

2013

Newman's Idea of the University -Today

Center for Catholic Studies, Seton Hall University

Kevin Mongrain
Duquesne University

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Summer 2013

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2013 Summer Faculty Seminar



**NEWMAN'S IDEA OF THE UNIVERSITY
—TODAY**

May 21—23, 2013
Seton Hall University

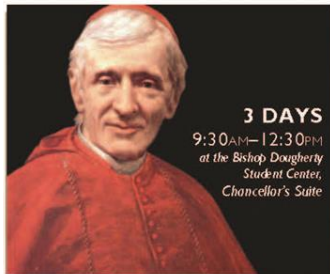


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FACILITATOR

KEVIN MONGRAIN, PH.D.

Kevin Mongrain is the Executive Director of the National Institute for Newman Studies at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. He has a Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Yale University and he has taught at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas, and in the Program of Liberal Studies at Notre Dame. His writings have appeared in *Newman Studies Journal*, *Heythrop Journal* and *Modern Theology*. Besides his writings on John Henry Newman, he has also published a book and several articles on the thought of Hans Urs von Balthasar.

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Seton Hall University

Center for Catholic Studies
2013 Faculty Seminar

Newman's Idea of a University—Today

May 21 – 23, 2013

ANDERSON, Justin	Newman's Liberation of Theology: On the Role of Philosophy in Newman's <i>The Idea of a University</i> and its Relation to Theology	4
CARR, Vivienne B.	Core of the University, with reflections on Newman	8
ENRIGHT, Nancy	Newman and the Limitations of Virgil	12
HAYNOR, Anthony L.	On Newman's "Christianity and Scientific Investigation"	17
HOBBIE, Maryann P.	Reflections on John Henry Newman's idea of a University, Discourse VI, Knowledge Viewed in Relation to Learning	20
JOHNSTON, Eric	Cardinal Newman on the Legitimate Autonomy of the Sciences	23
MANJIKIAN, Raffi M.	Newman's Outlook on Natural Science in the University: Past and Present	26
STAMPER, Sally	The Tie that Binds John Henry Newman and the Idea of a Protestant Theologian at a Catholic University	29
STOCKDALE, Todd	Newman, the Problem of Relationship and the Promise of Practical Theology	32
THURMOND, Gloria J.	Music, Morals and the Voice of Authority	35
CONTRIBUTORS		41

**Newman's Liberation of Theology:
On the Role of Philosophy in Newman's *The Idea of a University*
and Its Relation to Theology**

JUSTIN ANDERSON

When John Henry Newman aspired to write *The Idea of a University* he joined a long and venerable line of intellectuals who have sought to mold the education system of their own time.¹ In this brief essay, I wish to focus on one facet of this mold according to Newman's mind. By focusing on the aspect of Newman's understanding of the philosophical, I will argue that it is its presence within theology, which ultimately permits theologies liberalization.

Yet, prior to discussing the role of the philosophical and theology in *The Idea of a University*, several contextualizations need to be made. Newman's thoughts do not exist in a vacuum. The term "liberal, as many things in his opus, ought not to be understood as something altogether disconnected from its more classical understanding. Here, the denotation is not one of "progressive" or "favoring reform," but instead capable of "setting free" or, more aptly, of "liberating."

Newman explicitly applies this "liberating" theme to university education when he initially writes:

It is common to speak of '*liberal knowledge*,' of the '*liberal arts and studies*,' and of a '*liberal education*,' as the especial characteristic or property of a University and of a gentleman; what is really meant by the world?²

After counterpoising it to "servile," Newman surprisingly strikes from our conception of liberal, that which is of the mind. "Liberal" in the sense he is using it, is not necessarily a quality only having to do with the mind. Thus, a danger presents itself in process of defining our subject: there can be, and are, a great many exercises of the mind which are not liberating! Indeed, even the highest and most intellectual endeavor may not worthily attain the appellation of "liberal." What, then, is "liberal" that it can both elude the highly intellectual as well as be present in an ordinary track meet?

...[T]hat is liberal knowledge, which stands on its own pretensions, which is independent of sequel, expects no complement, refuses to be *informed* (as it is called) by any end, or absorbed into any art, in order duly to present itself to our contemplation. The most ordinary pursuits have this specific character, if they are self-sufficient and complete; the highest lose it, when they minister to something beyond them. 3

Here, then, is the first contextualization: liberal is a setting free, and a liberal education is free in itself from serving any other end than its own, so as “to present itself to our contemplation.” This is precisely how we in the West have customarily understood a “liberal education.”

Yet, this first contextualization already scented with a second. Newman alludes to Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* when he describes this liberal knowledge as an end in itself and something “self-sufficient and complete.”⁴ These are the two signs by which Aristotle avers that happiness itself can be identified, a happiness that Aristotle goes on to attribute to contemplation. However, what is of interest for our second contextualization is the other options Aristotle lays out for his readers. It reveals Newman’s intention. Liberal denotes not only pursuing something as an end instead of a means. Life’s portrait is something more complex than that. Aristotle notes that it is a choice of three alternatives, not two: (1) pursuing something as a means, (2) pursuing something as an end *and* as a means to something else, and finally (3) pursuing something as an end in itself and not for the sake of something else. By alluding to this context, Newman indicates to his audience the same choice obtains for how to consider liberal knowledge and that education which leads to it. Furthermore, because liberal knowledge and happiness attain to the same demanding criteria of being for their own sake and not for the sake of another end, then one could worthily investigate Newman’s understanding of their relation. This, however, travels beyond the confines of this essay.

Assuming that liberal knowledge is that which is attained by a liberal education, and noting Newman’s previous point that the intellectual exercises of the mind can fail to attain the appellation of “liberal” by being subjected or utilized in themselves for another, exterior purpose, it appears as little wonder that he notes even the divine science of theology can fail to be liberal. Newman writes,

If, for instance, Theology, instead of being cultivated as a contemplation, be limited to the purposes of the pulpit or be represented by the catechism, it loses, –not its usefulness, not its divine character, not its meritoriousness (rather it

gains a claim upon these titles by such charitable condescension), – but it does lose the particular attribute which I am illustrating; just as a face worn by tears and fasting loses its beauty, or a labourer's hand loses its delicateness; – for Theology thus exercised is not simple knowledge, but rather is an art or a business making use of Theology. And thus it appears that even what is supernatural need not be liberal, nor need a hero be a gentleman, for the plain reason that one idea is not another idea.⁵

Certainly it is not Newman's point to argue that *only* liberal knowledge is worthy of attainment. He explicitly says the opposite here and in other places. Nevertheless, it is not this "business making use of Theology" that is theologies truest interior end, which always introduces the knower to contemplation.

How then can a university keep theology liberal? How is it possible, particularly while training seminarians and lay faithful for ministry, to remain steadfast in its own internal purpose? Newman's answer is surprising. Theology, like any other body of knowledge that can be gained at a university, must remain *philosophical*.

Knowledge, I say, is then especially liberal, or sufficient for itself, apart from every external and ulterior object, when and so far as it is philosophical and this I proceed to show.⁶

Newman proceeds to demonstrate this by positing that knowledge is only philosophical when it is "impregnated by Reason."⁷ It is this impregnation of reason, which engenders in any form of knowledge that will accept the liberal life of contemplation.

Reason is the principle of that intrinsic fecundity of Knowledge, which, to those who possess it, is its especial value, and which dispenses with the necessity of their looking abroad for any end to the rest upon external to itself.⁸

Yet, Newman's point is perhaps not so far from us as we might suppose. There is another text, a theological text that makes some of the same points of reason, of its "intrinsic fecundity," and its ability to impregnate everything so as to set it free, to make it a source of contemplation. And this ancient verse sings of Wisdom thus:

When he fixed the foundations of earth, then was I beside him as artisan;

I was his delight day by day, playing before him all the while,

Playing over the whole of his earth, having my delight with human beings..." (Proverbs 8: 29-31)

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1. This point was not lost on Newman either. See *The Idea of a University*, part I, discourse 5, number 3.
2. Newman, *The Idea of a University*, p. I, d. 5, n. 4. (emphasis original).
3. Ibid.
4. See, Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics* I, 7. "Happiness, then, is something final and self-sufficient, and is the end of action." (Translation of Ross).
5. Newman, *The Idea of a University*, p. I, d. 5, n. 4.
6. Newman, *The Idea of a University*, p. I, d. 5, n. 5.
7. Newman, *The Idea of a University*, p. I, d. 5, n. 6.
8. Ibid.

Core of the University with Reflections on Newman

VIVIENNE B. CARR

We have to start from the ground up and reconsider what education is. In my language, I'd like to see us educate the soul, and not just the mind. The result would be a person who could be in the world creatively, make good friendships, live in a place he loved, do work that is rewarding, and make a contribution to the community...

---Thomas Moore

The seminar discourse on John Henry Cardinal Newman's "Idea of the University – Today" keenly focused on the intellectual and religious context of Newman's mind. As Dr. Kevin Mongrain, Executive Director of the National Institute for Newman Studies and Seminar Facilitator, so insightfully posed in his thoughts and questions regarding Newman's prose, the dialogue centered on the crisis and decisions found in the eloquent compositions crafted by Newman. What struck me was the ultimate question that so many of us at the academy search to answer... how do we truly succeed at educating, supporting and forming the young minds that enter our university? A challenge indeed...yet we have an advantage to teach at a Catholic university whereby, the crisis of modernity is overcome with faith, spirituality and reason. Bishop Bayley likely had this in mind when he named Seton Hall University after our patroness, Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, pioneer, founder and mother of Catholic education. Her invisible arms embrace us that lest we not forget emulating her spirit in our daily work with students. However, the question looms large in light of Newman's teachings such that we ponder... how do we as educators have a positive and lasting impact on our future servant leaders? Newman offers a deep yet promising perspective; to consider that which involves grace and not power, principles devoid of skepticism, knowledge with purpose to help lead young minds on an educational journey to find meaning in their life. Newman believes that

knowledge is capable of being to its own end. Such is the constitution of the human mind, that any kind of knowledge, if it really be such, is its own reward.¹

To truly merit the study of Newman's writing or teaching for that matter, would probably take months, possibly years of deciphering, however at the root of all of his teaching, is God. Regardless of the religion we believe in, especially at a Catholic university where our Journey of Transformation courses include the *Nostra Aetate*...acceptance of all religions...God is central. Possibly it is this influence, whereby if we believe in God, connect to our morality, we might think different to reason and be open to various world or religious opinions, learn to accept differing perspectives leading ultimately to respect of one another. So, how does one accomplish this outside of religion class? That is, how does one teach the notion that God is in everything we are and do in educating young minds along their educational journey? We may not speak to this directly in an education course however we can, through modeling in the classroom, have an incredible opportunity to expand the acquisition of knowledge and possibly directly or even indirectly, carefully shape thoughts of our students to respect and care for themselves and others while doing what is right and just.

This might be seen in one of my education courses titled *Seminar on Social, Ethical and Legal Issues in Technology* whereby students are called to question our "Gift of Fire" which is technology and its power to provide tremendous access to knowledge yet implications when used as a weapon in our society. If we take steps to act ethically and morally with social responsibility, while understanding the impact technology can hold, we are likely to be great global digital citizens where there is God. Having a deeper understanding of human error for destruction, remiss of God, coupled with the truth of making the right decisions, can open the minds for how we want to live our own lives and in turn teach others to actualize and act ethically. This brings to mind the bible verse from the prophet John 8:32 "then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" the more educated the mind, information as foundation, circumstances to guide perspective, possibly, the more open to God, reason and meaning in life.

Newman's influence was found in our seminar discourse reflecting on the idea that individuals are likely to see truth, and be in the light of knowledge similarly to Plato's *Allegory of the Cave* if they have no fears. Although the conversation to this regard was reflective of Newman's fifth sermon and the questions surrounding the role of Theology in religion, or of the heart, its place in the church and education, might be construed to our own role as educators and influencers in the university and forming young minds in the classroom. The rationale being in the same regard to those who try to defend religion, provide argument for or even force it, use fear. "To fear is to not see God" therefore, it would not be prudent to use fear in a classroom as a means for students to gain

perspectives, knowledge and understanding. Rather, in light of Newman's perspectives, there is belief that we are pre-disposed to "love and see God in everything." Therefore, I believe, we as educators are called to provide a caring, safe academic environment without fear that empowers students to perform, investigate, question, debate and challenge, to foster understanding so that the acquisition of knowledge is truly realized. Clark Kerr makes the claim for opening the mind of students in his *Uses of the University* stating that

knowledge may be the most powerful element in our culture affecting the use and fall of professions and even of social class, of religions and nations. Knowledge comes to serve mankind...in unprecedented proportions...re-shaping the nature and quality of the university.²

There is no doubt that this can be witnessed today as education is evolving, especially in an information age. Thus, however connected we are with our God, we can pose a light on the truth of knowledge as it develops and expands with further discovery, for students to meet their hierarchy of needs benchmarks, posed by Maslow, for self-fulfillment and actualization.

Newman is so comprehensive, perhaps, due to the challenge to stay on pace with the development of information and knowledge, as if he knew the Internet was somewhere in the distance, that we must have awareness of the endless possibilities to be a true, caring resource for students. Newman writes "to discover and to teach are distinct functions...distinct gifts...not commonly found in the same person" thus as educators we self-actualize ourselves, to be in touch with our own gifts while balancing the need to close the door for seclusion to conduct research and develop scholarship in tandem with teaching, advisement, and maintaining office hours. Further, Newman expresses that

a University...is a place of teaching universal knowledge...for the sake of intellectual peace...students learn to respect, to consult, to aid each other...a habit of the mind is formed which lasts through life...freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation, and wisdom.³

which to this regard, I believe our greatest gift is to teach our students, our "treatment" is to care for them, keep the office door open to invite them, meet their inquiry with fervor and understanding, embrace them in God's image, and love them.

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2. Kerr, *The Uses of the University*, preface, xii.
3. Newman, J. H., *Idea of the University*, p. 1, d. 5, n. 3

Newman and the Limitations of Virgil

NANCY ENRIGHT

When John Henry Cardinal Newman spoke of the importance of the Arts in his *Idea of a University*, he lovingly outlines the importance of literature in the development of what he calls “Civilization.” In “Christianity and Letters” he specifically states, “a University, after all, should be formally based (as it really is), and should emphatically live in, the Faculty of Arts.”¹ Tracing the origins of western civilization back three thousand years, Newman acknowledges a kind of “solemnity” in the opening of a school of Arts in that he sees it as “reiterating an old tradition, and carrying on those august methods of enlarging the mind, and cultivating the intellect, and refining the feelings, in which the process of Civilization has ever consisted.”² My own discipline of English, consisting of both literature and writing (i.e. what would have been traditionally called rhetoric), Newman sees as the origin of the other Liberal Arts, with rhetoric growing out of the persuasive powers of poetry, with the legacy of Greece carried on through Rome and passed along to the modern world through medieval Christendom (“Christianity and Letters.”³ However, despite this deep respect for the Arts and for my own discipline of literature in particular, Newman also offers a caution regarding its limitations. Like Dante, who deeply loved his guide and mentor Virgil in *The Divine Comedy* but nevertheless depicts his inability to lead him into heaven, Newman also limits the powers of poetry and reason as helping us to move toward heaven, but not enough, alone, to allow us to enter it.

One of the main points of the seminar offered by Kevin Mongrain for the Center for Catholic Studies this summer was that Newman downplayed the role of reason, putting the prophetic or mystic gifts over it. There is a certain irony in the fact that Newman, who himself was outstandingly endowed with the capacity for reason and whose book *The Idea of a University* is a foundational text for defining higher education in the liberal arts, should ultimately relegate reason to a place less significant than these other spiritual qualities. However, in Sermon 5, Newman argues that reason enables one to argue well, but that this capability can be more advantageous toward error than truth because “the exhibitions of the Reason, being in their operation separable from the person furnishing them, possess little or no responsibility. To be anonymous is almost

their characteristic, and with it all the evils attendant on the unchecked opportunity for injustice and falsehood.”⁴ As Plato warns about in “Gorgias,” it is dangerous to use rhetorical skill for selfish motives, without connection to the idea of Truth, but the very argument assumes the fact that it is entirely possible to do so. Reason, though a good gift of God, can easily be misused. It is not by itself capable of leading us to salvation, though it can be useful on the path toward it. Salvation, however, can only come from the reception of God’s love, His grace, through faith. Newman underlines this point explicitly in Sermon 10, quoting St. Paul’s letter to the Galatians: “‘By grace have ye been saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;’ but investigation and proof belong to man as man, prior to the Gospel: therefore Faith is something higher than Reason.”⁵

Dante, of course, makes this same point in his *Divine Comedy* where he has Virgil, who (as Charles Williams in his *Figure of Beatrice* says) represents poetry and reason, able to be a worthy guide of Dante through Hell and Purgatory, but no further. It is Beatrice, followed by Bernard of Clairvaux, as embodiments of God’s grace, who lead him into and through Paradise. In the courtesy of Beatrice to Virgil, a quality Charles Williams emphasizes in his discussion of this scene, when she comes to beg his help for Dante in the beginning of *Inferno* (Canto II, ll. 58-74), urging him to use his “persuasive word” (l. 67) to reach Dante, clearly, the message is that reason, poetry, and the beauty of persuasive speech (rhetoric) can be instruments of God’s grace in helping someone (Dante, here) toward salvation. But by themselves they are not enough. In *The Idea of a University*, Newman makes a similar point, acknowledging both the power of, in this case, knowledge but also its limits: “And though it has no tendency, I repeat, to mend the heart, or to secure it from the dominion in other shapes of those very evils which it repels in the particular modes of approach by which they prevail over others, yet cases may occur when it gives birth, after sins have been committed, to so keen a remorse and so intense a self-hatred, as are even sufficient to cure the particular moral disorder, and to prevent its accesses ever afterwards.”⁶ However, though this awareness is useful, it is not enough to “mend the heart.” It is as if Newman, having pushed his own intellect to its greatest capacity is convinced that it can go no further. Ultimately, one has to experience a sense of grace, of conversion. And how does one cultivate that experience?

First, most significantly, grace can never be “earned.” By its nature it is a gift, supernaturally given to the soul by God. However, its instruments, according to Newman, can be and usually are human and personal. Just as Dante uses Beatrice, the woman he loved personally on earth, as the symbolic

representation of God's love in his *Comedy*, so Newman asserts that the faith has been "upheld in the world not as a system, not by books, not by argument, nor by temporal power, but by the personal influence of such {92} men as have already been described, who are at once the teachers and the patterns of it..."⁷ He goes on to say that the personal witness of a truly faith-filled person is not easily attacked, even by those inclined to mock "religion:"

Men persuade themselves, with little difficulty, to scoff at principles, to ridicule books, to make sport of the names of good men; but they cannot bear their presence: it is holiness embodied in personal form, which they cannot steadily confront and bear down: so that the silent conduct of a conscientious man secures for him from beholders a feeling different in kind from any which is created by the mere versatile and garrulous Reason.⁸

It is God's life in the lived presence of a holy man or woman, by grace, that is the most powerful argument for faith, according to both Newman and Dante. St. Paul makes a similar point: "You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. Such confidence we have through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God" (2 Cor. 3: 3-5). The writing here, the persuasive letter, is God's, not ours, "written" on us. We become the page, so to speak, and the competence, beyond anything our own reason could create, is not "from ourselves."

Interestingly, for Newman, as for Dante, much of this personal witness that spoke to him of God's grace and led to his conversion was found in the early Church. In *Paradiso*, Dante depicts St. Peter contrasting the fourteenth century church with the holiness of the early church:

The Bride of Christ was never nurtured by
my blood, and blood of Linus and of Cletus,
to be employed in gaining greater riches;
but to acquire this life of joyousness,
Sixtus and Pius, Urban and Calixtus,
after much lamentation, shed their blood. (Canto XXVII, ll. 40-45)

The witness of the early martyrs, followed by those taking a similar path throughout the ages, was still powerful, for Newman, as for Dante. In Sermon V, Newman cautions against any criticism of differing customs among holy people,

particularly those in “the Primitive Church, which, in spite of the corruptions which disfigured it from the first, still in its collective holiness may be considered to make as near an approach to the pattern of Christ as fallen man ever will attain...”(5). Newman also valued the presence of the Spirit in those Christians of his own time who had a similar personal commitment to Christ, a living faith, though he contrasted it to the rudimentary “religion” of many professing Christians. In Sermon 12, he says,

As to the multitude of professed Christians, they indeed believe on mere custom, or nearly so. Not having their hearts interested in religion, they may fairly be called mere hereditary Christians. I am not speaking of these, but of the serious portion of the community; and I say, that they also, though not believing merely because their fathers believed, but with a faith of their own, yet, for that very reason, believe on something distinct from evidence—believe with a faith more personal and living than evidence could create.⁹

For Newman, the living faith of the catacombs, of the Fathers, of the saints throughout the ages, was the only faith worth having, and it is rooted in the experience of grace, through faith, beyond the realm of reason, but not alien from it either. Enhanced by the experience of grace, through the Spirit, reason can fulfill its ultimate purpose, helping us along the way, but not usurping the place of grace and its mysteries.

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¹ John Henry Newman. "Christianity and Letters." *The Idea of a University. The Newman Reader. — Works of John Henry Newman*, (The National Institute for Newman Studies, 2007), 8.

² *Ibid.*, 5.

³ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴ Newman, Sermon 10, *Oxford University Sermons (1843/1871). The Newman Reader. — Works of John Henry Newman* (The National Institute for Newman Studies, 2007), 9.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶ Newman, Discourse 8, *The Idea of a University*, 7.

⁷ Newman, Sermon 5, *Oxford University Sermons*, 10.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁹ Newman, Sermon 12, *Oxford University Sermons*, 2-3.

On Newman's "Christianity and Scientific Investigation"

ANTHONY L. HAYNOR

The present essay is a reflection on Newman's "Christianity and Scientific Investigation: A Lecture Written for the School of Science."¹ It is written from the perspective of a person of Christian faith trained in and committed to human scientific inquiry.

Newman begins the essay by characterizing the University as a human construction of monumental significance:

Among the objects of human enterprise ...none higher or nobler can be named than that which is contemplated in the erection of a University...It professes to teach whatever has to be taught in any whatever department of human knowledge, and it embraces in its scope the loftiest subjects of human thought, and the richest fields of human inquiry. Nothing is too vast, nothing too subtle, nothing too distant, nothing too minute, nothing too discursive, and nothing too exact, to engage its attention.²

For Newman, the University is much more than an entity that simply encompasses or houses the various departments of knowledge under one umbrella. Rather:

...it professes to assign to each study, which it receives, its own proper place and its just boundaries; to define the rights, to establish the mutual relations, and to effect the intercommunion of one and all; to keep in check the ambitious and encroaching, and to succor and maintain those which from time to time are succumbing under the more popular or the more fortunately circumstanced; to keep the peace between them all, and to convert their mutual differences and contrarieties into the common good.³

It is a given for Newman that a Catholic university "is ancillary certainly, and of necessity, to the Catholic Church"⁴ due to the fact that:

...truth of any kind can but minister to truth; and next, still more, because Nature ever will pay homage to Grace, and Reason cannot but illustrate and defend

Revelation; and thirdly because the Church has a sovereign authority, and when she speaks *ex cathedra*, must be obeyed. But this is the remote end of a University; its immediate end...is to secure the due disposition, according to one sovereign order, and the cultivation in that order, of all the provinces and methods of thought which the human intellect has created.⁵

The “sovereign order” of which Newman speaks is one in which:

[the University’s] several professors are like the ministers of various political powers at one court or conference. They represent their respective sciences, and attend to the private interests of those sciences respectively; and should dispute arise between those sciences, they are the persons to talk over and arrange it, without risk of extravagant pretensions on any side, of angry collision, or of popular commotion. A liberal philosophy becomes the habit of minds thus exercised; a breadth and spaciousness of thought, in which lines, seemingly parallel, may converge at leisure, and principles, recognized as incommensurable, may be safely antagonistic.⁶

He goes on to argue that:

The great universe itself, moral and material, sensible and supernatural, cannot be gauged and meted by even the greatest of human intellects, and its constituent parts admit indeed of comparison and adjustment, but not of fusion... [The] philosophy of an imperial intellect, for such I am considering a University to be, is based, not so much on simplification as on discrimination... He aims at no complete catalogue, or interpretation of the subjects of knowledge, but a following out, as far as man can, what in its fullness is mysterious and unfathomable. [If the imperial intellect of the University] has one cardinal maxim in his philosophy, it is, that truth cannot be contrary to truth; if he has a second, it is, that truth often *seems* contrary to truth; and if a third, it is the practical conclusion, that we must be patient with such appearances, and not be hasty to pronounce them to be really of a more formidable character.⁷

To sum up, Newman makes the argument that it is incumbent on each field of inquiry to contribute to the one truth by pursuing its own methods of thought and to juxtapose its perspective on reality against the other perspectives (each with its own method of thought). In this process, the one truth can be increasingly revealed—but only to a point given the limitations of human reason in comprehending the fullness of truth. This dialogical process identifies points of seeming tension and/or contradiction and seeks to reconcile or harmonize them in what is an ongoing evolutionary project.

Newman introduces into his discussion an example of particular relevance to the human sciences:

...when we contrast the physical with the social laws under which man finds himself here below, we must grant that Physiology and Social Science are in collision. Man is both a physical and a social being; yet he cannot at once pursue to the full his physical end and his social end, his physical duties...and his social duties, but is forced to sacrifice in part one or the other. If we were wild enough to fancy that there were two creators, one of whom was the author of our animal frames, the other of society, then indeed we might understand how it comes to pass that labour of mind and body, the useful arts, the duties of a statesman, government, and the like, which are required by the social system, are so destructive of health, enjoyment, and life. That is, in other words, we cannot adequately account for existing and undeniable truths except on the hypothesis of what we feel to be an absurdity.⁸

However, the Catholic human scientist believes and asserts to be true that the one Creator God is the source of both of biological and social dimensions. It is the task of the disciplines of biology and sociology (and the other social sciences) in open and respectful dialogue with each other and with theology to recognize what on the surface appears to be an antinomy between the organic and the super-organic realms and to explore ways of resolving or reconciling it.⁹ Clearly, theology would play an indispensable role in such an exploration. So would philosophy, which is responsible for integrating all lines of human inquiry (in this case, biological, sociological, and theological) and for acknowledging integrative obstacles that may exist at any given point in time.

1. "Christianity and Scientific Investigation: A Lecture Written for the School of Science" (1855) in Newman, John Henry Cardinal. *The Idea of a University*, Chapter VII under "University Subjects." Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 343-344.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 344.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 345.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 345-346.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 346.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 347.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 349.

9. There have been numerous attempts in sociology to explore the relationship between the organic and super-organic levels. See, for example, Auguste Comte, *The Positive Philosophy*. New York: Calvin Blanchard, 1855; Herbert Spencer, "The Social Organism," in *On Social Evolution: Selected Writings*, pp. 53-70. Edited by J.D.Y. Peel. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1860/1972; Emile Durkheim, "The Dualism of Human Nature and its Social Conditions." In *On Morality and Society*, edited by Robert N. Bellah. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1914/1973; and Talcott Parsons, *The Social System*. Glencoe: Free Press, 1951. For a bio-social anthropological perspective, see Robin Fox, *The Search for Society*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989.

Reflections on John Henry Newman's 'Idea of a University, Discourse VI,' Knowledge Viewed in Relation to Learning

MARYANN P. HOBBIE

He was a difficult man to speak to. He was a difficult man to impress. He was driving me home from college for the weekend. I gathered up my courage to speak. "Dad? I am going to major in Humanities. It is a new major. It is interdisciplinary. Each semester is a different time period. If we study the Renaissance, I will be taking a course in Renaissance art, one in Renaissance philosophy, history, literature, music and so forth. There is a seminar that meets once a week that ties all the pieces together." No comment. "I have been asked to join the major. It is brand new." Dead silence. I held my breath. "Why don't you be a professional like one of your sisters?" End of conversation.

The faculty seminar on John Henry Newman was useful to me on many levels, both personally and professionally. The entire concept of *The Idea of a University* is vital to me as I pursue my calling as a teacher in a college classroom. There are two key concepts presented in Newman's VI Discourse, "Knowledge Viewed in Relation to Learning" that I wish to focus on here. The first of these is his concept of the illumination of the mind. He called for an enlargement, or illumination, of the mind which consisted "not merely in the passive reception into the mind of a number of ideas hitherto unknown to it, but in the mind's energetic and simultaneous action upon and towards and among these new ideas, which are rushing upon it."¹ He continues:

There is no enlargement, unless there be a comparison of ideas one with another, as they open before the mind, and a systematizing of them...It is not the mere addition to our knowledge that is the illumination; but the locomotion, the movement onwards, of that mental centre, to which both what we know, and what we are learning, the accumulating mass of our acquirements, *gravitates*.²

This illumination then is a process, a word, perhaps, not used in 1852, the year of these writings, but steeped in learning literature today. This is a pedagogical challenge for me to be aware of in the classroom. My course, "Christian Belief and Thought," spans, as I like to tell my students, 4,000 years in 14 weeks! If I am to be attentive to this process of illumination, I must be aware of how I present the material, being sure to build in pauses where students can

reflect and build on what they know as they move through the course. This can be done through directed reflection, verbal discourse, and frequent writing opportunities. The students need to be encouraged toward illumination, so that they can experience what Newman outlined, "We feel our minds to be growing and expanding then, when we not only learn, but refer what we learn to what we know already."³ Newman promises that "to have even a portion of this illuminative reason and true philosophy is the highest state to which nature can aspire, in the way of intellect; it puts the mind above the influences of chance and necessity, above anxiety, suspense, unsettlement, and superstition."⁴ Lofty ideals, perhaps, but something to stretch towards. It is easy enough for the students to be exposed to Newman's thoughts at the beginning of the semester, and to see if they bear fruit as the semester moves on.

There is another concept of great interest to me in this discourse, and that is where Newman mentions Religion. Indeed, this subject is woven throughout his work since he is arguing for the inclusion of Religion as a subject necessary to any institution that would call itself a University. There is only a small aside in this essay, which warrants attention. Newman presents the case of what may be considered the modernist dilemma, the man presented with a whole new world of thought wherein God can be dismissed. We should pay close attention to this description, since it is sometimes the case for young minds who have been spoon-fed their faith and now, encouraged to think for themselves via their exposure to philosophy and other courses of study in our university classrooms, can dismiss their belief system. Newman writes:

The first time the mind comes across the arguments and speculations of unbelievers, and feels what a novel light they cast upon what he has hitherto accounted sacred; and...if it gives into them and embraces them...as if waking from a dream, begins to realize... that there is now no such things as law and the transgression of law, that sin is a phantom...they look back upon their former state of faith and innocence with a sort of contempt and indignation, as if they were then but fools, and the dupes of imposture.⁵

Quite often we encounter searching students in our religion classes. Faith development is a critical part of emerging adulthood development. It would behoove us as teachers to be aware of this and how we might play a part, even the smallest, in guiding that development.

Newman juxtapositions the person losing their faith with the individuals who find faith. One cannot help but think when reading this description of the

cultural theorists Edward Said and Homi Bhabah. Are we reading a type of meta-narrative where whole civilizations that were once “lost” are now “found” with the truth of the Bible? Perhaps not, but the treatment does seem like a rather totalizing statement.

It was a course of study where the illumination of the mind was constant—small classes, intimate, challenging readings, interesting questions—a weekly seminar and semester project to synthesize our learning. You worked not only alone, but journeyed with your classmates, always called to look at the bigger picture of the time period of the semester. We studied in context, before studying in context was fashionable, it was interdisciplinary, the dream of a few industrious professors, willing to gamble that the illumination of the mind could be a reality for a small group of undergraduates. I am eternally grateful. May I pass on the favor to my own students.

Thank you, John Henry Newman, for the inspiration.

¹ John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, ed. Martin J. Svaglic (In: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982), p.100.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

Cardinal Newman on the Legitimate Autonomy of the Sciences

ERIC JOHNSTON

Key to understanding John Henry Newman's *Idea of a University* is understanding what a university is. The first thing to be said about the Catholic university is that it must be truly a university. Newman defines a university as "a place of *teaching* universal knowledge."¹ As such, all branches of knowledge must be represented. Though the burden of Newman's argument will be that theology is one, and indeed the preeminent, of these branches of knowledge, we must first understand that it is not the only branch.

A university is, first of all, a place where "An assemblage of learned men, zealous for their own sciences, and rivals of each other, are brought, by familiar intercourse and for the sake of intellectual peace, to adjust together the claims and relations of their respective subjects of investigation. . . . Thus is created a pure and clear atmosphere of thought, which the student also breathes."² Whatever it means for this to be Catholic, it is first of all intellectual and universal: first of all a true university.

This intellectual work is good in itself. Newman gives an entire discourse to the idea that Knowledge—the secular knowledge sought by all these university men – is its own end. "Such is the constitution of the human mind, that any kind of knowledge, if it be really such, is its own reward." But while the search for each knowledge in itself is good, even better is the task he calls "Philosophy:" "a comprehensive view of truth in all its branches, of the relations of science to science, of their mutual bearings, and their respective values."³ This is the task not of independent scholars, but of the university as a whole, a gathering of scholars.

This is good, not because it is useful, and not even first of all because it is religious, but as beauty itself is good: for its own sake. "Liberal Education, viewed in itself, is simply the cultivation of the intellect, as such, and its object is nothing more or less than intellectual excellence. . . . There is a physical beauty and a moral; there is a beauty of person, there is a beauty of our moral being, which is natural virtue; and in like manner there is a beauty, there is a perfection,

of the intellect." He describes in all its beauty this task of perfecting the intellect: "To open the mind, to correct it, to refine it, to enable it to know, and to digest, master, rule, and use its knowledge, to give it power over its own faculties, application, flexibility, method, critical exactness, sagacity, resource, address, eloquent expression."⁴ These things are good not for any other purpose, except that they are good in themselves, and beautiful; Newman lists them at length to make clear the abundance of the university project.

But as grace perfects nature, so Newman believes that knowledge is a kind of thing that can be sanctified. True, university knowledge and a liberal education are not directly about the one thing that really matters; yet "As a Hospital or an almhouse, though its end be ephemeral, may be sanctified to the service of religion, so surely may a University, even were it nothing more. . . . We attain to heaven by using this world well, though it is to pass away; we perfect our nature, not by undoing it, but by adding to it what is more than nature, and directing it toward aims higher than its own."⁵ This is in fact a very important statement for Newman's thinking on the University. It is *not* the specifically Catholic nature of the subjects that makes it good. Knowledge can be for us a path to God precisely because of what it is in itself. A Catholic can be sanctified at a university even if there is nothing more Catholic about the university than the mere fact of its being a university.

Or, to put it another way, what knowledge is in itself is already something from God, because Creation is from God. Newman describes the most sublime things: "The laws of the universe, the principles of truth, the relation of one thing to another, their qualities and virtues, the order and harmony of the whole, all that exists, is from Him." And he describes the humblest things: "The primary atoms of matter, their properties, their mutual action, their disposition and collation, electricity, magnetism, gravitation, light, and whatever other subtle principles or operations the wit of man is detecting or shall detect, are the work of His hands." What makes these things Catholic is not the addition of anything extrinsic, but their own natures. And Newman descends almost to the absurd: "The most insignificant or unsightly insect is from Him, and good in its kind; the ever-teeming, inexhaustible swarms of animalculae, the myriads of living motes invisible to the naked eye, the restless ever-spreading vegetation which creeps like a garment over the whole earth, the lofty cedar, the umbrageous banana, are His."⁶ (One recalls that the ba-na-na was at the time still rather an exotic and ridiculous fruit.)

And not to be excluded from this list is even man himself. “Man, with his motives and works, his languages, his propagation, his diffusion, is from Him. Agriculture, medicine, and the arts of life, are His gifts. Society, laws, government. . . The course of events, the revolution of empires, the rise and fall of states.”⁷ In short, the first thing that makes the University Catholic is precisely that it is a University, consecrated not to a specifically religious end but to the study of the world as God has given it to us. Intelligence itself is his gift, and should be used to search out its proper object.

The Second Vatican Council would echo Newman a century later in its teaching on “the legitimate autonomy of the sciences.”⁸ A true university requires, before all else, this legitimate autonomy: a recognition that whether botany, physics, economics, or even psychology and literature, each field has its own way of seeking the truth that comes from God. To interfere with this legitimate autonomy is an offense both against the nature of the University and against the truth of the Catholic faith.

Everything Newman says about the essential role of theology in the university will only confirm that all of these things call for reference to God not in spite of themselves, but because of their own created natures.

¹ John Henry Newman, “Preface,” in *The Idea of a University: Defined and illustrated: In Nine Discourses Delivered to the Catholics of Dublin; in Occasional Lectures and Essays Addressed to the Members of the Catholic University*, ed. Martin J. Svaglic (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982), xxxvii. The italics are Newman’s.

²Newman, p. 76.

³ Newman, p. 77.

⁴ Newman, p. 92.

⁵ Newman, p. 93.

⁶ Newman, p. 48.

⁷ Newman, pp. 48-49.

⁸ *Gaudium et Spes*, 36, then *Gaudium et Spes*, 59, quoting Vatican I’s “Constitution on the Catholic Faith,” *Dei Filius*, and Pius XI’s 1931 encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*. §36 goes on to say, “But if the expression, the independence of temporal affairs (*rerum temporalium autonomia*), is taken to mean that created things do not depend on God, and that man can use them without any reference to their Creator, anyone who acknowledges God will see how false such a meaning is.”

Newman's Outlook on Natural Science in the University: Past and Present

RAFFI M. MANJIKIAN

John Henry Newman believed that a university should be a place where people are given the opportunity to explore the truths of the world while increasing their intellectual knowledge. To Newman, a university should provide people with a sense of ease and comfort, not only to gain knowledge of truth, but also to express their own ideas and opinions. "A University is at once so arduous and beneficial an undertaking, because it is pledged to admit, without fear, without prejudice, without compromise, all comers, if they come in the name of truth; to adjust views and experiences, and habits of the mind the most independent and dissimilar; and to give full play to through and erudition in their most original forms, and their most intense expressions, and in their most ample circuit."¹ However, many people in Newman's time did not share the same belief that all disciplines should be looked at with the same regard, especially when it came to science. Numerous people during his period held the notion that science and research were mutually exclusive from teaching and the university. Some even took this notion so far as to believe that science had no place at all in a university. This was due to the fact that people could not understand how science and theology could be related in any way. Luckily, science has evolved so much so that there have been advances in relating both disciplines.

During Newman's era, science was viewed antagonistically. Many saw science as a source of anxiety and they were afraid of the consequences that science could have on theology. The reason science narrated so much doubt and disgust from the general population was because people did not know what to expect from it. Science was unexplainable by theology alone, and as a result, people tremendously feared it. Science also led some people to believe that it was a possible root for atheism and that the study of the material world would lead to the corruption of theology. Nevertheless, Newman did his best in trying to provide his outlook and opinion on science, and tried to help people keep their composure.

Newman outlined the proper role of intellect as it protected and developed the content of faith.² By doing this, he was able to show that the antagonistic views that people had about science did not exist. Instead, Newman divided science and theology into the natural versus the supernatural. He believed that these two great circles of knowledge were able to exist and intersected one another, but could not contradict each other. "By nature is meant, I suppose that vast system of things, taken as a whole, of which we are cognizant by means of our natural powers. By the supernatural world is meant that still more marvelous and awful universe, of which the Creator Himself is the fullness, and which becomes known to us, not through our natural faculties, but by superadded and direct communication from Him."³ The approach in viewing science and theology as two separate entities caused people to attain some straightforwardness, but it also led people to believe that the two disciplines could not possibly be intertwined in any manner. "If then, Theology be the philosophy of the supernatural world, and Science the philosophy of the natural, Theology and Science, whether in their respective ideas, or again in their own actual fields, on the whole, are incommunicable, incapable of collision, and needing at most to be connected, never to be reconciled."⁴ This belief sparked the issue of viewing science and theology as two separate, but equal entities that could never be used in any type of interdisciplinary fashion. Thankfully, our world has advanced since Newman's time and in today's society, there has been an increase in the collaboration between science and theology.

Newman's outlook on science and theology would not be able to hold true in today's modern world. Newman thought that since the two disciplines should be completely detached from one another, it would not be popular or practical to intertwine them. Today, there has been increased interest and research as to how theology and science are related, especially at Catholic universities. For example, Seton Hall University provides a commendable effort in demonstrating how science and theology can be related. First and foremost, Seton Hall University believes that a symbiotic relationship between all disciplines is feasible. This is demonstrated by providing University Mission seminars for all the faculty members of the university. These seminars allow faculty from all different types of disciplines to come together to discuss the mission of the university and whether the university is headed in the right direction in regards to its curriculum and present circumstances. Second, Seton Hall University offers faculty from all departments a unique opportunity to participate in its Core Curriculum. The Signature Three Course entitled "Engaging the World," is discipline-specific, linking the general principles of the Catholic intellectual tradition to various fields of study, including science. By providing this

opportunity to its science faculty, new courses have been created. For example, a course entitled “Engaging the World: Science and the Church,” focuses on the foundations of modern science. This course deals with the influences science and the Church have exerted upon each other since the beginning of Christianity. Thirdly, due to this new interest in developing a connection with theology and science, more and more science faculty at Seton Hall University are trying to relate theology and philosophy to their classes as best as they can. Therefore, those who lived during Newman’s time probably would find it quite interesting to see the many examples of how science and theology are related in today’s society.

Science has developed greatly since Newman’s time. People today are well aware that there can be some connection found between theology and science. Keeping this positive attitude in mind, who knows where the world will go from here. As long as the interdisciplinary action between theology and science continues to gain interest, there is no telling what innovations people can create and what new things they can possibly discover and investigate.

1. Newman Reader- Idea of a University- Part 2- Article 8: Christianity and Scientific Investigation
<<http://www.newmanreader.org/works/idea/article8.html>>
2. Liddy, Richard. Final Report Oxford University Sermons: John Henry Newman
3. Newman Reader- Idea of a University- Part 2- Article 7: Christianity and Physical Science
<http://www.newmanreader.org/works/idea/article7.html>
4. Newman Reader- Idea of a University- Part 2- Article 7: Christianity and Physical Science
<http://www.newmanreader.org/works/idea/article7.html>

The Tie That Binds
John Henry Newman and the Idea of a
Protestant Theologian at a Catholic University

SALLY STAMPER

Blessed be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love; the fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.

--John Fawcett, 1772

John Henry Newman is most popularly known for his landmark conversion to Roman Catholicism after serving as an Anglican cleric and theologian, in which roles he had founded the Oxford Movement, aimed at returning the Church of England to its apostolic roots. Working in a nineteenth century atmosphere in which both historical and philosophical perspectives dominated his community's theology, Newman was both more historical than his German predecessor Schleiermacher and less philosophical than Hegel. Newman insisted that faith and reason are not incompatible; that theology and science are distinct but not contradictory disciplines, and that theology plays an appropriately central role in the scholarly and pedagogical mission of the university. Walking this intellectual middle road, he sought the apostolic grounds for the Anglican tradition in the writings of the ante-Nicene fathers, concluding, however, that it was the Roman, rather than English Catholic tradition that best adhered to those seminal teachings. Protestants, Catholics, and secular readers, alike, admire the clarity and sophistication of Newman's arguments, as well as his rhetorical elegance. While Roman Catholics can claim him as one of their own, he represents a kind of bridge between the Catholic and Protestant intellectual traditions, one that is especially effective in the twenty-first century theological environment in which historical and constructive readings of early Christian thinkers have experienced a renaissance. Indeed, Newman's focus on the theological grounds of Christianity that precede any of the major schisms in Christian thought, practice, and polity informs a theological voice that is relevant across the differences that today divide the Christian community.

At Seton Hall, as a postdoctoral teaching fellow in the Core Curriculum, I serve as a humanities generalist—someone once referred to me as a “Great Books person.” My scholarly specialization, however, is theology, and my research is located within the Reformed Protestant tradition. In my previous faculty position, also at a post-secondary Catholic institution, I served explicitly as a teacher of theology, mostly notably Catholic thought (in which I am trained), as well as the Western intellectual tradition more broadly construed. That parsing of my teaching assignments, however, belies the perspective that drew me to the faculty summer seminar on Newman’s *The Idea of the University*: after all, for much of their shared history, there is little (if any) meaningful distinction between the Catholic and Western intellectual traditions. Early Christianity is intimately informed by Platonism, for example, and in turn Christian thought (Catholic thought, up to the sixteenth century) is at the heart of Western philosophy until late in the modern era. Newman worked in a time in which the centrality of Christian thought to philosophy was under siege—a battle many consider lost in the disciplinary split between theology and philosophy, a split that in most institutions has relegated the study of theology to divinity schools, if it has been retained at all. Newman’s defense of the centrality of theology is thus of critical importance and relevance today, in some ways even more so than in his own period. And his engagement of theology in a manner that is applicable to all theology—not just the Catholic thought with which he allied his work after his conversion—affords him an unusual position among Christian thinkers not only in the nineteenth century and for the Roman Catholic community, but in our own time and for the broader Christian community, as well.

Beyond debates around ecclesial authority and the operation of soteriological grace stand the earliest Christian thinkers, to whom Newman directs our attention, and a long—very long—and intimate relationship between theology and higher education. Many of the early fathers to whom Newman directs our attention developed pedagogical paradigms, and the first universities, of course, were founded by Catholic religious orders. To a large degree, what sets Catholic institutions apart today, however, is an ongoing commitment to the Catholic intellectual tradition and to Catholic social thought. That commitment places theology at the center of the university community, where Newman argued it should stand—a boon to academic theologians of any persuasion. Beyond such a general commitment, Newman pushes us theologians back to our common beginnings, where the bases for all Christian dogmatics lie. He urges us both to consider how we may best nurture our own and our communities’ spirituality and to cultivate conversation with a range of scholarly sources that speak to the pressing questions we pursue. To my mind,

this is a vision within which theological thinkers of all types may contribute to academic discourse, seeking commonality where it can be found and sharing a faithful pursuit of understanding.

In the twentieth century, Roman Catholic Hans Urs von Balthasar wrote an important critical treatment of a major Protestant theologian of his era, Karl Barth. As many have noted, regardless of what one thought of Barth, one could not reasonably ignore him. I think the same principle holds true for Christian theologians today: we may disagree, but we cannot productively ignore one another's positions. In some ways, Newman personally and singularly embodies such a conversation: as a teenager he read Calvinist texts; he went on to lead a movement urging the Church of England toward greater adherence to what Newman believed at the time was its unique faithfulness to apostolic witness; then he became convinced that Roman Catholicism was the more faithful embodiment of early church teaching. Throughout, Newman focused on the tie that he believed most authentically binds Christendom, to use the language of John Fawcett's popular Protestant hymn, locating that tie in the thought of early Christian thinkers who are shared by all Christian communities. Like them—and like Aquinas and Calvin—Newman insisted that God's creation is itself a form of revelation and that we cannot ignore the natural sciences whose conclusions differ from a literal reading of the biblical witness. Also like Calvin and Aquinas, Newman was broadly read and educated, placing theology at the center of his intellectual vision, while affirming the constraining primacy of faith. While Newman is unequivocally Catholic, an eloquent defender of Catholic doctrine, I would argue that these general principles transcend not only disciplines, but Christian perspectives, inside and outside the Church, in the sense that they make room for conversations of generous breadth and depth, informed by faith commitments. For me, a Protestant theologian working in a Catholic community of scholars from many backgrounds, it is that balance of breadth and depth with faith commitments that makes possible both the contribution I hope that I offer here and the gifts I receive as a member of the university community.

Newman, the Problem of Relationship, and the Promise of Practical Theology

TODD J. STOCKDALE

In the third and fourth discourses of his celebrated text, *The Idea of a University*, John Henry Newman brings into sharp focus the relationship between theology and other academic disciplines. Considering first how theology speaks to other branches of knowledge, and then turning to reflect on how these other branches of knowledge bear on theology, Newman works methodically to carve out a secure place for theology within the modern university curriculum. Central to the argument Newman makes in these discourses is his understanding of the integrated nature of the subject that knowledge pursues. He writes:

All knowledge forms one whole, because its subject matter is one; for the universe in its length and breadth is so intimately knit together, that we cannot separate off portion from portion, and operation from operation, except by a mental abstraction.¹

The ideas contained within Newman's claim permeated much of the discussion in this year's Faculty Summer Seminar at Seton Hall. Our facilitator, Kevin Mongrain, regularly underscored how Newman sought to move beyond the dualisms that emerge when truth is abstracted and portioned off into distinct realms. For Mongrain, the fact that we use a word like "spirituality", which can be neatly distinguished from the word "doctrine," says something about the pervasiveness of dualistic condition. He proposed that for Newman, truth was a practical knowledge: that one knows (doctrine) by doing (spirituality).

Sadly, Newman's warnings against modernity's abstracting tendencies were not fully heeded, and today's university—typified by its ever-increasing strata of specialization—separates the universe off "portion from portion" into isolated disciplines and sub-disciplines. Not surprisingly, this abstraction and separation has left its mark on modern theology, and has deeply impacted modern theology's attempt to situate itself in relation to the other distinct disciplines. British theologian David Ford has noted this impact, and employs *relationship* as a crucial concept for mapping modern theology. In an attempt to

sketch the contours of this branch of knowledge, Ford situates the various stains of modern theology along a linear continuum based upon their understanding of the relationship between Christianity and the intellectual environment of modernity.² Ford places on one end of this spectrum an account of religion that attempts “to repeat a traditional theology or version of Christianity and see all reality in its own term.”³ According to him, this approach to theology is undertaken without an acknowledgment of the relevance of modern perspectives. On the opposite end of the spectrum, Ford places an account of religion that “gives complete priority to some modern secular philosophy or worldview.”⁴ In this approach, Christianity, in order to be valid, must fit within the terms set forth by this particular philosophy or worldview. With these two extremes laid out, Ford suggests that correlational approaches—such as can be seen in Paul Tillich’s “model of critical correlation,” or David Tracy’s revised “mutually critical correlation” model—rest at the center of this continuum.⁵

At first glance, it appears that these correlational approaches fit well with Newman’s vision for theology’s place amongst the other disciplines. Indeed, I write from the perspective of a practical theologian, and our discipline—which embodies Newman’s determination to dissolve dualistic understandings of doctrine and spirituality, truth and practical knowledge, knowing and doing—has been largely influenced by these correlational approaches. Nevertheless, recent developments in the field of practical theology have brought into question the helpfulness of these correlational methods for overcoming the dualisms Newman cautioned against. Practical theologian Pete Ward, in his important work on this subject, shows how continuums such as Ford’s illustrate the way in which the modern theological debate has focused on the “problem of relationship,” and how correlational approaches seek to reconcile “two seemingly opposed positions.”⁶ After showing how practical theology has largely followed this focus on the problem of relationship when considering the link between theology and human experience, Ward then argues that by accepting the dualistic assumptions present in the correlational approaches, which seek to “reconcile” theology with human experience, practical theologians are in danger of actually reinforcing the very dichotomies that their discipline is attempting to overcome. Yet, as Ward contends, recent approaches to practical theology have attempted to reframe the discussions surrounding theology and human experience in a way that avoids the dualisms inherent in correlational models.⁷ He sees this discipline turning towards *culture* as a key theological category—suggesting that this is “a positive move because it means that theologians are tending to see “ideas” about God as somehow connected and conditioned by historical and social realities.”⁸

In moving towards a post-correlational approach to theology and human experience, practical theology remains committed to what adherents such as Helen Cameron have identified as its central task: “to propose anew the deep connectedness of the Christian theological tradition and human experience.”⁹ This deep connectedness means that theology is not something that is detached from practice, or something to be “correlated” with data generated through other fields of knowledge such as social analysis, but rather theology is actually deeply embedded within human practices. Significantly, the recognition of this deep connectedness also situates practical theology as promising discipline for the pursuit of knowledge in a universe that—as Newman suggests—is intimately knit together.

¹ John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, ed. Frank M. Turner (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), p. 45.

² David F. Ford, “Introduction to Modern Christian Theology,” in *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology Since 1918*, ed. David F. Ford and Rachel Muers, (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005).

³ Ford, “Modern Christian Theology,” p. 2.

⁴ Ford, “Modern Christian Theology,” p. 2.

⁵ Ford, “Modern Christian Theology,” pp. 2-3.

⁶ Pete Ward, *Participation and Mediation: A Practical Theology for the Liquid Church* (London: SCM Press, 2008), p. 39.

⁷ Ward also sees this as a trend in modern theology as well, putting forward George Lindbeck, Kathryn Tanner, and Nicholas Healy as examples of theologians moving beyond correlational models. He puts forward Elaine Graham as an example of a practical theologian moving beyond correlational approaches. See: Ward, *Participation and Mediation*, pp. 40-43; 46-47.

⁸ Ward, *Participation and Mediation*, p. 47.

⁹ Helen Cameron, Deborah Bhatti, Catherine Duce, James Sweeney, Clare Watkins, *Talking About God in Practice: Theological Action Research and Practical Theology* (London: SCM Press, 2010), p. 13.

Music, Morals, and the Voice of Authority

GLORIA J. THURMOND

As a participant in the Seton Hall University 2013 Faculty Summer Seminar which was focused around John Henry Newman's text, *Idea of the University*, I was drawn to the view put forth by Dr. Kevin Mongrain, seminar facilitator, that a life informed by the practice of faith, prayer, and spiritual devotion was necessary to one's ability to act with moral authority and authenticity in the intellectual and academic pursuits of the University.

From his interpretation of Newman's text, Dr. Mongrain argued that the ability to discern the right relationship between an academic discipline and the pre-eminence of Theology must reflect a commitment to the Catholic faith on the part of the University disciplines and faculty, which, in turn, affects integrity and balance in a University education for students.

The fundamental disposition of Newman, as understood by Dr. Mongrain, is that a foundation of faith is contingent to authority and authenticity in the teaching of the various University disciplines. This understanding is supported by Newman's statement that [the] "most loving Providence...has on rational beings imprinted the moral law, and given them power to obey it, imposing on them the duty of worship and service."¹

According to Dr. Mongrain, Newman's idea of the University is that, as a Catholic academic community of arts and sciences, it needs to be infused with the knowledge of God through the foundation of faith. This faith is nurtured through prayer and saintly devotion and, as present through the regulatory system of Theology, as a core discipline in the University curriculum. From this understanding, Dr. Mongrain maintains that it is through one's direct relationship with God that one cultivates the sense of awareness of moral principle, which informs and guides the conscience. Consequently, the essential task of the University, according to Dr. Mongrain, is to "cure and redeem the intellect."

Newman's explanation of Theology as "the Science of God, or the truths we know about God systematized," conclusively states that [Theology] "teaches of a Being infinite, yet personal; all-blessed, yet ever operative; absolutely separate from the creature, yet in every part of the creation at every moment."² "... So it is in the intellectual, moral, social, and political world: Man, with his motives and works, his languages, his propagation, [and] his diffusion, is from [God]."³

This suggests that the role of Theology in the University, that of cultivating holiness and awareness of the moral principle through the system of religious faith, offers an open door for the education of third millennial Catholic university students where opportunities for recognizing the moral principle and for developing intellectual maturity have been greatly compromised by the pervasive secularism of popular culture.

Similar to the nineteenth century cultural environment of John Henry Newman, the high tide of secularism present at the dawn of the twenty-first century, with its strong feature of pop cultural imitation as a prominent characteristic, competes with the still small voice of moral principle that is intrinsic to human life, and that guides one in the expressions of truth and virtue.

Fostering awareness in University students of moral principle may best be engaged by teachers who represent awareness of moral principle and self-authenticity through the teaching of their respective academic disciplines. Through a demonstration of moral autonomy, intellectual curiosity, and academic discipline, teachers would be able to guide students toward their own expression of moral autonomy and the experience of self-authenticity. This type of education is that which, according to Newman, "gives [students] a clear conscious view of their own opinions and judgments, a truth in developing them, an eloquence in expressing them, and a force in urging them."⁴

Leo Tolstoy, having taken a teaching position in a peasant school, relates his moral dilemma as a teacher through the following passages from his autobiography *Confession*:

In reality I was ever revolving round one and the same insoluble problem, which was: how to teach without knowing what to teach. In the higher spheres of literary activity I had realized that one could not teach without knowing what, for I saw that people all taught differently, and by quarrelling among themselves only succeeded in hiding their ignorance from one another. But, here, with

peasant children, I thought to evade this difficulty by letting them learn what they liked. It amuses me now when I remember how I shuffled in trying to satisfy my desire to teach, while in the depth of my soul I knew very well that I could not teach anything needful for I did not know what was needful. After spending a year at schoolwork I went abroad a second time to discover how to teach others while myself knowing nothing.

My question – that which at the age of fifty brought me to the verge of suicide – was the simplest of questions, lying in the soul of every man from the foolish child to the wisest elder: It was a question without an answer to which one cannot live, as I had found by experience. It was: “What will come of what I am doing today or shall do tomorrow? What will come of my whole life?”⁵

Later, Tolstoy recognizes his moral crisis of meaning as symptomatic of his earlier disavowal of religious faith.

Newman writes that He [i.e., the Creator], “has stamped upon all things ... their respective natures, and has given them their work and mission. ... and has on rational beings imprinted the moral law, and given them power to obey it, imposing on them the duty of worship and service, searching and scanning them through and through with his omniscient eye, and putting before them a present trial and a judgment to come.”⁶

My understanding of Dr. Mongrain’s interpretation of Newman’s statement is that teaching without moral authority, which is cultivated and nurtured through an active life of prayer and spiritual devotion, leads to spiritual disorientation, an existential despair, and to a situation where teaching is experienced as a series of disconnected exercises devoid of meaning.

At the beginning of twentieth century Western art culture was changing in a direction that was new and not well understood by most. The transformation was driven by the influence of globalization, technology, media, multiculturalism, commercialism, the increased emphasis on visual media and various philosophical, ideological and sociological developments.

Perhaps the most significant philosophical change surrounding attitudes about the arts was that religion, for so long the “moral compass” of society, was no longer the potent force that it once was in guiding society in the matters of morality and ethics. One result of an increasingly secular society was that artists

were seemingly less aware or unconcerned with the moral and ethical power of the arts and, according to American philosopher/essayist Allan Bloom,⁷ in many instances had slipped into a relativist mindset regarding their creative endeavors.

Early twentieth-century German composer, Paul Hindemith, wrote the following regarding the state of Modern music in the first half of the century:

There are composers who flatly deny the ethic power of music, nor do they admit any moral obligation on the part of those writing.⁸

For Hindemith, the composer who has become aware of music as a beacon that reveals truth and beauty,

will then know about musical inspiration and how to touch validly the intellectual and moral depths of our soul. All the ethic power of music will be at his command and he will use it with a sense of moral responsibility. ... This life in and with music, being essentially a victory of external forces and a final allegiance to spiritual sovereignty, can only be a life of humility.⁹

It is significant to note that, in the foregoing passage, Hindemith was not speaking from a position of religious faith, but from his realization of that which he was experiencing as the fragmentation of twentieth-century musical experimentalism from the aesthetic categories of beauty and truth. Hindemith's critique was a moral and philosophical disposition through a secular lens toward experimentalist musical composition, which he believed had become detached from "sensible communication."

Among the several courses that I teach as a senior faculty associate in the Music Program at Seton Hall University, Beginning Voice classes for general students and Private Voice lessons for music majors and minors comprise most of my schedule. On the first day of class, I tell my students that the overarching objective for the course is that they find "their own voice." My definition of voice is that it is "the only instrument made by God," and that each voice is a unique vocal instrument. The students are told that their voice is the product of their unique vocal physiological and psychological makeup without which the world, as God intended it, is not complete.

The question that I pose to my voice students that reflects an important goal of singing is this: Does anyone feel better for your having sung your song? Singing, ultimately, is about the inspiration, expression, and the transformation of the heart and mind through our divine gifts of creativity and imagination.

Newman writes that “Music ... is a high minister of the Beautiful and the Noble,” and that [it] is the “special attendant and handmaid of Religion.” Accordingly, it may be understood that Music is not an end in itself. But rather, it is the creative energy of Music that has the capacity to connect Earth to Heaven, thereby making direct communication possible between the human and the Divine.

The message of Pope John Paul II in his April 4, 1999 pastoral *Letter to Artists* is supportive of Newman’s view as is reflected in the following quotation:

there is therefore an ethic, even a spirituality of artistic service, which contributes in its way to the life and renewal of a people. It is precisely this to which the well-known poet Cyprian Norwid seems to allude in declaring that “beauty is to inspire us for work, and work is to raise us up.” ... Humanity in every age, and even today, looks to works of art to shed light upon its path and its destiny.¹⁰

Matthew 7:29 states that “[Jesus] was teaching them as one having *authority*, not as their scribes.”¹¹ Taking the latter quotation of John Paul II and the Matthew passage together, Newman might suggest that Jesus reveals how faith is nourished by the word of God, how the mind is illumined through the gifts of God, and how action is inspired by the love of God. The Catholic University, as the daughter of the Church, bears within its life and mission the responsibility to support the divine work of the Church, which was begun through the life, teachings, and the love demonstrated by Jesus Christ.

The *voice of authority* through which Jesus spoke was expressed from his faith in God the Creator of all beings and of moral law that, according to Newman, [God] “has stamped on [all] rational beings.”¹² Therefore, it follows that the primary role of the third millennial Catholic University and that of its faculty is that of modeling moral authority through the teaching of every discipline of the academic curriculum.

As a University teacher of voice studies, my teaching strategy involves helping voice students to connect the discovery and exploration of their authentic singing voice to reflection on being an authentic person. The thought,

reflection, and practice required in the act of balancing the psychological-physiological interior processes and the resulting exterior vocal sound provide a natural “open door” to the mind and heart of the student.

The vocal preparatory exercises required for students to experience their authentic singing voice are parallel to those required in devotional reflection and contemplation. Diaphragmatic breathing, mental stillness, inward attentiveness, and conscious awareness which are pre-requisite to making a beautiful vocal sound also can potentially guide students toward the experience of their own moral autonomy with its accompanying authoritative voice. The literary gem of wisdom attributed to St. Augustine, *to sing is to pray twice*, is fundamentally true.

Newman’s idea of the University contributes to the “re-membering and renewal of the whole community,” according to Dr. Mongrain. Through its stewardship of moral authority, its trusteeship of many spiritual and intellectual gifts, and its servant leadership on behalf of the common good, the Catholic University, in solidarity with the Church, is the institution through which God continues to reconcile the world to Himself toward renewal and redemption.

1. John Henry Newman, *Idea of the University*, Discourse III, p. 63

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., Discourse III, p. 64

4. Ibid., Discourse VII, p. 10

5. Leo Tolstoy, *Confession*, Christianity and Culture in Dialogue, second edition, ed. Anthony Scigliano, Ki Joo Choi, and Peter Savastano, Seton Hall University: Kendall Hunt Publishing, 2013, pp. 215 – 219.

6. Newman, Discourse III, p. 7

7. Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988 (e-book)

8. Paul Hindemith, *A Composer’s World: Horizons and Limitations*, New York, NY: Schott, 2000 (e-book)

9. David Dubal, *The Essential Canon of Classical Music*, MacMillan: 2001 (e-book)

10. John Paul II, *Letter to Artists*, April 4, 1999

11. New American Bible, *Matthew 7:29*, New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1991

12. Newman, Discourse III, 7

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