

2011

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7-1-2011

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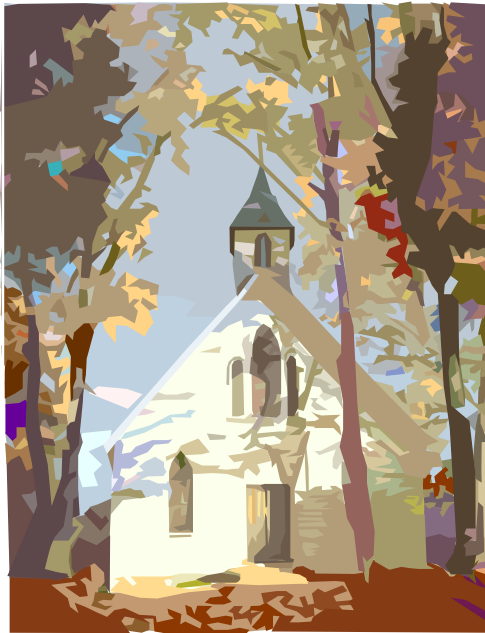
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“JOHN HENRY NEWMAN”



**2011 Summer Seminar
Center for Catholic Studies
Seton Hall University**

FACULTY SUMMER SEMINAR - MAY 2011
"JOHN HENRY NEWMAN"

FACILITATOR: DR. CYRIL O'REGAN, UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME



MAY 24, 25 AND 26, 2011
8:45 A.M. — NOON
THIRD FLOOR LOUNGE OF LEWIS HALL
(SEMINARY)

On September 19, 2010, John Henry Newman — Cardinal Newman — was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI, thus moving one step closer to sainthood in the Roman Catholic Church. It is timely, then, to celebrate Newman with a three-day seminar on a selection of his writings. Newman was a prolific writer of essays, sermons, and books on a tremendous variety of topics, including, *The Development of Christian Doctrine*, *The Idea of a University*, *The Apologia pro vita sua* and *The Grammar of Assent*.

We are truly fortunate to have Dr. Cyril O'Regan, Husiking Professor of Theology at Notre Dame, as our presenter for this seminar. O'Regan has specific interests in the intersection of continental philosophy and theology, religion and literature, mystical theology, and postmodern thought. A prolific writer, O'Regan has published four books: *The Heterodox Hegel*, *Gnostic Return in Modernity*, *Gnostic Apocalypse: Jacob Beohme's Haunted Narrative*, and *The Spaces of Apocalyptic*. Two volumes are forthcoming on the theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar.

Since 1998, the Annual Faculty Summer Seminar has provided the opportunity for faculty to reflect in depth on topics central to the purpose of learning and teaching at Seton Hall University. Participants will receive a stipend of \$300 for the seminar. Participating faculty will be expected to discuss certain texts and to write a short article about the topic from their own perspective and discipline. **Apply by indicating your interest to Professor Anthony Sciglitano, Chair of the Department of Religious Studies, at (973) 275-5847 or anthony.sciglitano@shu.edu. The deadline for indicating your interest is April 25, 2011.**

*Open to all faculty,
limited to 20 participants;
first come, first serve.*

 CENTER FOR
CATHOLIC STUDIES
SETON HALL UNIVERSITY
*This seminar is co-sponsored by the
Center for Catholic Studies and the
Center for Vocation and Servant Leadership*

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The Savior or the Saved: Newman and Survival at Auschwitz

Beth Bloom

Cyril O'Regan's lectures on John Henry Newman have brought to my mind the writings of Viktor Frankl, concentration camp survivor, psychiatrist, and author of *Man's Search for Meaning*¹ and the psychotherapeutic doctrine, logotherapy. Newman's and Frankl's particular philosophical approaches to the meaning of human life sparked my interest in comparing the two.

Both assert that each of us has a mission, and that mission is sacrosanct. According to Newman, that mission is for one to be saved, to be close to God, which is achieved through a combination of intellect and imagination and expressed through revelation or the mediation of Christ.² Frankl understands mission to be an end in itself, the objective of man's existence and, ultimately, survival. This essay examines briefly how the acceptance of Christianity (God's work) and the natural urge for survival both function ultimately as expressions of mission.

According to John Henry Newman, there are three channels through which nature informs our knowledge of God: our own minds, the voice of mankind, and the course of human knowledge and affairs.³ Perhaps the most affecting is our own mind, or Conscience, its alter-ego, which maintains for us the capacity to interpret and apply the efficacy of outside stimulus in our search for truth. This Conscience avails us the knowledge of God and the attendant moral code by which we must live. Societal changes, industrialization, nationalization, and the resultant denaturation of religion erode this code and our sense of the goodness of God. "I take our natural perception of right and wrong as the standard for determining the characteristics of Natural religion and I use the religious rites and traditions which are actually found in the world, only so far as they agree with our moral sense," says Newman.⁴

Perhaps the ultimate manifestation of the denaturation of religion was Auschwitz, one of the most notoriously horrific concentration camps in Poland during the Second World War, -a paragon of sadistic human behavior. "It is very difficult for an outsider to grasp how very little

value was placed on human life in camp."⁵ Prisoners were kept in unheated, filthy conditions; capricious guards shot innocent prisoners at will; bedraggled captives, protected only by ragged uniforms and decaying shoes, were forced at gunpoint to pull carts filled with emaciated, dying prisoners for miles, often in the snow. He adds, "Everything that was not connected with the immediate task of keeping oneself and one's closest friends alive lost its value."⁶

How would Newman diagnose life at Auschwitz, and what would be his prescription for moral certitude? He might suggest that the breakdown of community and morality in the modern, external world, to which he often refers, mirrors those issues in microcosm in the concentration camp, but that, despite the ghastly conditions created therein, human Conscience and moral sense could safely reside in those blessed with Christianity.

Both Newman and Frankl seem to agree that living a good life is not the secret to being saved. Real assent involves transformation of self. It is an internal process. Merit does not equal salvation, neither in the camps nor in the outside world. One must take responsibility for one's salvation, with God and within the camps. Here one can see the juxtaposition between the redeemed and the rescued.

According to Frankl, responsibility is the very essence of human existence. "Everything can be taken from a man but one thing; . . . to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."⁷ Man can make an inner decision to overcome external horror by retaining his human dignity. This "...spiritual freedom—which cannot be taken away—makes life meaningful and purposeful," he says.⁸ If one cannot change the cause of his or her suffering, one can still change his or her attitude "by facing a fate which one cannot change but may rise above and by so doing change himself and turn personal tragedy into triumph."⁹ Frankl concluded that those prisoners who responded to their condition by allowing fate to take over avoided responsibility; such apathy in these conditions was a shortcut to death.¹⁰

Similarly, Newman might assert that the moral code induced by Conscience could inure camp victims from physical horror with its own version of “spiritual freedom”. The notion of sin and its intrinsic hatefulness prepare a person for the “evidences of Christianity, which recognize the divine presence of God, a belief in the worth of the soul, the momentousness of the unseen world, an understanding that, in proportion as we partake in our own persons of the attributes which we admire in Him, we are dear to Him,” he notes.¹¹ Moral obligation is the voice of God and represents the meaning of life. Holiness is His gift. Could that gift help those in the concentration camps? Frankl seems to believe so: “In the concentration camp, only the men who allowed their inner hold on their moral and spiritual selves to subside eventually fell victim to the camp’s degenerating influences.”¹² “The consciousness of ones’ inner value is anchored in higher, more spiritual things, and cannot be shaken by camp life.”¹³

Both men assert that devotion to something other than the self is that which saves. To Frankl, “everyone has his own specific vocation or mission in life to carry out a concrete assignment, which demands fulfillment. It is life’s mission”¹⁴ [such as his own work on logotherapy], but also the image and love of his wife. “A man who becomes conscious of the responsibility he bears toward a human being who affectionately waits for him, or to an unfinished work, will never be able to throw away his life. He knows the ‘why’ for his existence, and will be able to bear almost any ‘how’.”¹⁵ Newman believes that it is the gift of holiness, the sense of moral obligation, from God, which allows humans to focus on an objective far beyond the self, despite adversity:

“Yes, so it is; realize it, my brethren; -- everyone who breathes, high and low, educated and ignorant, young and old, man and women, has a mission, has a work. We are not sent into this world for nothing; we are not born at random;...God sees every one of us; He creates every soul, He lodges it in the body, one by one, for a purpose. He needs ... every one of us; we are all equal in His sight, and we are placed in our different ranks and stations... to labour in them for Him. As Christ has His work, we too have ours.”¹⁶

Thus both would agree that one’s life is defined by much more than experience; commit-

ment to life’s tasks, goals and mission provide justification and meaning. Rather than asking “what do I expect from life?” perhaps one should ask, “what does life expect from me?”¹⁷

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²Newman, John Henry, “An Essay in Aid of A Grammar of Assent,” in *A Grammar of Assent*. Edited by Charles Frederick Harrold (New York: Longmans, Green & Co), 374.

³(Newman 296-297)

⁴(Ibid. 318)

⁵(Frankl 73)

⁶(Ibid. 70)

⁷(Ibid. 86)

⁸(Ibid. 87)

⁹(Ibid. 90)

¹⁰(Ibid. 170)

¹¹(Newman 317)

¹²(Frankl 90)

¹³(Ibid. 83)

¹⁴(Ibid. 131)

¹⁵(Ibid. 101)

¹⁶Newman, John Henry, “Discourse 6. God’s Will the End of Life. Discourses to Mixed Congregations,” in *Newman Reader—Works of John Henry Newman* (The National Institute for Newman Studies, 2007), {112}.

¹⁷(Frankl 98)

Newman, “Liberalism,” and the Early Church

Nancy Enright

In the Catholic Studies Seminar of 2011, co-sponsored by the Center for Vocation and Servant Leadership and conducted by Dr. Cyril O'Regan of Notre Dame University, the topic of Newman's “anti-liberal” stance recurred several times. In Newman's “Position of my Mind since 1845” (*Apologia Pro Vita Sua*) he talks about how the definition of the word “liberalism” has changed even since his own youth, when it named a periodical created by Lord Byron. Next, Newman says, it was “a theological school.” Now, at the time of Newman's writing, it is, “nothing else than that deep, plausible skepticism,...the development of human reason, as practically exercised by the natural man.”¹ In the discussion, some of us raised concerns about Newman being perhaps less vocal about some of the issues addressed by the “liberalism” of his day than other saints and contemporary clergy. However, Dr. O'Regan, and others, clarified that for Newman the government linked with even some positive liberal policies of the day was also linked with the oppression of Catholics and of Ireland, and the kind of rational skepticism that Newman abhorred and referred to in the quote above in regard to the definition of the term. What one must be very careful about doing is assuming, based on his attacks on liberalism, that Newman would be a “conservative” in the sense the word has in America today. What I would argue is that for Newman the true path lies much deeper than the so-called conservative politics of today or of his own day, though he did identify more with the Tories than the Whigs. However, it would seem from the sampling of his writings that we read during the seminar that the heart of Newman's beliefs is rooted in his deep and abiding love for the early Church and his desire to bring the type of Christianity lived then into the life of the contemporary Church of his own time.

Twenty-first century Americans, whether “conservative” or “liberal” would find much in the writings of Newman to challenge some of our basic assumptions. For example, in his “Notes” entitled “Liberalism” Newman challenges the basic principles under which America was founded; in #16, he gives as a principle of liberalism: “It is

lawful to rise in arms against legitimate princes,” and in #17: “The people are the legitimate source of power” and “Universal Suffrage is among the natural rights of man.” Apparently, Newman would challenge both of these positions. The American Revolution and our whole system of government would seem to be rooted in exactly those two ideas, and certainly neither “conservatives” nor “liberals” of today would argue with either of them. However, I am not sure that these differences with Newman are as important as the sweeping challenge of Newman's remarks about wealth and notoriety, words extremely relevant to today's society:

This is what I am insisting on, not what they actually do or what they are, but what they revere, what they adore, what their gods are. Their god is mammon; I do not mean to say that all seek to be wealthy, but that all bow down before wealth. Wealth is that to which the multitude of men pay an instinctive homage. They measure happiness by wealth; and by wealth they measure respectability.”²

Such words are hard to classify in terms of today's classifications of “liberal” and “conservative,” though they would seem to me to be even more of a challenge to the right than to the left. More to the purpose, they go against many of the assumptions of our popular (as opposed to our political) culture, and this challenge becomes even more telling for us, living in the era of reality TV shows and the e-channel, in Newman's attack on the modern love of “notoriety”:

All men cannot be notorious: the multitudes who thus honour notoriety, do not seek it themselves; nor am I speaking of what men do, but how they judge; yet instances do occur from time to time of wretched men, so smitten with passion for notoriety, as even to dare in fact some detestable and wanton act, not from love of it, not from liking or dislike of the person against whom it is directed, but simply in order thereby to gratify this impure desire of being talked about, and gazed upon. “These are thy gods, O Israel!”³

Our whole culture that worships fame and money, and whose politics, going beyond even the sharply divided party lines, seem to reflect an inordinate reverence for these two worldly concerns, is deeply critiqued by Newman's statements.

In light of this critique of his own and, implicitly, our own culture, what is Newman advocating instead? Though I am far from an expert on Newman, I can say that the one aspect of his thought that struck me most powerfully in the seminar was his love of the early Church. This love was not simple nostalgia, by any means, nor was it mere "conservativism" in the sense of keeping things the same because the Church of Newman's day had traveled far from its origins. Newman's early Evangelicalism, when he encountered Christ in a personal way that felt more real to him "than the fact that he had hands or feet," as Msgr. Liddy recounted in the seminar, led him to a search for a faith that was most linked to the Source of Love whom he encountered in that moment. This search led Newman through the high Anglicanism of the Oxford Movement and ultimately to the Roman Catholic Church, as the church, he believed, most connected with Christ historically and sacramentally. However, he strove in his writings to bring his beloved Church back to its roots. This love for the early Church is clearly seen in the passionate way Newman writes about the early Church in *The Grammar of Assent*.

Interestingly, Newman's account of the early church links powerfully with his critique of the modern (i.e. nineteenth century) pursuit of wealth and "notoriety," as well as conveying a profound challenge to our own society and its values. Newman points out, "still the rule held, that the great mass of Christians were to be found in those classes which were of no account in the world, whether on the score of rank or of education."⁴ Newman quotes the mockeries of the "low-born Christians," such as the description of the early Church by Caecilius: "The greater part of you are worn with want, cold, toil, and famine; men collected from the lowest dregs of the people; ignorant, credulous women;" "unpolished boors, illiterate, ignorant even of the sordid arts of life; they do not understand even civil matters, how can they understand divine?" Newman says that even the Fathers themselves describe the early Church similarly, as in the quote he gives

from Jerome: "They are gathered not from the Academy or *Lyceum*, but from the low populace."⁵ Newman, rising from Oxford (the Academy or *Lyceum* of his day), speaks with the deepest respect and even awe of these uneducated but powerful believers. "How came such men to be converted?" he asks, and "being converted, how came such men to overturn the world?"⁶

Newman speaks of the sufferings of the early Christians, as recounted by Tacitus, who tells of the persecution under Nero: "Mockery was added to death; clad in skins of beasts, they were torn to pieces by dogs; they were nailed up to crosses; they were made inflammable..." He recounts Pliny's letters to the emperor Trajan about how he handles Christians accused under his governance, saying that he asks them to offer sacrifice to the gods and "wine and incense to the Emperor's image," and to curse the name of Christ. If they do these things, Pliny says, "I let them go; for I am told nothing can compel a real Christian to do any of these things."⁷ Newman goes on to recount in page after page stories of these suffering and devoted early Christians. He tells of Polycarp, martyred at the age of eighty-six, and of Blandina, a slave, tortured and killed in the persecution at Lyon, as recounted by Eusebius. Newman gets to the heart of the matter by looking at where the early Christians got their strength: "How clearly do we see all through this narrative what it was which nerved them for the combat! If they love their brethren, it is in the fellowship of their Lord; if they look for heaven, it is because He is the Light of it."⁸

For Newman, the relationship with Christ, into which he entered at the age of fifteen, was the central motivation of the early Church. This relationship leads to a community that goes beyond all definitions of "liberal" or "conservative." What could be more conservative than returning to the very roots of a two thousand year old faith, rooted in the Jewish tradition that is thousands of years older? However, what could be more liberal than a faith that enjoins a lifestyle that is beyond class and status, that enjoins giving away property and a radical sharing of wealth? A lifestyle in which "the one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little" (Ex. 16:18). The early Christians did not have class conflicts because "there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or

houses sold them, brought the money from the sales ³⁵ and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need" (Acts 4:34-35). Again, "All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2: 44-47). This is the world of the early Church that inspired Newman. Rooted in the personal relationship with Christ that transformed his life, the early Christians created a society that was unique in its time but not fully practiced in our times, or in most proceeding times (including Newman's). The seminar and Newman's writings call contemporary believers to a faith like theirs.

¹ *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*. Ed. Martin J. Svaglic. Oxford: Clarendon, 1967, 234.

² "Discourses to Mixed Congregations – Discourse 5." *Newman Reader*. The National Institute for Newman Studies, 2007, 4.

³ "Discourses to Mixed Congregations – Discourse 5." *Newman Reader*, 5.

⁴ *Grammar of Assent*. Ed. Charles Frederick Harrold, 356.

⁵ *Grammar of Assent*, 357.

⁶ *Grammar of Assent*, 357.

⁷ *Grammar of Assent*, 359.

⁸ *Grammar of Assent*, 367.

Newman's Epistemology: Literal Saints

Jonathan Farina

Cyril O'Regan suggested during our seminar that one of the new cultural shifts John Henry Newman registers in *The Grammar of Assent* and other writings is the invalidation of the categories of holiness or saintliness and sin: Newman sensed that holiness and sin were no longer knowable and relevant subjects for nineteenth-century Britons. Victorian literary historians recognize this as one theological instance of a widespread epistemic and political shift, as I'll explain briefly below, but O'Regan's talk and our brief readings in *The Grammar of Ascent* made me suspect that Newman's response to this shift is not just akin to his fellow "sage," Thomas Carlyle's, but also to the realist novelists. Troubles with believing in holiness and sainthood were analogous to troubles believing in the work of fiction. And the language of both Newman and the realists responds to this with certain recognizable tropes that aspire to validate the epistemological authority of "assent" and "fiction."

A believer in Apostolic Succession, the transmission of Jesus's sacramental, ecclesiastical, and spiritual authority through the apostles through the bishops, Newman's notion of sainthood and Episcopal Church was a theological form of historicist inheritance: present Christians were tied to the history of Christians through the living church and its saints. This notion had its parallel in English notions of aristocracy as inherited obligation to shepherd the common classes, to improve the nation, but only, as the influential 18th-century MP and author Edmund Burke had it, with respectful allegiance to the past. For orators like Burke, there was no nation without a living past. And so, the attenuation of the aristocracy that was legislated in the Great Reform Act of 1832 in Britain, but globally instantiated in the emergence of the United States and in the French Revolutions, very naturally had its epistemic impact on British religious sentiment, as religion was, even in the age of doubt, a large part of everyday Victorian life: just as many Britons were beginning to wean themselves off of an implicit political faith in an aristocracy justified by inherited nobility of blood many lost spiritual faith in the sense of inherited holiness passing through bishops and saints.

The poet and philosopher Samuel Taylor-Coleridge fought against the cultural impact of this with an idea in *On the Constitution of Church and State*, a fairly widely read work in the Victorian period, of a "clerisy" class or "national church" composed of "the learned of all denominations ... the sages and professors of the law and jurisprudence; of medicine and physiology; of music; of military and civil architecture; of the physical sciences; with the mathematical as the common *organ* of the preceding; in short, all the so called liberal arts and sciences, the possession and application of which constitute the civilization of a country, as well as the Theological."¹ This body of individuals would be saints, so to speak, of "culture"—a concept that was then only just beginning to accrete the kinds of meanings it holds now—who would be responsible for maintaining the nation's historical identity and for furthering it, modeling it, for everyday Britons.

Where Newman promoted saints and holy days and Coleridge promoted a clerical class, Carlyle promoted "heroes," past and present. His *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (1840) characterized belief in heroes as a kind of secularized or at least non-denominational spirituality. Odin, Cromwell, Napoleon, Martin Luther, Shakespeare, Dante, Samuel Johnson, Rousseau, Robert Burns, John Knox, and Mahomet all model types of heroism—divines, prophets, priests, poets, kings, and men of letters.² And men of letters were the 19th-century embodiment of sainthood for Carlyle:

the Man of Letters is sent hither specially that he may discern for himself, and make manifest to us, this same Divine Idea: in every new generation it will manifest itself in a new dialect; and he is there for the purpose of doing that. Such is Fichte's phraseology; with which we need not quarrel. It is his way of naming what I here, by other words, am striving imperfectly to name; what there is at present no name for: The unspeakable Divine Significance, full of splendor, of wonder and terror, that lies in the being of

every man, of everything,—
the Presence of the God who
made every man and thing.
(186)

Carlyle recognizes that the cultural investment that was formally made in saints had been transferred to writing. Print bore the authority that saints and holiness had formerly held. Men of letters had, for better or worse, become the media of the past and the repositories of value.

But, unlike Coleridge, Carlyle did not want a nation of philosophizing. He also did not want a nation of skeptics and finicky, critical thinkers; he wanted believers and doers:

For the Scepticism, as I said, is not intellectual only; it is moral also; a chronic atrophy and disease of the whole soul. A man lives by believing something; not by debating and arguing about many things. A sad case for him when all that he can manage to believe is something he can button in his pocket, and with one or the other organ eat and digest! Lower than that he will not get. (206)

Newman clearly was not interested in replacing traditional saints and holiness with Carlyle's books and men of letters. But the style of his prose attests that he shared the new Victorian epistemology of faith with Carlyle and some of his men (and women) of letters. The epistemology underwriting Newman's own defense of belief was one that also underwrote 19th-century defenses of fiction and culture, of forms of knowing other than empiricism, numeracy, and the other "fact"-based arguments that Newman rebuts in *The Grammar of Assent*.

Victorianists well know Newman's prose for its prophetic gusto and passion, features that we typically rely upon to compare him to Carlyle, Matthew Arnold, and John Ruskin. But there are other, more subtle features that connect him to figures like George Eliot, Dickens, G. H. Lewes, and other novelists that we now denominate "realist." Realism emerged in England as a named concept in the early 1850s with John Ruskin's *Modern Painters* and essays by George Lewes and George Eliot in the *Westminster Review*.³ The explicit tenet is a commitment to recording "things as they are," common people and their common

lives, with sympathy for all their inglorious ordinariness. Newman certainly shares this in his humility and sympathy.

But he employs some other more subtle and complex tropes that also distinguish realism. Probability is first and foremost of these features. Newman holds that "from probabilities we can construct legitimate proof" (312); he writes of "the legitimate force of this antecedent probability" (320); and founds arguments on "what is so probable in anticipation" (327). The probable was a hallmark trope in the history of the novel in England, especially in early reviews of Austen and in earlier justification of the epistemic category of fiction, itself, as form of virtual reality or imagined or probable truth.⁴ Novelists had to justify fiction as a moral medium and a source of truth because it was imagined, not recorded from experience. Analogously, revealed religion is only selectively revealed and so it was open to the same critiques as fiction was and therefore ready to adopt a similar vocabulary of justification. Newman also invokes the language of "mutual reference," "fit," and "variety" (309) characteristic of conservative early 18th-century moral philosophy (Samuel Clarke, for example) and 19th-century natural history ("fitness" and "variation" would be key terms for Darwin) as well as Victorian realism: Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend*, for example, or *Middlemarch*'s the social web, for another.

These all deserve lengthy attention, but I want to focus my last few remarks on a more subtle feature of realist style: suspense. Caroline Levine has recently described suspense as a key feature of the realist aesthetic. She remarks how John Ruskin in "the clearest theoretical articulation of the epistemological seriousness of narrative suspense ... prescribes the experimental method in order to encourage his readers into a permanently suspenseful relationship to the world."⁵ Newman's *Grammar of Assent* also teems with suspense and asks readers to cultivate a suspenseful orientation to the world. Yet Newman's prose affirms a salutary suspense affiliated neither with skepticism nor with scientific doubt, but with *belief*: "the anticipation ... the expectation ... This presentiment" (321); "looking out for it" (330); "faithful expectation ... a condition of their covenant" (331); "the promise forfeited and the promise fulfilled" (333); "exceeding expectation!" (361); "I have been forestalling all

along ... necessarily forestalling it ... the fulfillment of the promise" (370-1), and so on.

Such suspense inheres in Christian theology, in the promise of a messiah and the promise of salvation, however the frequency of Newman's reiteration of it suggests a parallel between *The Grammar of Assent* and the realist novelists. Both validated kinds of knowledge that were losing authority to statistics, physical sciences, and other modern modes of fact-, money-, and reality-making. Suspense reinforces Newman's concern with maintaining a sense of the past and of embodying that past in saints who'll entail their holiness to the future, and yet it does so by subtly invoking the affiliation to skeptical experimental science that Levine tracks in realist fiction. One might liken this to the Kantian "regulative," the imperative to behave "as if" we knew God for certain,⁶ for the grammar of "as if" produces the suspenseful gap that Levine describes; but where the Kantian "regulative" concedes a horizon of knowability—we can only ever know these things "as if" they were true—I think for Newman, like for the realists, this was a suspense whose conclusion felt guaranteed, if "necessarily forestalled." That is a different form of knowledge than the suspense of the empiricists; it is the truth of fiction and the truth of Newman's genuine "assent." And it required heroic men of letters to articulate in an age that seemed poised to praise the fact and forgo the "holy."

¹ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *On the Constitution of Church and State* (London: Hurst, Chance, and Co., 1830), 47.

² Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1840).

³ See [George Eliot], "Art and Belles Lettres," *Westminster Review* 65: 128 (April 1856), 625-650 and George Henry Lewes, "Realism in Art: Recent German Fiction," *Westminster Review* 70:138 (October, 1858), 488-518.

⁴ See, for starters, Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987) and *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), and Douglas Lane Patey, *Probability and Literary Form: Philosophic Theory and Literary Practice in the Augustan Age* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

⁵ Caroline Levine, *The Serious Pleasures of Suspense: Victorian Realism and Narrative Doubt* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003), 55.

⁶ See Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, particularly I.8 and I.9.

A Grammar for Consent

Al Frank

The 19th century classical education John Henry Newman experienced is not even a distant memory for today's university students. Contemporary course offerings range far beyond anything Newman could have conceived, especially in the sciences, business and finance and politics and diplomacy. Multiple media compete for attention in a Wi-Fi world where few fingers refrain from playing symphonies in 4G or many heads remain disconnected for long from a pair of ear buds. This is nothing to regret, because the ability to command information at light-speed is of enormous benefit.

What remains constant is the challenge of making prudent judgments about the data's value, personally and to society. In helping with this discernment, today's universities are no different from those in Newman's time, especially at schools where religion is a component of the core curriculum. As Durham University's Gerald Loughlin noted, "Newman argued that there is no university where there is no theology" (Ker 223). Truly, the religious perspective is essential in molding the "servant leaders" Seton Hall University aims to cultivate.

By exploring the scriptural, historical, theological and the sacramental, students can achieve a more advanced intellectual grounding in religious tradition than provided in most homes, parish catechetical programs and certainly in most high schools. In collaboration with classmates, there is the intellectual satisfaction – even joy – brought by the discovery of new concepts. When this leads to forming values and judgments, the exposure can inject an invaluable dynamic into the development of young adults at a time when they are likely to be more reflective and predisposed to build upon the experience. Extracurricular service can refine skills that bring to maturity the "servant leaders" sent forth at each baccalaureate commencement.

The best instructors will serve as intellectual guides and personal models in helping students embrace their full potential. Newman believed "the essential principle of the university is 'the professorial system,'" which provides "the living influence of one person on another, the

teacher on the taught" (Liddy, 24). "Books are important instruments in the consolidation and communication of this knowledge, but the influence of a teacher provides what books never can."

For this pattern of growth, Newman's life provides a model. Perhaps precociously, he was touched by an awareness of the divine at age 15. Yet, his questioning did not end and additional introspection led him from Anglicanism to his profession of faith in the Roman Catholic Church. Even more questioning led to a daunting ministry of evangelization. Newman's embrace of the one, true faith brought him a sense of fundamental rightness in finding his place in "the land of milk and honey" (Martin, 113).

For many of today's youth, the experience is just the opposite. They may be "cradle Catholics," or adherents to the religion of their parents, but, once they have completed rites-of-passage, like confirmation or bar/bat mitzvahs, few experience further growth in faith and many leave aside devotional practice. As a Catholic university, Seton Hall offers the opportunity to recover and enrich what lies in dormancy.

This building of competency in religion can be compared to the maturing of writing and reading skills, which is the objective of core English classes. Students are urged to find relationships among the assigned readings and to reflect on these links—and contrasts—in essays or research papers. The process emphasizes not the vapid spouting of opinion but the articulation of reasoned arguments based on academic evidence. Religious studies courses provide a similar template and the concomitant self-discovery can lead to the kind of introspection and conversion that hone maturity and servant leadership.

Essential is a curriculum that examines many voices and traditions as befits the diverse society in which we live and which our students will serve and lead. Msgr. Richard Liddy says Newman describes this as a "philosophical or theological attitude or openness" in *The Idea of a University*.

The Seton Hall core curriculum describes this as embracing “the questions central but not exclusive to the Catholic intellectual tradition.” In this way, Seton Hall provides the platform for developing the critical thinking that enables students to learn “how all the sciences and professions taught in the university relate to each other” in a process that spawns natural wisdom. Out of that can grow supernatural wisdom in which the person’s relationship with the universe—and God—can mature (Liddy, 26).

Catholicism remains the heart of the university’s identity. This ancient and universal tradition provides the fundamental frame-of-reference and comprises legitimate ground for academic inquiry.

Within this process, young adults are led to a deeper realization of what it means at Baptism to be immersed in eternal life and to become a daughter or son of God. From that understanding comes a deeper appreciation of how the divinized life is sustained and enriched by continuous access to the sacraments—those portals to the stream of grace—particularly the self-examination and growth provided in encountering Christ in confession and the nourishment He directly provides in the Eucharist.

There is in intellect— if not in fact—a link between classroom and chapel that can provide God’s daughters and sons a sense of their place in the communion in which they stand, even an impetus to wholehearted consent to living the Gospel. The blending of scriptural, historical, theological and sacramental comprehension is what advances the college inquiry beyond the religious instruction of the past. Discerning their rightful places within the Communion of Saints is what motivates many students to participate in DOVE, FOCUS, prayer groups and other Seton Hall programs of social service and evangelization.

Just as Newman’s life of continuous conversion is instructive, so is his era, because it is so much like our own. As Notre Dame’s Cyril O’Regan said during the faculty seminar’s second session, “the 19th century is the culture of now” with its focus on “this world, money, fame.” It is all there today as it was then: the outsized personalities, the divisions, even dueling media. Yet, the standard of Catholicism perdures. “Some persons speak of it (the church) as if it were a thing of

history, with only indirect bearings upon modern times; I cannot allow that it is a mere historical religion. Certainly it has its foundations in past and glorious memories, but its power is in the present.” (Newman 371)

“We’re not any different now,” O’Regan said.

Also abiding, no matter the era, is the college experience of maturing individual identity and finding one’s place in society. When these goals are earnestly pursued in the context of a university education steeped in the Catholic tradition, servant leadership and committed faith are more likely outcomes.

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Dr. O'Regan began by presenting John Newman as a prophet. In Hebrew a prophet is called a *nabi*, while its etymology is uncertain, a newer understanding of the root is simply "to speak, to utter words." The historic meaning of *nabi* established by biblical usage is "interpreter and mouthpiece of God". The source of the prophet's knowledge is Divine Revelation.¹

Newman speaks of his own knowledge of the truths of Christianity as a "*Revelatio revelata*"; it is a definite message from God to man distinctly conveyed by His chosen instruments, and to be received as such a message; and therefore to be positively acknowledged, embraced, and maintained as true, on the ground of its being divine, not as true on intrinsic grounds, not as probably true, or partially true, but as absolutely certain knowledge, certain in a sense in which nothing else can be certain, because it comes from Him who neither can deceive nor be deceived."²

Just as the prophet acknowledged the source of his revelation as Divine, "I am putting my words into your mouth," "Yahweh says this"; so Newman acknowledges a definite message from God.

The task of the prophet was to deliver the Word of the Lord to his hearers, the men of his own day. The task required the prophet to "read the signs of the times" to effectively frame his message. This message generally included accusation of failure to keep the Covenant, warnings of punishment to come, punishment, repentance, and return to Covenant values.

Whether eager to speak the Word of the Lord, as Isaiah, "Here I am Lord, Send me."; or reluctant, as Moses the first and greatest of Israel's prophets, "I am a slow speaker...Send anyone you will," and Jeremiah, "I am a child"; the prophet could not but speak the Word put into his mouth by God.

The future component of the prophet's message depended not on the ability of the prophet to "foresee the future," but rather on his knowledge of God and his confidence that God

would indeed fulfill his Covenant with his people. It was his knowledge of the Covenant, of Israel's past, which allowed the prophet to speak confidently of the future.

Dr. O'Regan grants Newman the prophetic mantle; it is in more of an equivocal than a univocal sense of the term. While Newman's own knowledge is a definite message from God it is mediated through His chosen instruments, the prophet's message is a direct communication from God himself. Recognizing this major difference between the two, in many other ways Newman is indeed a prophetic figure.

O'Regan cites first the evidence for Newman's prophetic motivation; Newman could not *not* speak the message, nor witness the variety of his output for over sixty years. Secondly, Newman was required to discern the times, and he found the times dire indeed. The problem as he saw it was the secularity of Christianity in society, a moralistic rationalism relying on a distorted sense of reason. Like Isaiah, Newman begins with a social critique, a diagnosis of the situation and then presents a prescription, a means to redress the situation. Newman finds the situation long in coming, starting with the reformers and most clearly exemplified in the writings of John Locke. The cultural diagnosis reveals that God is dead and society is focused on a narrow rationalistic morality.

In this situation, as Christianity makes peace with secularity, Christianity is beggared by the transaction. Holiness is no longer viewed as moral perfection in which man's actions play a role. Rather sanctity is a pure gift from God with God and Grace playing the only active role in the giving.

Newman's prescription is to focus on the modes of memory, to reclaim the Catholic tradition especially the authority of the Church and the Catholic practices of liturgy, sacraments, asceticism and prayer. For Newman, Roman Catholicism is the only real religion, the only force capable of stemming the rising tide of secularism. "Turn away from the Catholic Church, and to

whom will you go? It is your only chance of peace and assurance in this turbulent, changing world. There is nothing between it and skepticism.”³

According to O'Regan, Newman finds the Church “Too complex to fail.” I was reminded by this remark of G.K. Chesterton's (a fellow convert to Catholicism) description of the Church touching lightly on its complexity.

“It was certainly odd that the modern world charged Christianity at once with bodily austerity and artistic pomp. But then it was also odd, very odd that the modern world itself combined extreme bodily luxury with an extreme absence of artistic pomp. The modern man thought Becket's robe too rich and his meals too poor. But the modern man was really exceptional in history; no man before ever ate such elaborate dinners in such ugly clothes.

The fact that Swinburne was irritated at the unhappiness of Christians and yet more irritated at their happiness was easily explained. It no longer was a complication of diseases in Christianity, but a complication of diseases in Swinburne.

Its fierce crusaders and meek saints might balance each other; still the crusaders were very fierce and the saints were very meek, meek beyond all decency. The very people who reproached Christianity with the meekness and non-resistance of the monasteries were the very people who reproached it with the violence and valor of the Crusades. It was the fault of poor old Christianity (somehow or other) both that Edward the Confessor did not fight and that Richard Coeur de Leon did.”⁴

Chesterton continues for many more pages demonstrating how Christianity holds in its heart, not compromise or balance, but two opposite ideas, both at full strength: God and Man, Divine and Human, Three and One, Faith and Works, Grace and Nature, a Sinner Saved, Now and not Yet, Reason and Mystery. Too complex to fail.

One last thing I note, there seems to be a confluence, at least in my reading, of a new recognition of the necessary role of liturgy in enter-

ing and participating in the mystery that is at the center of our faith and theology.^{5 6}

¹ Catholic_Encyclopedia, online

² John Henry Newman, *A Grammar of Assent*, p. 294

³ Newman Reader- *Discourses to Mixed Congregations* p.283

⁴ G. K. Chesterton *Orthodoxy*, Kindle version Loc. 1218-1225

⁵ Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth, Part Two*, Kindle version

⁶ Karen Armstrong, *The Case for God*, Kindle version

Did Newman Go “Beyond Objectivism and Relativism”?

Anthony L. Haynor

The phrase, “beyond objectivism and relativism,” is taken from the title of Richard J. Bernstein’s much acclaimed book.¹ In this seminal work, Bernstein examines the efforts of contemporary philosophers (e.g. Gadamer, Habermas) in reframing what has often been put forward as a firm dichotomy between foundationalism and anti-foundationalism. In light of the seminar facilitated so expertly and so powerfully by Professor Cyril O’Regan, I would like to consider whether or not Newman should be included within this intellectual conversation. Does Newman contribute in a meaningful way to us getting “beyond objectivism and relativism?” While my answer is “Yes,” this project is fraught with difficulty, and in the effort to transcend or harmonize objectivism and relativism significant hurdles surface. This is no less the case with Newman as it is with other thinkers involved in this project.

Newman clearly gives primacy to the phenomenological basis of belief. A crucial question for him was not “What should we believe?” but rather “How do we believe?” Newman approaches this latter question by positing the “domain-specific” nature of knowledge. Human beings approach the Divine, the natural world, the aesthetic realm, and the moral realm by drawing on presuppositions, paradigms, and methodologies specific to each, and these presuppositions, paradigms, and methodologies are “incommensurable” to a significant extent. To take it one step further, the presuppositions, paradigms and methodologies drawn upon can very well be “incommensurable” within any given domain (so that there can be presuppositional, paradigmatic, and methodological disputes vis-à-vis our apprehension and comprehension of the Divine (within the discipline of theology), nature (within particular scientific disciplines), Beauty (within aesthetics) and Goodness (within ethics). From a phenomenological standpoint, how we apprehend and comprehend the reality (in its myriad forms) is dependent on “traditions” that make it plausible to us. Our “knowledge” of any given domain is linked inextricably to a “discourse.” For most of us most of the time our knowledge is “implicit,” that is, “taken-for-granted.” While in this mode of consciousness,

we do not adopt a “critical” stance in relation to it, that is, we do not feel obligated to give a formal “account” or “defense” of it (unless and until we are challenged to do so, or facts or experiences impel or compel us to bring our previously taken-for-granted presuppositions, paradigms, and methodologies to the level of self-conscious awareness and critical examination). The transition from “implicit” to “explicit” knowledge is one that is clearly valued by Newman, but he realized that in the normal course of events it is one that does not and need not occur. He also recognized that a preoccupation with “explicit” knowledge is the province in large part of “professional” theologians, scientists, aesthetic scholars, and ethicists.

For Newman, then, belief does not require demonstrative proof. If “implicit” (in which category most belief falls) then it is by definition not demonstrated. But, even “explicit” knowledge does not require demonstration. In attempting to make sense of what Newman said, it seems to me that knowledge as “implicit” is “plausible” as a taken-for-granted reality, and as “explicit” is “reasonable” as a judged reality.² In neither case is it a reality that is grounded in or requires demonstrative proof. Newman’s notion of belief (defined in terms of its plausibility or reasonableness) is a profoundly *communal* one. Christian belief, in particular, is necessarily grounded in a thick set of cultural practices which sustain it and help confer plausibility on it. Disciplined reflection on these practices enables Christianity to pass the test of reasonableness. Sacred scripture, the sacramental life, and the evolution of doctrine guided by recognized “guardians” of the faith all play an indispensable role in sustaining the plausibility and reasonableness of Christian belief. To the degree that these features of the tradition are gutted or delegitimized, plausibility and reasonableness will suffer. This was Newman’s great fear.

To this point, Newman seems to be arguing that belief (Christian or otherwise) must go through the “fiery brook of relativity.”³ How so? Belief seems to be defined in terms of that which strikes human beings as plausible (at the implicit

level) or reasonable (at the explicit level) given a particular communal frame of reference. What seems to be lacking is any common measure capable of determining the truth value of any given belief system. Newman's position leaves us with "horizons"⁴ that are incommensurable. There seems to be no "objectivist" possibility in Newman's stance. Now, there is no question that Newman believes that Christianity represents the fullness of truth. Such an assertion is clearly objectivist in tone. Yet, how can that fullness be proven or demonstrated after we are presented with the argument that beliefs are only plausible or reasonable in relation to a particular communal discourse. What Newman is saying is that an objectivist conclusion can only be reached from or through a relativistic starting point. Newman's "illative sense" refers to the cultivation of a state of mind that continually tests the plausibility and reasonableness of one's belief system.⁵ This requires entering into ongoing dialogue with other belief systems (within and between domains) in order to explore integrative possibilities. Newman's relativistic bent can be seen in his assertion that it is only in terms of the "old" that the "new" can be encountered. It is only through the prism of the paradigm to which one is already committed that an alternative framework or discourse can in any way be fused with it. For Newman, not only is Christianity both plausible and reasonable, but it is best positioned, so to speak, to incorporate other systems of cognitive, aesthetic, and moral belief. (This integrative and holistic vision was articulated in Newman's *Idea of a University*.) It is precisely out of a commitment to the plausibility and reasonableness of Christianity (a commitment that is sustained by its communal practices) that an expansive objective truth can begin to be uncovered.

Newman rejected the liberal (that is Enlightenment) prejudice against prejudice, which positioned him as a Counter-Enlightenment thinker. However, he argued that it is only out of a Christian prejudice that a more objective (non-prejudiced) truth is possible. In this sense, Newman did go beyond relativism and objectivism. But, did Newman show convincingly why one "prejudice" however plausible and reasonable is a more preferable starting point than another? Did he show how a Christian starting point leads to a more preferable end point than a non-Christian one? Rooting objectivism in the

soil of relativism is tricky indeed.

¹ Richard J. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983).

² See Joseph Dunne, *Back to the Rough Ground* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1993) for the argument that Newman's concept of reasoned judgment draws heavily on Aristotle's notion of phronesis.

³ See Ludwig Feuerbach, *Fiery Brook: Selected Writings* (Doubleday, 1973) and Peter L. Berger, *A Rumor of Angels* (Knopf Doubleday, 1970).

⁴ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*. Seabury Press, 1975.

⁵ See Frederick D. Aquino, *Communities of Informed Consent: Newman's Illative Sense and Accounts of Rationality* (Catholic University of America Press, 2004).

Newman's Liberalism

Eric M. Johnston

One can hardly read the works of Bl. John Henry Cardinal Newman (1801-95), especially his great autobiography, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, without being struck by his virulent anti-liberalism. Perhaps this was a sign of the times: Newman entered the Church in 1845, the first year of the pontificate of Bl. Pius IX, known by the Italian pun “Pio No-No”: the pope of the Syllabus of Errors. Yet Newman was seen in the Church of his age as something of a liberal himself, and has inspired a certain kind of liberalism in the century since his death.¹ We can better understand both Newman himself, and his prophetic read of the times, by distinguishing the kind of liberalism he criticized from the kind he promoted.

The most obvious place to look for Newman's critique of liberalism is to his “Note A,” entitled simply “Liberalism,” at the end of the *Apologia* (1856). It is noteworthy that he begins by expressing admiration for the French political figures Charles de Montalembert and Henri Lacordaire, who were a kind of liberal that he thinks he can call “conservative.”²

He defines liberalism as “the exercise of thought upon matters, in which, from the constitution of the human mind, thought cannot be brought to any successful issue, and therefore is out of place. . . . Liberalism then is the mistake of subjecting to human judgment those revealed doctrines which are in their nature beyond and independent of it.”³

He concludes with a kind of syllabus of errors of his own, abjuring propositions such as that science, including economic science, can overturn teachings of faith, including moral teachings; that education itself is the source of virtue; and, perhaps most controversial now, that the civil power has no role in maintaining religious truth. He seems to propose a vision of Church and State in which the State has no right to judge the Church, but the Church does have a right to be aided by the State—because, apparently, the highest truths are matters of authority, not of open inquiry.⁴

A broader condemnation of liberalism

comes out in the last chapter of *The Grammar of Assent* (1870). In context, his aim is to show how Christianity accords with the natural religion proposed by the conscience of people in every age. Along the way, however, he emphasizes the difference between what conscience proposes and what he believes to be the errors of modern “civilization.”⁵ The key point of natural religion as he thinks conscience presents it is our need to make atonement for sin and guilt. To this “severe aspect” he adds positive things such as the consolation of prayer; but he thinks any true religion needs to recognize our severe distance from God as of far greater importance than mere moral effort.⁶

False liberalism, it seems, differs from true religion in failing to see our vast need in relation to the highest things.

Yet we should not fail to see in Newman's own thought various strands that could themselves be called “liberal.” The very context of his condemnation of “civilized”—i.e., Victorian—religion comes in the context of commending both the natural aspirations of man, and his ability, through conscience, to discern the truth about God, views that stand in striking contrast to the Jansenism still so powerful in the Ireland and France of his day.⁷

Indeed, the central argument of *The Grammar of Assent* is that true assent to the faith requires not only submission to authority, but also a recognition that what authority teaches is true, or at least in line with truths, according to our own lights. True religion can never be merely assent to authority.

This central Newmanian insight casts Newman's condemnation of liberalism in a very different light. Newman condemns his contemporaries for thinking they can do without authority, as if everything stands upon pure reason. But Newman's response is not the standard ultramontanist of his times, which looked to papal authority for all truth. Indeed, Newman was seen as a liberal in the Church of his time for arguing that Vatican I's definition of papal infallibility

(1870), though true, was inopportune, encouraging a false reduction to authority. To the contrary, Newman urged his contemporaries to see whether the teachings of the Church did not conform with what they already knew in their conscience: a truly Thomistic confidence that genuine natural reason could never contradict the teachings of faith.

Even Newman's teachings on Church and State, which at first would seem to contradict Vatican II's *Declaration on Religious Liberty*, end up concurring with that document's teaching that "man perceives and acknowledges the imperatives of the divine law through the mediation of conscience. In all his activity a man is bound to follow his conscience in order that he may come to God, the end and purpose of life. It follows that he is not to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his conscience."⁸ If, as Newman asserts in his Note on liberalism, the civil power has a duty to maintain religious truth, it is not to force men to act against their conscience, but to give them the opportunity to consider a position that otherwise might be shouted down. Newman's political conservatism ends up matching with his championing of the university, as another way to give people access to great ideas.

"Liberty of thought is in itself a good; but it gives an opening to false liberty."⁹ In the end, Newman's liberalism and his anti-liberalism come together in an affirmation that there is a Truth greater than, but accessible to, the human mind. Conscience is not the right to make things up, but the divine ability of man to see and know the Truth.

¹ See for example "Newman and the Second Vatican Council," a lecture presented by the English, Benedictine Bishop Christopher Butler, himself a prominent voice at the Council. (Document available at: <http://www.vatican2voice.org/3butlerwrites/newman.htm>.) Butler not only shows Newman's immense contribution to Vatican II—especially on "liberal" issues such as a return to pre-scholastic sources; development of doctrine; historical thinking; personal commitment; and the role of the laity—but also highlights how Newman was out of favor with the ultramontanists of his time, especially his fellow convert Henry Edward Manning, who, despite entering the Church six years after him, was made a cardinal four years before, as well as Archbishop of Westminster and thus head of the Catholic Church in England.

² *Apologia*, p. 254.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 256.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 260-62.

⁵ See for example *Assent*, pp. 302-303.

⁶ See especially his commendation of the Anglican divine Joseph Butler (1692-1752), and his explanation of how divine punishment, including vicarious punishment, accords with the truth that "Finally, indeed and upon the whole, every one shall receive according to his personal deserts": in the mean time, being good cannot help us avoid atoning suffering (pp. 308-309).

⁷ For a classic treatment of Jansenism, see especially chapters IX and X of Ronald Knox's *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion*.

⁸ *Dignitatis Humanae*, n. 3.

⁹ *Assent*, p. 255.

Newman, the Scholars, and the Jews:
Newman's Use of the Old Testament in *Grammar of Assent*
in Contrast with 19th Century Biblical Criticism

Jeffrey L. Morrow

In the tenth chapter of his *Grammar of Assent*, John Henry Newman devotes a substantial portion of the second section, "Revealed Religion," to the discussion of biblical Judaism and the Old Testament within salvation history (432-459).¹ Although it would be too Christocentric for many Jewish readers, Newman's positive treatment of the Old Testament and of biblical Judaism contrasts with the intellectual trends of the time period. The nineteenth century saw the continual denigration of all things Jewish, especially the Old Testament as it was treated in biblical scholarship and the burgeoning field of the History of Religions. Newman's understanding of salvation history, however, makes it impossible for him to ignore, minimize or disparage biblical Judaism and the Old Testament, as did many of his nineteenth century contemporaries, as well as the philosophical predecessors who serve as his interlocutors. Indeed, Newman's arguments here rely on the importance of the Old Testament as a context for understanding the New Testament.

Newman's use of the Old Testament in the context of salvation history in his *Grammar of Assent* indicates the necessity of the Old Testament and biblical Judaism for understanding Jesus, the New Testament, and thus for Newman, the Catholic Church. At the outset of his discussion in this section of Chapter 10, Newman writes, "Here, then, I am brought to the consideration of the Hebrew nation and the Mosaic religion, as the first step in the direct evidence for Christianity." He immediately follows with a laudatory statement about the Jewish people: "The Jews are one of the few Oriental nations who are known in history as a people of progress, and their line of progress is the development of religious truth" (432). In particular, Newman isolates their faith in the one God as the center around which their life and witness revolved. Among a host of positive comments Newman makes regarding the Jewish people and their monotheistic faith (what Newman terms "Theism"), he includes, "of this truth [Theism] their poetry is the voice, pouring itself out in devotional compositions which Christianity, through all its many countries and ages, has been unable to rival" (433).

In preparation for his discussion of Christianity—indeed, as evidence he marshals in defense of Christianity—Newman reviews Old Testament salvation history by highlighting the many ways that it prepared for the coming of Christ: in Genesis this Abrahamic people was chosen by God to be a blessing to the nations (441-442); this promise continues with Isaac and Jacob, and thus the Israelites (442); the future Christ who would usher in this worldwide blessing would come from the line of Jacob's son Judah (442-443). Although Jewish readers might be uncomfortable with lines that appear supersessionistic, Newman's comments tie Christianity inextricably to its Old Testament and Jewish roots, contrasting with his contemporaries who maligned the Old Testament and Judaism. Newman observes unambiguously that Christianity "issued from the Jewish land and people" (437).

This stark difference is remarkable given the earlier and contemporary discussions that form part of the intellectual context within which he writes. One of his main intellectual interlocutors in *Grammar of Assent*, for example, is John Locke, whom Newman explicitly engages prior to the chapter under discussion (e.g., 160-164, 174, and 176).² Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* provides an interesting contrast with the earlier portions of Newman's *Grammar of Assent*, but Locke's other works, like *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, especially indicate the extent to which Locke's vision of Christianity was de-Judaized (Gerdmar; Sutcliffe). Locke's biblical exegesis was indebted to earlier and contemporary trends within seventeenth century biblical criticism. One of the most foundational early modern biblical critics is Richard Simon whose *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* was instrumental for Locke, who owned two copies of the text (Champion). Simon, Locke and others effectively deconstruct the Old Testament for political and theological ends in order to minimize any form of transnational Catholicism and contemporary Judaism.

Judaism and the Old Testament became the convenient whipping boy in the Enlighten-

ment period that preceded Newman, and this was evident especially in biblical studies (Manuel; Kugel; Legaspi). Eric Nelson explains that, “when the *philosophes* looked at the Hebrew Bible, they rarely liked what they saw. ... Recast as a tribal relic from the primitive past, the Pentateuch could safely be dismissed as absurd and uncivilized...” (139). The nineteenth century biblical criticism which flourished especially in Germany had arrived from earlier Locke- and John Toland-inspired biblical criticism in England, and was repollinating English academic circles during the general time Newman wrote *Grammar of Assent* (Rogerson; Sheehan). Anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism often went hand-in-hand with such scholarship, as well as with the broader trends in History of Religions scholarship, which both relied upon and influenced developments within biblical studies (Masuzawa). Within a matter of decades, Adolf von Harnack would seek the removal of the Old Testament from Christian Scripture, and Friedrich Delitzsch would urge the replacement of the Old Testament with German folklore (Arnold and Weisberg; Kinzig). Nor were these Marcionite tendencies isolated events. Jewish scholars of the Bible have been adept in recognizing the anti-Jewish underpinnings of some of the nineteenth century scholarly trends that rendered the Old Testament useless as a source of religious authority (Schechter; Kaufmann; Levenson; Weinfeld).

Alfred Loisy was one of the most significant biblical scholars in the Catholic world of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and he imbibed many of these same anti-Jewish methodological frameworks for his study of the Old Testament and the origins of Christianity. Yet Loisy saw himself as following the trail Newman blazed, and he justified his work as a continuation of Newman’s by applying Newman’s developmental notions within the biblical texts themselves (Talar; Hill; Loisy 1900; Loisy 1902). When we compare Newman’s own views on the Old Testament and biblical Judaism, and their relationship to Jesus, to Christianity, and to the Catholic Church however, we find a stark contrast with these other frameworks that diminish the importance of the Old Testament by questioning its authenticity and its authority. The trend from Locke to von Harnack was to de-Judaize Jesus and Christianity and to minimize the Old Testament through literary and historical decon-

struction, methods adopted by Loisy. In contrast, Newman’s work indicates that Christianity cannot be understood apart from its Jewish origins, and this makes Newman’s work all the more significant.

¹ 2.10.2.6-2.10.2.9 for those using a different edition of this text.

² 2.6.1.

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Appreciating the Catholic Studies' Seminars: An Outlier's Perspective

Athar Murtuza

During my first extended stay in a Muslim country, Bangladesh, I experienced a palpable sense of the presence of God in “ordinary believers,” finding that we shared a faith in God, however different the faith-traditions may be, our God was clearly the same. (David B. Burrell, C.S.C)

Since the summer of 1999, as an accounting professor and a Muslim, I have attended four of the intellectual feasts organized by the Center for Catholic Studies for Seton Hall University's faculty. They have intimated to my imagination the time when the earlier Abbasid caliphs, the best of them, established their capital in the newly founded city of Baghdad and constructed within it the Bayt al-Hikma (House of Wisdom). The Bayt al Hikma of Baghdad had a sibling in the South Asian court of Emperor Akbar, who ruled from 1556 to 1605 CE. A contemporary of the Virgin Queen of England, Queen Elizabeth, Akbar used to hold seminars where Muslim Scholars [*alims*] would debate religious matters with intellectuals of all faith, including atheists, Jews, and Portuguese Roman Catholic Jesuits—Protestants had not yet made it to India. Akbar, a Muslim, treated these religious leaders with great consideration, irrespective of their faith, and revered them, not unlike the Muslim Sultan in Egypt who behaved similarly with St. Francis in another place and time. A recent novel by Salman Rushdie's *Enchantress of Florence* provides an imaginative linkage between the court of Akbar and the city of Florence during the High Renaissance, where Niccolò Machiavelli takes a starring role in what the blurb for the novel describes as “the true brutality of power.” Yet another account of that era *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim Between Worlds* by Dr. Natalie Zemon Davis serves as a treat for the intellect and a corrective to conventional perceptions about the clash of civilization.

A more recent echo the Msgr. Richard Liddy's seminars create for me is a recollection of Rudyard Kipling's famous (in-famous!) verses:

OH, East is East, and West is West, and never the
twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great

Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor
Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they
come from the ends of the earth!

The first line has become a commonplace in this post-modern, post-colonial world of ours. Yet to only quote the first line is to misconstrue the poem's intent. What matters for a proper understanding of the poem as well as Kipling's overall message are the last two lines quoted above. What the alleged drum-beater of the British Empire is implying is not all that different from what St. Paul envisioned about Jews and gentiles co-existing in the commonwealth of Christ. In Kipling's case, he wanted the rulers and ruled to have a position similar to that of Jews and gentiles in St. Paul's vision, something I argued in my doctoral dissertation back in 1977.

For me the seminars have been extremely valuable. I would say that attending them has done for me something akin to the knowledge David Burrell acquired in Bangladesh. While attending the Catholic Studies seminar, one finds the silos, academic, religious, social, and economic, dissolving and one feels transported to the kind of university envisioned by John Henry Newman. The business schools, given their ethos of maximizing shareholders' wealth while ignoring the social and moral considerations, seem more like voc-tech for money mongers. Ideally, business schools can do well to require their students to devote their undergraduate degree to learning as envisioned by Newman and then have students follow it with a graduate degree that will introduce them to business disciplines. Such integrated learning, besides making students more employable, could develop a greater sense of social empathy and moral imagination, which could perhaps even curb what seems like the unchecked greed, or even old-fashioned idolatry of money.

At present, most business schools seem a copy of the school located in the Coketown of Charles Dickens' *Hard Times*, much too bitzered to see a horse as anything but factual:
“Quadruped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely

twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive. Sheds coat in the spring; in marshy countries, sheds hoofs, too. Hoofs hard, but requiring to be shod with iron. Age known by marks in mouth.” Their obsession to factual makes the likelihood of their discerning the apocalyptic potential of what the unbridled worship of capitalism unleashes: Conquest, War, Famine and Death. It would be better if the business students could be made to see the implication of various encyclicals issued by the Vatican on work, wealth, and human dignity, which make clear that the unchecked power of wealth can and does, thwart one’s connection with one’s faith. Not unlike the parable of Last Judgment in Matthew 25:31-46 is the verse 39 in the 30th chapter of the Qur’an which contrast wealth which is acquired and hoarded with wealth that is shared with the needy and promotes social justice. A similar sense of social justice imbues the scriptures and traditions of other faiths, as noted in *Small Is Beautiful: Economics As If People Mattered* by British economist E. F. Schumacher. Knowing this ought to make the seeding of Business students’ moral imagination easier.

Newman’s view of Islam, which is the subject of this essay, is a very small part of his scholarship. It has nothing to do with his accomplishment. His stature is secure and is not denigrated by his having accepted the conventional view of Islam held on both sides of the Atlantic for almost a thousand years. My reason for writing this essay is to urge that these views that are still held by a very large multitude are wrong and dangerous. They are helping to create the fog which prevents Americans from seeing 9/11 as a reaction against American foreign policies. No one can justify the terrorism unleashed but the failure to see not only the horrible event of 9/11 as well as the terrorist acts that followed as being a response to our governmental policies all through the cold war and since is only making the problem worse. Unfortunately most Americans do not even know what is done by their government officials. The virtually total lack of public awareness as regards the incidence dating back to June 1967 involving the USS Liberty is a good illustration of the civic ignorance and lack of political accountability. The perception of Islam as a fanatical enemy of Western values and its linkage to the Anti-Christ is making the Military Industrial complex even more dominant. President Eisenhower’s warning remains valid

given this expansion of war profiteers, a simultaneous weakening of the US economy, and the increase in the foreign debt that was used for waging unneeded wars against the wrong targets.

Newman does mention the Paraclete from the Bible and in so doing seem to acknowledge a possible link between the Bible and the Prophet Muhammad but he dismisses the connection in short order. What Newman and many others fail to note in the same Bible that links Jesus to the promise made to Abraham also promises similar blessings to the progeny of the first born (rightful?) heir of the Patriarch. A Muslim perspective of this can be seen at the web site <http://www.islamicity.com/mosque/muhammad_bible.htm>.

In fairness to Newman, his view of Islam is a lot more benign than those of Franklin Graham, Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, certainly Pastor Terry Jones, a bushel of Republican presidential wannabees and Geert Wilders---collectively these sages are working up a North American *kristallnacht* with considerable help from the descendants of those victimized by the German *kristallnacht*. Newman’s remarks are less frightening than the view of Islam and Muslims depicted in “Obsession: A view of Radical Islam;” 28 million copies of which were distributed in the swing states during the last presidential election through the resources furnished by Israeli Aish HaTorah and its related Clarion Fund.

The charge against Islam of containing nothing new remains persistent but one needs to remember that Islam does not consider itself to be new. An informed Muslim could easily see it as a continuation, completion, clarification, and reformation of the tradition that has always sought through divinely guided messengers to make human beings live a life in which faith matters, and in which others are treated as one would like to be treated. Karen Armstrong’s perception of the Axial Age and its extension to include Judaism, Christianity, and Islam is much in line with the Qur’anic exhortations. Furthermore, those who allege Islam’s lack of universality need only a visit to any of the sprouting mosques in North America to realize that they are the most integrated places in the United States during the five daily prayers and especially at noon on Fridays. The universality realization can also be facilitated from knowing that coffee, cotton, checkbook, chemistry,

college, common law, the Magna Carta, courtly love, love sonnets, the Arabic names of the most of the known stars, Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, Aquinas' *Summa*, and Dante's *Divine Comedy*, his Beatrice, and his election to write in Italian all have Islamic antecedents.

Even in Newman's own era, Islam's universality was being demonstrated in a very interesting cultural transfer. It is well described by William Dalrymple in his 2007 review of a seminal exhibit about the ties that reviewed Venice's relationship with its Islamic neighbors from 7th to 17th centuries at the New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art: "Ironically, the most remarkable, and certainly the most unlikely, export of Venetian culture was still to come" and it did so through the British. When British Raj began looking for an architectural style which would not look incongruent in India they turned to Ruskin's *Stones of Venice*. The reason the style fits in so well in India has to do with the fact that the stones of Venice themselves had come from the Islamic world, which also left its legacy throughout India. The transfer of culture from Spain, Anatolia, Cairo, Baghdad, Damascus, and quite possibly Delhi, to Venice and then to the British occupied India suggests an alternative way of looking at the world, unlike that proposed by Huntington through his thesis about the clash of civilizations.

Cultures and Civilization do not exist in discrete silos. Even though thinking thus can lead many to fantasize that the birth of Western Civilization as having been independent of what came before and after; however, civilization, renaissances, and Modernity did not show up in Europe fully formed like a Barbie doll and ready to ovulate. Even the very idea of Europe was the result of presumed dangers from Islamic influences. That the center of gravity as far as the game of cricket, more popular than baseball and basketball around the world, has shifted to India from England; that the Man Booker Prize is routinely awarded to people with Indian origins; that the Indian firm Tata now owns the British Jaguar; and that fish and chips as a staple of the British diet have been replaced by the South Asian import, chicken *tikka*, should make one see that the relationship between civilizations is not like that between discrete and segregated silos and is much more like a palimpsest, to borrow a term from post-colonial theories. The palimpsests are

scrolls [or cultures] that get overwritten by another text, but where the original still remains visible or discernable. Seen thus, the Enlightenment, the Western civilization and even Modernity can be seen as palimpsests where the contributions of what came before, such as the Islamic contributions, are very much discernable, though awaiting greater attention. Such awareness would make us avoid perceptions that come through in the sketch attached as an appendix to this essay; it shows St. Thomas inspired by Christ in glory and guided by Moses, St. Peter, and the evangelists, and instructed by Aristotle and Plato, overcoming Abū l-Walīd Muḥammad bin 'Aḥmad bin Ruṣd (Averroes), who lies vanquished under St. Thomas's feet.

Our world will be a better place if the view point shown in the sketch is replaced by one sought by David Burrell in his *Knowing the Unknowable God* (1986) and *Freedom and Creation in three Traditions* (1993), as well as translations of three major works of the 'Islamic Augustine,' al-Ghazali. Adopting the approach suggested in Burrell's essay titled "The Abrahamic Faiths in their New Context" provides a much better and needed alternative (the essay by Burrell is available at the web site <http://www.nd.edu/~dburrell/jcmexchange.html>).

Appendix



ST. THOMAS AQUINAS OVERCOMING AVERROES

The sketch shows St. Thomas inspired by Christ in glory and guided by Moses, St. Peter, and the evangelists, and instructed by Aristotle and Plato, overcoming Averroes, who lies vanquished under St. Thomas's feet. From *An Introduction to the History of Science*, by Walter Libby (1917, Houghton Mifflin, New York, NY, p.56.

Newman's religious epistemology in *A Grammar of Assent* can strike the contemporary reader as unduly focused on loneliness, fear, and judgment. His "first lesson" of natural religion is the absence and silence of God.¹ Indeed, "[n]ot only is the Creator far off," he suggests, "but some being of malignant nature seems . . . to have got hold of us, and to be making us his sport."² All religions, Newman argues, understand that humans are separated from God, and seek to find respite from God's judgment through prayer, rites of satisfaction, and the intercession of holy men.

The preparation for revealed religion, in Newman's estimation, is a sense of foreboding – a sense that seems quite distant from the appeal to symmetry and aesthetics that characterized Aquinas' Five Ways. It is also far distant, as Newman acknowledges, from the mechanistic remonstrations of William Paley's watchmaker. While Paley's God – and perhaps, in Newman's estimation, Thomas' God – could turn out to be any sort of master tinkerer, merely a Platonic ideal of the Victorian gentleman naturalist, the God prefigured by Newman's natural religion must be more viscerally terrible. For Newman, "[o]nly one religion," Christianity, supplies a God capable of dishing out, and absorbing, this sort of pain.

Newman's focus on anxiety seems to prefigure the existentialist theologies that would come to define the twentieth century, particularly those of Karl Barth and Hans Urs von Balthasar. But Newman was more an Augustinian than Barth or Balthasar, particularly in his construction of revelation and authority. For Newman, the bulwark of revealed religion was the institutional infallibility of the Roman Church. Yet even here Newman recognized a dynamic aspect to the Church's authority. The decisions of Popes and Councils, he recognized, were often mired in jealousies and politics.³ Still, the Church reached its conclusions over time spans measured in hundreds and thousands of years. Time, and patience, and the slow work of God's Spirit, ensured that the Church would preserve the truth against the vicissitudes of intellectual fashions.

Karl Barth's theological anthropology, and his resulting appraisal of the "natural" human

condition, was remarkably consonant with Newman's. For Barth, following Luther, Humanity stood separated from a hidden God. And Barth repeatedly affirmed that "there is no possibility of dogmatics at all outside the Church."⁴ It might seem that Barth and Newman were following similar lights.

However, Barth was notoriously less sanguine – indeed, not at all sanguine – about the possibility of any sort of natural theology. He refused any prior anthropological basis for theology. Moreover, because, in Barth's view, dogmatics always is a fresh encounter with revelation, he likewise would not assign the final say to any person within or document produced by the Church. The Roman Catholic approach to dogmatics, even when it understood the Church's teaching office to embody genuine progress over time, "fails to recognize the divine-human character of the being of the Church."⁵ According to Barth, "[t]he freely acting God Himself and alone is the truth of revelation . . . only in God and not for us is the true basis of Christian utterance identical with its true content. Hence dogmatics as such does not ask what the apostles and prophets said but what we must say on the basis of the apostles and prophets".⁶

It is curious that Barth does not cite Newman in this section of the *Dogmatics*.⁷ More similarities perhaps appear between this section of the *Dogmatics* and Newman's construal of Church authority than otherwise meet the eye. Newman's discussion of the "tyrannical interference" that results when the Church acts too swiftly against an apparently new opinion resonates with Barth's understanding of the "divine-human" Church.⁸ If Christian belief and practice has varied since the inception of the Church, for Newman, this only reflects "the necessary attendants on any philosophy or polity which takes possession of the intellect and heart, and has had any wide or extended dominion."⁹ Great ideas can only be fully comprehended over time, particularly when communicated through human media to human recipients, even though transmitted "once for all by inspired teachers."¹⁰

Nevertheless, Newman ultimately sides with history over experience: “[t]o be deep in history,” he said, “is to cease to be a Protestant.”¹¹ For Barth, revelation is ever and again (to use a Barthian turn of phrase) a fresh encounter with Christ, scripture, and the proclamation of the Church; for Newman, revelation is complete, and what remains is only the development of the Church’s understanding and possession of what has been delivered. Yet Newman and Barth seem to agree that natural theology, at most, highlights God’s hiddenness. Nature tells us nothing about God except that God is beyond us, terrible and unreachable.

Is there space for natural theology between the poles of revelation-disclosed-in-history (Newman) and revelation-disclosed-in-experience (Barth)? Newman rejected the Anglican *via media*, which, as Newman described it, sought to “reconcile and bring into shape the exuberant phenomena under consideration by cutting off and casting away as corruptions all usages, ways, opinions, and tenets, which have not the sanction of primitive times.”¹² This position of “neither discarding the Fathers nor acknowledging the Pope,” Newman thought, cannot resolve hard cases.¹³ However, splitting the difference between history and experience is not the only possible “third way.” Perhaps Newman’s “natural religion,” although it pointed towards the cross and the Resurrection, did not fully account for the cross and the Resurrection in the history of creation.

The suffering and separation of creation – our suffering and our separation from God – was taken up and transformed by the cross of Christ.¹⁴ The cross reveals that the *Logos* who created the universe is the suffering servant who became incarnate, God and man, and who in the flesh of man suffered for us and with us. In the cross and Resurrection, God is not distant or hidden – indeed, in the cross and Resurrection, the shape and purpose of creation is disclosed. In the cross, history and experience join together; in the Resurrection, history and experience are fulfilled. Through the cross and the Resurrection, we recognize in creation the love and beauty of the God who declared the universe “good,” the God who made us, and who accepts us by grace despite our sin. Because the cross and the Resurrection are the center of history and experience, we can delight in creation as gift and know God in creation

as the giver of all good gifts. This is true “natural” theology.

¹ *A Grammar of Assent*, p. 301.

² *Ibid.*, p. 302.

³ See *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, p. 232-33.

⁴ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, (T&T Clark Study Edition, 2009) (hereinafter “CD”), I.1.3., at p. 17.

⁵ CD I.1.2, at p. 14.

⁶ CD I.1.2, at p. 15. It follows for Barth, then, that “the place from which the way of dogmatic knowledge is to be seen and understood can be neither a prior anthropological possibility nor a subsequent ecclesiastical reality, but only the present moment of the speaking and hearing of Jesus Christ himself, the divine creation of light in our hearts.”

CD I.1.2, at p. 41.

⁷ He cites Diekamp, *Katholic Dogmatik*, 6th ed. (1930). See CD, I.1.1, at p. 14.

⁸ *Apologia*, at p. 232-33.

⁹ *Ibid.* at 67.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, in “Conscience, Consensus, and the Development of Doctrine,” (Doubleday, 1992), at p. 50. “And whatever history teaches, whatever it omits, whatever it exaggerates or extenuates, whatever it says and unsays,” Newman said, “at least the Christianity of history is not Protestantism. If ever there were a safe truth, it is this.” *Id.* at 50.

¹² *Ibid.* at 52.

¹³ *Ibid.* at 53.

¹⁴ See Jurgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, (Fortress Press 1972).

Secular Music, Social Reform, and the Church in the Modern World¹

Gloria J. Thurmond

The cultural and social currents that transform a society are inevitable and present in every age. The period of transition within the society between the old ways and the new trends may be described as a time of crisis and opportunity. When the established ways of thinking and acting are challenged, a crisis in confidence occurs. Simultaneously, however, there also exists the opportunity and potential for intellectual, moral, and spiritual expansion and expression through the presence of new creative energies.

The thoughts and reflections presented by the seminar facilitator Dr. Cyril O'Regan on the writings of John Henry Newman, nineteenth century Oxford academic and Anglican priest, addressed Newman's view and interpretation of the secularization of religion within the Anglican Church. Dr. O'Regan rests his analysis of Newman's view of the secularization of religion in the nineteenth century Anglican Church upon the new philosophical, social, and scientific developments of the eighteenth century Enlightenment era.

By way of comparison, the early flowering of the Western European Renaissance era (15th c.) also was marked by new pathways of inquiry, innovation, exploration, world-changing discoveries, and a type of creative musical expression that overflowed the traditional liturgical boundaries of the Roman Catholic Church.

It has been recognized by historians and theologians alike that the new ideas and the creativity that led to the new cultural and social forms that emerged during the Renaissance and Enlightenment eras paved the way for the contemporary ideas that affirm the dignity of each human being, and that call for social justice for the common good within the community.

The occurrence of economic growth in Europe, an increase in population, the onset of the Crusades and of other historical factors during the twelfth century influenced changes in the way musicians approached Church music as well. During that time, polyphony made its way gradually into Church music, replacing plainchant, the official body of Church music, identified by is

monophonic (single-line) texture, dating from c. 604 CE.

Polyphony occurs when there are separate voices singing diverging parts simultaneously. Improvisation, which permitted freedom from a certain body of agreed upon rules of music, along with a later development of adding a secular text over the liturgical text, also fostered the development of the polyphonic style, signaling an important development in the history of Western music – yet one that ultimately would challenge the Church's musical sense of “right and wrong.”

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Catholic Church “met the defection of its northern brethren by starting a program of internal reform known as the *Counter-Reformation*.”² “From 1545 – 1563, a special Council, meeting intermittently in the northern Italian city of Trent, worked to formulate and pass measures aimed at purging the church of abuses and laxities.” While Church music was not a major agenda item for the Council, “it heard serious complaints.” The major complaints were that polyphonic music based on secular songs (while still including a plainchant melody as an inner part) profaned the Mass; “complicated polyphony made it impossible to understand the words, even when pronounced correctly; musicians were accused of using inappropriate instruments, being careless, and having irreverent attitudes.”³

Contrary to popular notions and stories that oftentimes have been circulated down through the centuries, regarding the Council's desire to banish the use of polyphony from Church music, and that the “Savior” of polyphony arrived in the person of the Italian composer Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525 or 1526 – 1594), the Council's official statement on Church music reform was that “They shall also banish from church all music that contains, whether in the singing or in the organ playing, things that are lascivious or impure.”⁴

According to the late, foremost music historian of the twentieth century, Donald Jay Grout, Palestrina, “captured the essence of the sober, conservative aspect of the Counter-Reformation and set the standard for polyphonic church music.”⁵ He used plainchant in all parts of his compositions rather than to confine it to one voice; and overall musical transparency, textual clarity, and spiritual reverence define his compositional style.

“Savior” or not, the ability of Palestrina to provide a clear way to maintain the integrity of liturgical music and to serve musical creative activity through the Church established the Church as the arbiter of Western classical music, which continued to evolve and emerge through the Church.

Just as the late Renaissance Church was able to make a creative musical transition through its liturgical music challenge, so was the nineteenth century Church able to prove itself capable of connecting its mission of love, salvation, and service in the world through the Gospel of Jesus Christ to its social teaching as set forth in the encyclical letter *Rerum Novarum*, widely considered to have been shaped by Pope Leo XIII.

The themes of *Rerum Novarum* are focused around “persons, systems, and structures – the three coordinates that foster the promotion of justice and peace, now established as integral to the mission of the modern Church.”⁶ The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has identified seven key themes of Catholic Social Teaching which have their roots in *Rerum Novarum*.

- The sanctity of human life and dignity of the person
- Call to family, community, and participation
- The right to life and to the necessities of life
- Preferential option for the poor and vulnerable
- Dignity of work
- Solidarity towards the common good
- Care for God’s creation

The principles of Catholic Social Teaching, having been set forth in the late nineteenth century, but considered to be far older in origin, have continued to evolve through the need to address and respond to the emerging issues of a continu-

ally progressive society under the leadership of the Church. According to Pope Benedict XVI, the purpose of Catholic Social Teaching “is simply to help purify reason and to contribute, here and now, to ... what is just [in human affairs in the world.] The Church has to play her part through rational argument and she is to reawaken the spiritual energy without which justice...cannot prevail and prosper.”⁷

In the foregoing instances, it can be seen that individuals with religious integrity and creative vision were able to seize the opportunity to advance God’s kingdom here on earth through the intersection of the sacred tradition and the secular world of human affairs.

As the agent of God’s dynamic presence and creative action in the world, the Roman Catholic Church, at critical ventures in its existence, “scrutinizes the signs of the times”⁸, reflects upon the societal issues and tasks by which it is confronted; and, ever maintaining its integrity, charts its way forward by continuing its mission of bringing the good news of God’s love and salvation into the ever-changing world of human affairs.

¹ *The Documents of Vatican II*, “*Gaudium et Spes*,” (1965)

² Donald Jay Grout, *A History of Western Music*, sixth ed., (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001) 234.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.* 236

⁶ Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, (1891)

⁷ Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 28, (2006)

⁸ *The Documents of Vatican II*, “*Gaudium et Spes*,” 4, (1965)

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

Beth Bloom, Associate Professor/Librarian, at Seton Hall University, has an MA in Musicology, in addition to her MLS. She coordinates the library's information literacy program and is library liaison for art, music, women's studies, nursing, and the School of Health/Medical Services. She has been the recipient of various CDI grants, in addition to a \$15,000 grant from Google. She has participated in the university core curriculum program since its inception.

Nancy Enright is an Associate Professor of Writing and Director of First Year Writing at Seton Hall University. She serves on the Board of Advisors for Catholic Studies and as a Senator on the Faculty Senate. She has published articles on Dante, Augustine, Julian of Norwich, J. R. R. Tolkien, and C. S. Lewis

Jonathan Farina is Assistant Professor at Seton Hall, where he teaches 19th-century British literature and culture. He has taught at Vanderbilt and New York University, where he earned his Ph.D. in 2008. His work is published or forthcoming in journals including *RaVoN*, *Victorian Literature and Culture*, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, *Victorian Studies*, and *The Wordsworth Circle*. He is finishing a book manuscript tentatively titled *The Character of Everyday Words*.

Al Frank '72/ M.A. '10, a Roman Catholic deacon, is an adjunct professor in English and religion and a tutor in the Educational Opportunity Program. He returned to Seton Hall after retiring from The Star-Ledger in 2008, ending a 30-year career in journalism. He also holds a master of city and regional planning degree from Rutgers University.

Paul F. Gibbons, Seton Hall University Class of 1962, is Chairman of the Sister Rose Thering Fund for Jewish Christian Studies and an Adjunct Professor in the Religion Department. He taught Sacred Scripture for 30 years in St. Teresa of Avila Parish in Summit, and also gives Scripture workshops for the School Offices and Offices of Catechetics in the five Dioceses of New Jersey.

Anthony L. Haynor, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Sociology. He teaches introductory sociology, social problems, self and society, social change, and sociological theory. Dr. Haynor also teaches the Signature II course, "Christianity and Culture in Dialogue." His main research areas include the development of a method of social problem-solving, the relationship between theology and the human sciences, and the search for meaning in the contemporary world.

Eric M. Johnston earned a Ph.D. in Medieval Theology from The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, in 2008. His doctoral dissertation is titled "The Role of Aristotelian Biology in Thomas Aquinas's Theology of Marriage," one topic within his broader interest in Thomas's theology of grace and nature. He is also interested in topics related to spirituality and political philosophy.

Jeffrey L. Morrow earned his Ph.D. (2007) and his M.A. (2003) in Theology from the University of Dayton. He earned his B.A. (2001) in Classical Greek and Comparative Religion from Miami University. A Senior Fellow of the St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology he currently teaches as an Assistant Professor at Immaculate Conception Seminary School of Theology at Seton Hall University.

Athar Murtuza a member of the Accounting faculty in the Stillman School of Business at Seton Hall University, obtained his Ph.D. in Literature, received an MBA and is a Certified Management Accountant (CMA). His research interests include accounting ethics, interdisciplinary perception of accounting, and the regulation of commerce and the pursuit of wealth in the Islamic world from 7th to 17th century.

David W. Opderbeck, is a Professor of Law and Director of the Gibbons Institute of Law, Science & Technology. His work focuses on the regulation of access to scientific and technological information. His published work has employed the tools of game theory, classical microeconomics, and statistical analysis to address issues such as intellectual property restrictions on essential medicines in developing countries, open source biotechnology, patent damages reform, and the interaction of law and social norms concerning music file sharing. In addition to his traditional legal scholarship, he is interested in the philosophical and moral foundations of information policy and other aspects of the law. Professor Opderbeck graduated from Seton Hall Law School in 1991 and earned an LL.M. in Trade Regulation from New York University Law School in 1998. He currently is pursuing a Ph.D. in Systematic and Philosophical Theology at the University of Nottingham. He previously was a Partner in the Intellectual Property/Trade Regulation group at McCarter & English, LLP.

Gloria Thurmond, a faculty associate in the Department of Communication and the Arts, and the director of the Seton Hall University Jazz ‘n the Hall concert series, teaches *Vocal Studies*, *Music of America*, and *Journey of Transformation*. Dr. Thurmond has an interdisciplinary background in Music and in Theology. Having performed with the Metropolitan Opera and with New York City Opera for twenty-five seasons, Dr. Thurmond combines her artistic and theological background as a faculty member of Assisi Performing Arts in Assisi, Italy, where, during the organization’s annual music festival held during the month of July, she teaches courses in music and spirituality.