
“A RHETORIC IN CONDUCT”: THE GENTLEMAN OF THE UNIVERSITY AND THE GENTLEMAN OF THE ORATORY

M. KATHERINE TILLMAN

Newman's explicit presentation of the ideal type, "the gentleman," appears first and foremost in his Oratory papers of 1847 and 1848, and appears only secondarily, and then but partially, four and five years later in his Dublin Discourses of 1852 (The Idea of a University). This essay traces lines of similarity and of difference between these successive portraits and distinguishes both from the attractive, better-known sketch Newman presents as Lord Shaftesbury's, the "beau ideal" of the man of the world.

“Trinity? A most gentlemanlike college,” said Dr. Nicholas, who presided over the Ealing school and was by now a friend of the Newman family.¹ It was December of 1816 and John Henry, still fifteen, had just returned from his first venture at Oxford. Having by chance matriculated at Trinity College, which he had never heard of, he had been told he would have to wait to take up residence there. When he returned to Trinity the following June, he wrote his father saying that the first thing he did was rush to the tailor to be fitted for his “commoner’s gown.”²

Perhaps young Newman thought that when George Nicholas identified Trinity as a “gentlemanlike” college, he meant that the college had a reputation for turning out educated gentlemen, a trait that an undergraduate commoner might find desirable. But Nicholas may well have been employing the term “gentlemanlike” tongue-in-cheek, or else naively, for as Newman would soon discover, the Trinity College of his day was infamous for its “gentleman-commoners,” who often were no gentlemen at all.³ Ranked above paying commoners like Newman, yet situated below titled noblemen, gentleman-commoners at Oxford were notorious for attaching themselves to certain colleges by paying high fees, which they could well afford. There to pass adolescence, rather than their examinations, they lived in style and deemed themselves excused from many of the ordinary college rules. They drank with idle abandon and some of them badly bullied Newman because of his studious and

Katherine Tillman, professor emerita of the Program of Liberal Studies at the University of Notre Dame, has taught, lectured, and published extensively on Newman, including introductions to his *Rise and Progress of Universities* and *Benedictine Essays* and to his *Fifteen Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford*. An earlier version of this essay was the featured address at the 2007 conference of the Venerable John Henry Newman Association at the National Institute for Newman Studies in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

¹ Like George Nicholas, Newman uses the term “gentlemanlike,” not infrequently, in referring to the qualities of a gentleman. John Henry Newman (hereafter JHN), *Autobiographical Writings*, ed. and intro. Henry Tristram (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1957), 30; hereafter cited: AW.

² *Ibid.*, 31.

³ “Gentleman Commoner: An empty bottle; an university joke, gentlemen commoners not being deemed over full of learning.” Definition taken from *The 1811 Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, originally by Francis Grose, available at <http://www.from-oldbooks.org/Grose-VulgarTongue/g/gentleman-commoner.html>.

morally upright bearing. One time a rowdy crowd of them rushed in upon Newman and pressured him to stop overdoing it with the books and to go drinking with them:

I said such conduct was not the conduct of gentlemen—and ordered them to leave [my] room. One of them said he would knock me down, if I were not too contemptible a fellow. (He was 6 feet 3 or 4 inches high, and stout in proportion.)⁴

In the beginning, Newman was certain he did not fit in with college life, not only because of studying all the time and only occasionally enjoying a taste of wine, but also because no man of rank would be caught dead taking dance lessons, playing the violin, or play-writing, all of which he enjoyed. "I really think, if any one should ask me what qualifications were necessary for Trinity College, I should say there was only one,—Drink, drink, drink."⁵

Four years after the conclusion of his undergraduate days at Trinity, that is, in 1826, when he was appointed Public Tutor at the acclaimed Oriel College, of which he was by then a Fellow, Newman again encountered idle gentleman-commoners. "I have now been engaged in the Oriel Tuition four weeks," he wrote home; "the College is filled principally with men of family, in many cases, of fortune. I fear there exists very considerable profligacy among them."⁶

As Oriel tutor, Newman set himself "fiercely against the Gentleman-Commoners, these young men of birth, wealth, or prospects, whom [I] considered (of course with real exceptions) to be the scandal and the ruin of the place."⁷ He felt that these privileged and indolent young men, together with those in high places who pandered to them, were gradually destroying the high academic reputation of Oriel College. "In much disgust with the state of the Undergraduates at large," Newman turned for relief to the students assigned to his own tutelage, particularly to those among them who showed conscientiousness and promise in their studies.⁸

Here then are two quite dissimilar understandings of what goes into the making of a gentleman, that of the young Newman and that of his rowdy young foes. Both modes of conduct were probably due to the youths' upbringing, to a certain manner of cultivation and to special friendships, but neither of them is what Newman would later sketch in his portraits of the university gentleman and the gentleman of the Oratory.⁹

THE UNIVERSITY GENTLEMAN

It is no wonder then that almost twenty years later when Newman was composing his Dublin Discourses on behalf of liberal education in a Catholic context, he would see to it that his description of gentlemanlikeness would have nothing to do with the formation of the so-called gentleman-commoners, fraudulent pretenders

⁴ *AW*, 157.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 209.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁹ It is likely that Newman's friendship from the start with John William Bowden played a large part in enabling him to survive the taunts of the gentleman-commoners and remain steadfast in his ideals.

to the title, “gentlemen.” In his Preface to *The Idea of a University*, Newman distinguishes other deficient meanings of the word “gentleman” from his own “ideal type” thereof.¹⁰

Some persons may be tempted to complain, that I have servilely followed the English idea of a University . . . ; and they may anticipate that an academical system, formed upon my model, will result in nothing better or higher than in the production of that antiquated variety of human nature and remnant of feudalism, as they consider it, called ‘a gentleman.’¹¹

Newman remarks that when the Holy Father suggested the establishment of a Catholic university for the English speaking world, “his first and chief and direct object” was not indeed the “formation on any narrow or fantastic type, as, for instance, that of an ‘English Gentleman.’”¹²

The proper goal of liberal education in a university is not merely a matter of dressing up one’s behavior and manners and thereby becoming an ideal gentleman.

Our desideratum is, not the manners and habits of gentlemen;—these can be, and are, acquired in various other ways, by good society, by foreign travel, by the innate grace and dignity of the Catholic mind;—but the force, the steadiness, the versatility and comprehensiveness of intellect, the command over our own powers, the instinctive just estimate of things as they pass before us, which sometimes indeed is a natural gift, but commonly is not gained without much effort and the exercise of years.¹³

The direct and only goal of liberal education is thus the formation and the cultivation in the student of an enlarged, enlightened, or illumined intellect. Importantly for Newman, being gentlemanlike is a natural by-product, an ordinary side-effect, of a liberal education that has already achieved its goal in the student, or at least has begun to achieve its goal in what is really a lifelong process. The very possession itself of the virtues of the intellect “is a substantial good, and is enough, yet still that substance has a shadow, inseparable from it, viz., its social and political usefulness.”¹⁴ For Newman, this “shadow” of the intellect’s self-possession and health is gentlemanlikeness.

A “philosophical habit of mind,” in Newman’s distinctive sense of the term, is a “master view” of things as they really are—in themselves, in relation to one another, and in relation to the whole of which they are a part.¹⁵ One who is liberally educated is one who habitually sees things in their right relations and proportionate connectedness to other persons and things. Students are thereby enabled, Newman boasts, to have “mapped out the Universe” from where they stand, that is, to grasp in a general way the relative dispositions and bearings of things, to understand how what they learn connects with what they already know, and to locate themselves in relation to these things and to the universe as a whole.¹⁶ “He apprehends the great

¹⁰ JHN, *The Idea of a University*, ed. with intro. by I. T. Ker (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976); available at <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/idea/index.html>; hereafter cited: *Idea*.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 5–6.

¹² *Ibid.*, 6.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 157.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 96.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 105.

outlines of knowledge, the principles on which it rests, the scale of its parts, its lights and its shades, its great points and its little, as he otherwise cannot apprehend them."¹⁷

This challenging aim of liberal education is not the merely passive acquisition of factual knowledge, but rather is "knowledge impregnated by Reason."¹⁸ Thought infiltrates and informs the bare facts in order to make sense of them.

The intellect of man . . . energizes as well as his eye or ear, and perceives in sights and sounds something beyond them. It seizes and unites what the senses present to it; it grasps and forms what need not have been seen or heard except in its constituent parts. It discerns in lines and colours, or in tones, what is beautiful and what is not. It gives them a meaning, and invests them with an idea.¹⁹

This is not useful knowledge in the immediate sense of training for a vocation or a profession, but is learning for its own sake, its own enjoyment and its own reward.²⁰ It is the kind of knowledge that can be appropriated and made a habit, the personal possession of the university-educated gentleman, satisfying a direct need of his nature. ". . . There is a Knowledge, which is desirable, though nothing come of it, as being of itself a treasure, and a sufficient remuneration of years of labor."²¹

Newman affirms as well the ordinary accompaniments of cultivation of mind. "I do not deny that the characteristic excellences of a gentleman are included in it."²² But the fact that such an education in itself does ever so much more is what Newman insists upon. Most importantly, "It brings the mind into form."²³ He draws a charming analogy with the awkward bodies of adolescent boys as they outgrow their younger shape and strength. They need exercise and tone to catch up with themselves, "their limbs have to be knit together."²⁴ Of course, Newman sees this as an emblem of young minds. Boys have no convictions, no definite views, and no principles on which to build. Blurred and dazzled by phenomena, their thoughts are clumsily held and expressed. However, once the intellect has been properly trained it begins to take on a certain grace and excellence.²⁵

It is by means of what Newman calls the "habit of method" that the fruit of liberal education, which is attainment of a healthy, energized intellect and a broad master view of things as they are, gradually takes shape and emerges. Here is what this method entails:

I hold very strongly that the first step in intellectual training is to impress upon a boy's mind the idea of science, method, order, principle, and system; of rule and exception, of richness and harmony. . . . Let him once gain this habit of method, of starting from fixed points, of making his ground good as he goes, of distinguishing what he knows from what he does not know, and I conceive he will be gradually initiated into the largest and truest philosophical views²⁶

¹⁷ Ibid., 96.

¹⁸ Ibid., 84.

¹⁹ Ibid., 74-75.

²⁰ Ibid., 97.

²¹ Ibid., 105.

²² Ibid., 10.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 12-13.

The development of a student's intellect toward habitual large-mindedness and relational intentionality is thus the sole essence and the sole purpose of university education. Gentlemanliness, itself hard wrought through the self-mastery gained from the disciplines of the mind, is the refinement of manners and the freedom from self-absorption that are the ordinary concomitants of liberal education. Such gentlemanliness is quite simply, "fitness for the world."²⁷

The *Idea's* celebrated portrait of a gentleman is by now a staple of world literature. Its beginning is best known: "Hence it is that it is almost a definition of a gentleman to say he is one who never inflicts pain."²⁸ Then Newman elaborates for several pages of *The Idea*:

. . . He is mainly occupied in merely removing the obstacles which hinder the free and unembarrassed action of those about him; and he concurs with their movements rather than takes the initiative himself The true gentleman in like manner carefully avoids whatever may cause a jar or a jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast; —all clashing of opinion, or collision of feeling, all restraint, or suspicion, or gloom or resentment; his great concern being to make every one at their ease and at home. . . . He is seldom prominent in conversation, and never wearisome. . . . He may be right or wrong in his opinion, but he is too clear-headed to be unjust. . . . He throws himself into the minds of his opponents, he accounts for their mistakes. He knows the weakness of human reason as well as its strength, its province and its limits. . . .²⁹

What often goes unrecognized, however, is that Newman presents this appealing description not as his own ideal, but rather as that of Lord Shaftesbury and rationalists like him.³⁰ This ideal gentleman, Newman makes clear, is of the well-mannered, accomplished, secular man of the world, for such are "some of the lineaments of the ethical character, which the cultivated intellect will form, apart from religious principle. . . . They form the *beau-ideal* of the world."³¹ This is no more Newman's own ideal than is the university as such—even with the inclusion of the subject of theology—, if it be without its full "integrity" as Catholic. For although the essential nature of that university may be intact, the Church is necessary for its complete integrity and wholeness. The view that Newman takes in *The Idea of a University*, he says, defines a

University in its *essence*, and independently of its relation to the Church. But, practically speaking, it cannot fulfill its object duly, such as I have described it, without the Church's assistance; or, to use the theological term, the Church is necessary for its *integrity*. . . . [The University] still has the office of intellectual education; but the Church steadies it in the performance of that office.³²

The Shaftesburian description of the liberally educated gentleman is Newman's version of the great-souled or magnanimous man of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*,

²⁷ Ibid., 154.

²⁸ Ibid., 179.

²⁹ Ibid., 179–180.

³⁰ This "Lord Shaftesbury" is Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury (1651–1713).

³¹ *Idea*, 180–81.

³² Ibid., xxxviii.

the virtuous and fully actualized human being whom Newman described in one of his essays for the Oriel fellowship.³³ Newman had studied this work intensively as an Oxford undergraduate, reading it three times in preparation for his examinations.³⁴ Too, Aristotle's *Ethics* was the chief instrument of his teaching as Oriel tutor.³⁵ According to classics scholar Ronald Begley, it would be difficult to overestimate the influence of Aristotle's *Ethics* in the Oxford of Newman's day. Concerning this classical source of Newman's description of the "gentleman," Begley writes:

The similarity between these two moral portraits, Aristotle's and Newman's, is too great to be accidental or unconscious. Newman has composed his sketch of the gentleman according to Aristotle's pattern. . . . The frequency and the exactness of Newman's references to magnanimity in *The Idea of a University* show that the subject was on his mind as he prepared his lectures for Dublin.³⁶

Charles Harrold, in his 1945 study of Newman, notes well that Newman's famous definition of the gentleman is preceded in the text by a searching analysis of the eighteenth-century ideal of a gentleman as set up and exalted by Lord Shaftesbury.³⁷ Harrold points out that such definitions were a part of the long Victorian effort to clarify a social type, as also attested to by such writers as Ruskin, Tennyson, Thackeray, Dickens and Trollope.³⁸ By the middle of the nineteenth century, the industrial revolution had so altered the boundary lines of class that clearer understandings and definitions of social types were sought. The newly powerful middle class aspired to the polite manners of the wellborn, determined to keep alive the eighteenth-century tradition of a genteel aristocracy of morals and manners.

Shaftesbury depicted this cult of self-respect, politeness, and delicate taste in his popular and influential book *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1711).³⁹ Here the cultivated gentleman is presented from a highly aesthetic, rationalist, and artificial standpoint. Newman writes that

Lord Shaftesbury . . . will have a difficulty in proving that any real conversion follows from a doctrine which makes virtue a mere point of good taste, and vice vulgar and ungentlemanlike.

Such a doctrine is essentially superficial, and such will be its effects. It has no

³³ Martin J. Svaglic, "Newman and the Oriel Fellowship," *PMLA* 70 (1955): 1014-1032, as cited in Ronald B. Begley, "Too Diffident To Define": The Gentleman In Newman's *The Idea Of A University*, *Faith and Reason* (Winter, 1993), note 17: available at <http://www.eutn.com/library/ACADEMIC/FR933404.HTML>. Begley discusses the "megalopsychos" or "great-souled man" as described in the fourth book of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Hereafter cited: Begley.

³⁴ A. Dwight Culler, *The Imperial Intellect* (New Haven: Yale University, 1955), 18.

³⁵ Newman's copy of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, complete with his and his students' notes in the margins can be seen, newly bound of late, in the Birmingham Oratory archives.

³⁶ Begley, 3, 10. Begley, however, does not see the Shaftesburian context of Newman's famous portrait.

³⁷ Charles Frederick Harrold, *John Henry Newman, An Expository and Critical Study of His Mind, Thought and Art* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1945), 113.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 116-117.

³⁹ "Shaftesbury's *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* . . . ranges widely over ethics, aesthetics, religion, the arts (painting, literature, architecture, gardening), and ancient and modern history, and aims at nothing less than a new ideal of the gentleman It is a text of fundamental importance for understanding the thought and culture of Enlightenment Europe." Quoted from <http://www.chapters.indigo.ca/books/Shaftesbury-Characteristics-Men-Manners-Opinions-Lord-Shaftesbury/>.

better measure of right and wrong than that of visible beauty and tangible fitness.⁴⁰

Conscience produces an acute pang, contrition turns into remorse and a sense of degradation; humility is nothing but understatement and modesty; sinners are mere fools. It is Shaftesbury then, not Newman, who provides the broad grounds for the qualified cast of Newman's gentleman-type, thereby making this mock-up in fact the arch-representative of the "religion of civilization," which Newman excoriates. "There is a religion of civilized times, of the cultivated intellect, of the philosopher, scholar, and gentleman. This is that Religion of Reason, of which I speak."⁴¹ As other religions, this one requires sacrifices, promises, and rewards. And it possesses its own object of worship, human reason in the cult of the self. "They do not look out of themselves, because they do not look through and beyond their own minds to their Maker. . . . They are victims of an intense self-contemplation."⁴² Shortly before presenting the famous portrait of the gentleman, Newman employs, to illustrate "this intellectual religion," the example of the Emperor Julian, "the apostate from Christian Truth, the foe of Christian education,"⁴³ who "was all but the pattern-man of philosophical virtue."⁴⁴

Cast passively, reservedly and by means of negations, the gentleman of the world removes obstacles and hindrances for others, concurs rather than taking the initiative, avoids what jars and jolts, guards against irritations, is seldom prominent in conversation, is never wearisome, never mean or little, never insinuating of evil. Typecast with major qualifications by Newman, the Shaftesburian portrayal is of the gentleman "almost" defined and is accurate only "as far as it goes."⁴⁵ The carefully honed secular portrait, put forth with faint praise, displays for Newman "the limits of the contemplation of a Shaftesbury."⁴⁶

Newman's encapsulation of Shaftesbury's view, and the view of anyone else who thinks that reason and education alone are the key to solving all human problems, ends with the further qualification that the morally neutral characteristics of the gentleman can be found in the sinner as well as in the saint.

Such are some of the lineaments of the ethical character, which the cultivated intellect will form, apart from religious principle. They are seen within the pale of the Church and without it, in holy men, and in profligate; they form the *beau-ideal* of the world; they partly assist and partly distort the development of the Catholic. They may subserve the education of a St. Francis de Sales or a Cardinal Pole; they may be the limits of the contemplation of a Shaftesbury or a Gibbon. Basil and Julian were fellow-students at the schools of Athens; and one became the Saint and Doctor of the Church, the other her scoffing and relentless foe.⁴⁷

In a charming vignette from *Rise and Progress of Universities*, Newman writes of a contented English country gentleman: "To a life such as this, a man is more

⁴⁰ *Idea.*, 172-173.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 158.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 166.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 167.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 179.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 181.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 180-181.

attached, the longer he lives; and he would be more and more happy in it too, were it not for the memento within him, that books and gardens do not make a man immortal."⁴⁸ Similarly in *The Idea of a University*, although the focus remains on the secular gentleman more so than the Christian gentleman, Newman again offers a clue that points toward his own ideal type of the gentleman:

It is well to be a gentleman, it is well to have a cultivated intellect, a delicate taste, a candid, equitable, dispassionate mind, a noble and courteous bearing in the conduct of life,—these are connatural qualities of large knowledge; they are the objects of a University; I am advocating, I shall illustrate and insist upon them; but still, I repeat, they are no guarantee for sanctity or even for conscientiousness, they may attach to the man of the world, to the profligate, to the heartless,—pleasant, alas, and attractive as he shows when decked out in them.⁴⁹

THE CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN

The ideal of the religion of reason is wholly insufficient for a Christian: "liberal education makes not the Christian, not the Catholic, but the gentleman."⁵⁰ In other words, as examples, the intellectual study of ethics does not make one a moral or virtuous person; nor does the intellectual study of theology make one a religious or faith-filled person. A simple and good, uneducated country woman or factory worker, or even a child, may possess a deeper, stronger faith in God than the cultivated gentleman steeped in liberal learning. In Newman's memorable words:

Knowledge is one thing, virtue is another; good sense is not conscience, refinement is not humility, nor is largeness and justness of view faith. . . . Quarry the granite rock with razors, or moor the vessel with a thread of silk; then may you hope with such keen and delicate instruments as human knowledge and human reason to contend against those giants, the passion and the pride of man.⁵¹

A gentleman educated in the fine and polite arts, one with tact, good taste, and tolerance, as described by Shaftesbury, may be a believer or not, but Newman's ideal type is without a doubt the gentleman of faith. Whenever Newman writes of men such as St. Francis de Sales, or St. Paul, or his own special patron, St. Philip Neri, founder of his Congregation of the Oratory, he is describing magnanimous or great-souled men, that is, gentlemen, who are not only Christians, but who are saints. Unlike Aristotle's self-sufficient, magnanimous man, the saints Francis, Paul, and Philip are humble and gentle souls, whose humanity and nobility is more immediately Christian than Athenian. In place of Greek pride and self-sufficiency, Newman has substituted Christian humility and Christian charity as the highest and most praiseworthy of human attributes.

In *The Idea of a University*, Newman attends more critically to the proud university-educated gentleman who thinks he is the measure of all things, that is, to Shaftesbury's gentleman, than he does to the humble educated gentleman who

⁴⁸ JHN, "Discipline and Influence," *Rise and Progress of Universities*, intro. Mary Katherine Tillman (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 2001), 62-63.

⁴⁹ *Idea*, 110.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 110-111.

knows he is not. Too readily fascinated with himself and his own powers of reason, the self-sufficient gentleman submits to nothing and to no one. "They made their own minds their sanctuary, their own ideas their oracle, and conscience in morals was but parallel to genius in art, and wisdom in philosophy."⁵² Such a man easily falls prey to a culture for which man is the measure of all things.

On the other hand, there is the university-educated gentleman who knows that neither he nor his reason is the ultimate gauge of the true, the good, and the beautiful, who is of cultivated intellect and lively faith, who has mapped out the universe in relation to its Creator and who see things as they really are, in Him. Such a one continues to search for Truth with all the homage it is due.

The Catholic Church breathes its own unearthly spirit and light into the intellectual endeavors of the university, educates it in the profound truths that we are not self sufficient, that unaided reason can never solve all human problems, that ultimate truth is veiled in mystery, that we are all sinners, that charity and service have a claim upon us, that personal example and personal influence teach more than words alone do, and that a particular providence superintends our lives. Through the discipline, the ritual and the service of the academic, residential, and liturgical life of the Catholic institution, and through the unique charism and tradition of its religious foundation, liberal learning can expand beyond the bare idea of a university gentleman and can nourish the religious and moral integrity of the whole person and of the community.

It is true that some of the elements of Shaftesbury's portrait are not incompatible with the habits of the Christian gentleman, but some in fact are. A Christian gentleman may well be required to cause a jar or a jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast, to take the initiative in action, to be angry rather than tranquil in the face of wrong-doing, or to be in fact uncomfortable or inconvenienced in arrangements of a personal nature, and so forth. And certainly the Christian gentleman knows both the range and the limits of reason more accurately than does Shaftesbury's gentleman philosopher. The intellectual habit of faith always trumps the solely philosophical habit of an educated mind.

Newman's positive notion of the Christian gentleman, and more specifically, of the Oratorian gentleman, appears first and foremost in his Oratory papers of 1847 and 1848,⁵³ and only secondarily, and then only partially, four or five years later, in his Dublin Discourses of 1852 (as attended to above). But even as early as 1833, at the dawn of the Oxford Movement, Newman includes in an essay in *The Church of the Fathers*, an extract from a letter of Basil to Gregory stipulating the qualities that Basil thinks would become a true gentleman, especially if he lived with others as Basil did with Gregory. Writes Basil:

Should he be inquiring how to be at once meek and great-hearted, hearty against sin, meek towards men, he will find David noble in warlike exploits, meek and unruffled as regards revenge on enemies. Such, too, was Moses, rising up with

⁵² *Ibid.*, 167.

⁵³ Placid Murray, O.S.B., ed. and intro., *Newman the Oratorian: His unpublished Oratory Papers* (Leominster: Fowler Wright, 1980); hereafter cited: Murray 3-132, or *OrP* 133-466.

great heart upon sinners against God, but with meek soul bearing their evil-speaking against himself.⁵⁴

Newman interjects about Basil: "He would make the monk to be the true gentleman," then continues with Basil's words:

This, too, is a very principal point to attend to,—knowledge how to converse; to interrogate without over-earnestness; to answer without desire of display; not to interrupt a profitable speaker, nor to desire ambitiously to put in a word of one's own; to be measured in speaking and hearing; not to be ashamed of receiving, or to be grudging in giving. . . . One should reflect first what one is going to say, and then give it utterance; be courteous when addressed, amiable in social intercourse; not aiming to be pleasant by smartness, but cultivating gentleness in kind admonitions.—Ep. 2.⁵⁵

In addition and in particular, Newman's sermons on St. Paul and on St. Philip, who, like Newman, was devoted to Paul, are replete with references to Christian gentlemanliness.⁵⁶ St. Paul, for example, is said to have lost none of his natural human perfections, and imperfections, when he put on Christ. "We would not be unclothed,' [Paul] says, 'but clothed *upon* in Christ.' . . . He was not stripped of nature, but clothed with grace and the power of Christ."⁵⁷ Neither did he or Philip, nor Gregory or Basil, lose their philosophical habits of intellect upon becoming Christian. Instead, their natural and gentlemanly gifts were assumed and transformed by the habit of faith. "I do not mean to say that these virtues I have mentioned are necessarily Christian—but they are Christian *in* a Christian—When a Christian mind takes them up into itself they cease to be secular, they are sanctified by their possessor, and become the instruments of spiritual good."⁵⁸ It is not that the supernatural dimension overtook and eliminated the natural. "I mean there are Saints, whose mission lies rather in separating off from each other the world and the Truth; that of other Saints lies in bringing them together. Philip's was the latter."⁵⁹

Some saints seem so absorbed in God, Newman observes, that they "have no part in earth or in human nature; but to think, speak, and act under views, affections, and motives simply supernatural."⁶⁰ On the other hand,

There are those . . . in whom the supernatural combines with nature, instead of superseding it,—invigorating it, elevating it, ennobling it; and who are not the less men, because they are saints. They do not put away their natural endowments, but use them to the glory of the Giver; they do not act beside them, but through them; they do not eclipse them by the brightness of divine grace, but only transfigure them. . . .⁶¹

⁵⁴ JHN, "Basil and Gregory," *Church of the Fathers*, intro. Francis McGrath, F.M.S. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), 64–65; available at: <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/historical/volume2/fathers/cbchapter3.html>.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ See especially the two sermons about St. Paul that Newman delivered in 1857 in the new church of the Catholic University: "St. Paul's Characteristic Gift" and "St. Paul's Gift of Sympathy," *Sermons Preached on Various Occasions* (New York: Longmans Green, 1904). See also, in the same volume, "The Mission of St. Philip," preached in the Birmingham Oratory in 1850; hereafter cited: SVO; available at: <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/occasions/html>.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁵⁸ *OrP*, 214.

⁵⁹ SVO, 222.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

Concerning devout Catholics who are not liberally educated, which is “the state of the multitude of Christians in every age,” their faith, itself a principle of mental growth and always a means of new learning, fits them to be instruments of Divine Wisdom in the Church, though they do not have the wisdom of philosophy.⁶² Faith itself is their principle of mental illumination and enlargement, “till we see things as God sees them, with the judgment of his Spirit, and according to the mind of Christ.”⁶³

THE GENTLEMAN OF THE ORATORY

A full year after his reception into the Catholic Church, that is, in the fall of 1846, Newman traveled with Ambrose St. John to Milan and then to Rome for the study of Catholic theology and ordination as a priest. During his first months in Rome, he made progress in his intended research into and visiting of a number of religious communities “with reference not to my own vocation solely, but for one common vocation, if possible for me and the friends I had left behind me.”⁶⁴ On January 18, 1847, he began prayers about becoming an Oratorian and by the beginning of the next month, he had decided in the affirmative: “Whereas the tastes of all of us were very different, the Oratory allowed greater scope for them than any other Institution; again it seemed more adapted than any other for Oxford and Cambridge men.”⁶⁵

On February 21, Pope Pius IX approved Newman’s plan to introduce the Oratory in England. Newman’s patron in England, Bishop Nicholas Wiseman, wanted the small band of converts to form a community of educated men who could meet the growing rationalism and infidelity of the times through writing and preaching. He had already spoken to Newman about St. Philip Neri, “whose Congregation he earnestly recommended to me, as desirous of its introduction into England, since he considered it specially suited to the state of the country.”⁶⁶

In December of 1847, Newman began to compose what he would refer to as the “Santa Croce Papers,” so called after the old monastery in Rome where he and his small community, most of them now ordained priests, had retreated at the Pope’s bidding to learn the exercises and customs of St. Philip’s Oratory.⁶⁷ Newman had by then visited the Italian oratories and had read their founding documents. The Santa Croce papers are about the historical development of the idea of the Oratory traced back to its sixteenth century beginnings with St. Philip Neri, especially including the saint’s life as a pattern for every Oratorian. In the first four Santa Croce Papers, those of 1847 and 1848, writes Dom Placid Murray, author of *Newman the Oratorian*, “we have the rock-bottom foundation of Newman’s thought on the Oratory.”⁶⁸

Murray edited and published thirty-six Oratory papers in all, those composed in 1847 and 1848; those written through the 1850s, some of them long letters to the Birmingham Oratory while he was simultaneously instituting, writing about and

⁶² JHN, *Fifteen Sermons Preached before the University of Oxford*, intro. Mary Katherine Tillman (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), 302-303.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 311.

⁶⁴ *OrP*, 391.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 437.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 390.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 424.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 135-136.

eventually resigning from the Catholic University in Dublin; and finally a chapter address from 1878. There can be no doubt that Newman was consciously experiencing and reflecting upon the ideal type, the gentleman, as both Christian and as Oratorian, while he was actually composing the discourses of *The Idea of a University* (1852) and sketching Shaftesbury's portrait of the secular gentleman.

The Papal Brief of November, 1847, concerning what Newman called the "second founding" of the Oratory, mentions explicitly that the apostolate of the English Oratory was to be directed toward the *ordo honestior*, that is, to the upper classes, the leaders of the country as well as those who were at greatest risk from the problems of the modern world.⁶⁹ Newman's understanding of this papal charge, which had been directed by Pius IX to him when in Rome, led to conflict within the community, but it also led to an Oratorian apostolate by and to "those in higher ranks, the more learned and generally among the more educated."⁷⁰

What caused the major challenge to the young congregation was Frederick Faber's interpretation of the papal commission of the Oratorians to "the upper classes." Faber had joined the Oratory with his Wilfridian fathers only two weeks after Newman returned to England from Rome. He thought the papal mandate was a strict and literal order from the Pius IX, whereas Newman's thinking was broader and more inclusive. "In a community like the Oratory, the higher or more cultivated class would set the tone, and the rest would fall into it."⁷¹ Historically and by actual condition, Newman found, an Oratorian ordinarily exhibits "the breeding of a gentleman, the mental elevation and culture which learning gives, the accomplishments of literature, the fine arts, and similar studies."⁷²

Beginning with St. Philip, men who joined the Oratory had been, for the most part, lawyers and doctors, noblemen and courtiers, property owners and men of family, celebrated writers, musical artists, and historians.⁷³ On the whole, the Oratory was composed of priests who were able to influence and address themselves to the upper classes as their equals. Refusing Faber's interpretation, Newman justified his more modern thoughts on the issue.

Times have altered since St Philip lived. Whole classes of society have come into existence of late centuries; whereas there was no medium formerly between the very high and the very low, the peer and the tradesman or farmer. In those times there were no middle classes; not to be high was to be low, and to be low was to be ignorant and rude. . . .⁷⁴

Always of a flexible and interpretive mind, Newman established the principles involved and their implications for his Oratorians.

⁶⁹The Latin of the Papal Brief, together with the English translation, is contained in Murray's Appendix 2, 422-429. The pertinent section reads: "*Laudamus plurimum Newmanii, ejusque sociorum propositum, ut dum sacri ministerii muneribus omnibus in Anglia fungentur, illud simul animo defixum praecipue habeant, et efficiendum curent, quod ad Religionem in amplioribus praesertim urbibus, atque inter splendidioris, doctoris, et honestioris ordinis hominum coetus, amplificandam perducere posse putaverint.*" Ibid., 427.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., 321.

⁷² Ibid., 322.

⁷³ Ibid., 319-328.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 321.

Since by “upper classes” Englishmen do not simply mean the well-born and no others, but account “birth” as merely one element in the notion of “a gentleman”; since men of noble family will use the services of priests who are not such, provided they are gentlemen; since whole classes, having the education without the ancestry of a gentleman, have sprung into being since St Philip’s day, and want priests to instruct and direct them, it follows that, provided a priest rises above the level of his brethren in liberal education and refinement of mind, he answers to the vocation of the Oratory in this day. . . . So much on the rank of gentlemen, as being the ordinary condition of Fathers of the Oratory.⁷⁵

Furthermore, Newman wished to respect the particular “line,” as he called it, of each member of the community. He himself felt a strong sympathy for the poor, whom he had served well at St. Mary’s and Littlemore, and in the parish of the Birmingham Oratory. He was especially sympathetic toward the Irish immigrants driven to England by the famine, who labored at the lower edges of the English economy, toward the women who worked in the factories, and toward the ill and the imprisoned. All these were served directly by Newman or by one or another member of the Oratorian community, each of whom discerned his particular “line” within the larger Christian and Oratorian callings. Oratorian Father Stephen Dessain said it this way: “The Oratorians were free subjects, who had few rules and must learn to live together by means of tact, self-knowledge and the knowledge of others. Each had his own work and was to rely on personal influence rather than discipline in pursuing it.”⁷⁶

St. Philip’s Oratory was a set of spiritual practices, not a religious institute or order. No two Oratories had similar origins, so each was independent, having its own unique spirit. Overall, the characteristic spirit of the Oratory was to be natural, spontaneous, free, and joyous.

Interestingly, Newman saw his work for the Catholic University as essentially in discordance with his Oratorian vocation.

There can be no doubt at all, for instance, that my own present position in Dublin is distinctly incompatible with the Oratory, nor should I ever have taken it if left to myself. . . . Any occupation which carries a Father often or for a considerable time from the Oratory, is inconsistent with its spirit. . . .⁷⁷

Even though Newman’s university work was entirely about the educational mission the Oratory embraced, and even though education was Newman’s own particular “line,” Dublin indeed took him out of his “nest,” his *nido*, as it were, away from his home and his primary community. He found it remarkable “that the Oratorian Fathers should have gone out of their way to express the idea by the metaphorical word *nido* or nest, which is used by them almost technically.”⁷⁸ This meant that the community should never be too large or too distantly dispersed for personal knowledge, daily interaction and mutual affection.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 321–322.

⁷⁶ C. S. Dessain, *John Henry Newman* (New York: Oxford University, 1980), 92.

⁷⁷ *OrP*, 306.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 192.

I was bound not to leave England, yet bound to reside in Ireland, and, if my being Rector of the University necessarily involved my presence in Dublin, my absence from my Oratory was the breach of a duty as primary and sacred. . . . The Pope expressed a wish that I should be both in Dublin and Birmingham, but to be in both was to be in neither. . . .⁷⁹

By rule, every Oratorian had to possess sufficient property to sustain himself, and each was to have his own rooms and furniture, his books and small possessions which, without being luxurious, "should be such as to attach him to them. . . . In a word, he is to have what an Englishman expresses by the distinctive word *comfort*. And this characteristic of the Oratorian's private room is but a specimen of every part of an Oratorian establishment."⁸⁰ No liturgical or institutional detail was insignificant in providing for an Oratorian home.

The Church is to be handsome, the functions are to be performed with accuracy, and (if possible) with splendour, the music is to be attractive, the Sacristy is to be large and well furnished with vestments, the Refectory is in its way not to be inferior to the sacred buildings, and the table is to be abundant and respectable. Meanness, poverty, austerity, forlornness, sternness, are words unknown in an Oratorian House.⁸¹

Author-editor Murray finds it remarkable that "the one pivotal principle for Oratorian life which Newman brings away with him from Oxford and Littlemore is the necessity that an Oratorian be a 'gentleman.'"⁸² Community, in Newman's view as in St. Philip's, was foremost in the Oratorian calling. Gentlemanliness, Newman says first in the Oratory papers, is the hallmark of a liberal education rather than a badge of social rank,⁸³ and now it is to be of great assistance in the living out of holy community, which was "the only security and principle of permanence in an Oratory."⁸⁴

"Community" meant the situating of oneself in a voluntary and mutually affective small group of priests living together in a particular home, no vows but the bond of love. The Oratorian vocation was not a call to community in general or in the abstract, but to a particular given community with particular other priests. Obedience to all that is entailed in community life was the essential means, for an Oratorian, of cultivating the counsel of perfection. Considered a continual miracle by St Philip,⁸⁵ yielding to *santa communità* was understood by Newman to be a rare gift.

What always was from the first was Community; this was its very idea. . . . Here obedience is paid to the community as a first principle, . . . as our special means of perfection. Obedience then is our elementary principle, and thus we differ from others who live in community. . . . Without this obedience, though we lived in one house, we should fall back into the state of secular priests. . . . Not every good secular priest can live in community.⁸⁶

⁷⁹ *AW*, 286, as quoted by Murray, 95, note 19.

⁸⁰ Murray, 26.

⁸¹ *OrP*, 192.

⁸² Murray, 25.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁸⁴ *OrP*, 372.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 446.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 445.

Human affection was to be the animating principle of obedience to the community and was to be the vehicle and instrument of supernatural charity, which was enabled and supported in practice by the gentlemanlikeness of each community member. "Charity itself will find its best expression in terms of human refinement and tact such as would obtain between educated men."⁸⁷ Such practical virtues as gentlemanlike refinement and tact, concomitants of liberal education, would allow for the closeness and affection within the community, which otherwise might be rude, boorish, chaotic and likely impossible.

There is a far greater tendency to misunderstandings, jealousies, irritation, resentment and contention, when the mind has not been cultivated or what is called enlarged, than where books and the intercourse of society and the knowledge of the world have served to put things in their true light, to guard the mind from exaggeration, to make it patient of differences, and to give itself command amid differences of opinion and conduct.⁸⁸

Without the aid of divine grace, however, none of the cultivated virtues of gentlemanlikeness would have their special place in Oratorian life. Devout prayer and apostolic generosity in union with Christ were requisite. "We are not here contemplating refinement of mind by itself," Newman said in an early chapter address, "but as superadded to a high religious perfection. . . ."⁸⁹

Newman understood the Oratorian vocation not only as a comfortable and homelike setting for apostolic work, but "in itself a genuine way of perfection."⁹⁰ The pursuit of perfection for the gentleman of the Oratory was to involve the constant challenge and aim of doing all things well, especially the ordinary duties of every day.

To rise at the exact time, to give the due time to prayer, to meditate with devotion, to assist at mass with attention, to be recollected in conversation, these and similar observances carried duly through the day, make a man, as it is often said, half a saint, or almost a saint. It gives our aspirations too a definite scope.⁹¹

Community life and one's work were to be carried on as well as possible for the motive of voluntary love.

What is meant by perfection? I suppose it is the power or faculty of doing our duty exactly, naturally, and completely, whatever it is, in opposition to a performance which is partial, slovenly, languid, awkward, clumsy, and with effort. It is a life of faith, hope, and charity, elicited [sic] in successive acts according to the calls of the moment and to the vocation of the individual. It does not consist in any specially heroic deeds; it does not demand any fervour of devotion; but it implies regularity, precision, facility, and perseverance in a given sphere of duties. He is perfect who does the duties of the day perfectly. . . . It immediately depends upon *acquired habits* formed in the soul by means of past supernatural acts, or contemporaneously with their exercise."⁹²

Such obedience to the will of the community, even in the smallest details of attitude

⁸⁷ Murray, 24.

⁸⁸ *OrP*, 214.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 189-190.

⁹⁰ Murray, 127.

⁹¹ *OrP*, 235.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 315-316.

and industry, would provide sufficient mortification of self-will as not to require the imposition of any further austerities. "I do not know any thing more difficult, more sobering, so strengthening than [sic] the constant aim to go through the ordinary day's work well."⁹³

Perfection involves some mortification, which is of counsel, not of precept. What is that mortification in our case? It is not that of renouncing literature and literary occupations, or the refinement of mind consequent upon them; it is not that of ceasing to be gentlemen and scholars: on the contrary, a certain moral and intellectual standard, higher than is necessary for secular priests in general, is one of the qualifications of the Oratory, as being an institution intended (the English Oratory expressly so) for the service of the upper classes.⁹⁴

Newman points out the high religious perfection and saintliness of the first fathers of the Oratory. And then he notes "in addition that they are gentlemen besides: and it does not follow, because refinement is worthless without saintliness, that it is needless and useless with it."⁹⁵ In the same way that the liberal art of fine oratory enhances the presentation and persuasiveness of a logical argument, so can gentlemanlikeness "set off and recommend an interior holiness."⁹⁶ In fact, "as a system and product of Christian excellence within," gentlemanlikeness as "external polish and refinement, which is so valueless in itself morally . . . is useful as a sort of rhetoric in conduct."⁹⁷

For guidance in all these matters of Oratorian life, Newman looked to his patron, St. Philip Neri, into whose rooms in Rome crowded both the rich and powerful, the poor and the illiterate. Phillip, himself an educated Christian gentleman who had studied "polite literature," the classics, philosophy, and theology, had begun his mission with catechizing the poor in the church porches, yet he ended as "the guide and confessor of popes, cardinals, and the upper classes generally."⁹⁸ Newman's emulation and love of St. Philip often inspired him to reflection and prayer.

Only may we have a portion of that grace and that blessing which rested on the first disciples of St. Philip! Only may the Santo Padre himself, who with such caution, deliberation, prudence, judgment, and success guided the course of his nascent Congregation, be with us now in England, and bind us together in that his own spirit of love and gentleness, which is better than all vows, and adorn us with his own beauty of holiness and amiableness of word and deed, which is an influence stronger, wider, surer, than the most cunningly organized association.⁹⁹

CONCLUSION

Years before any appearance in *The Idea of a University*, Newman writes in the Oratory papers about "all those things which issue in what we familiarly mean by a gentleman, or in a word gentlemanlikeness, however attained, whether by these

⁹³ Ibid., 235.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 328.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 189.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 189-190.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 191.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 269.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 171.

means or by other, and still better if really flowing from the Christian spirit within . . .

¹⁰⁰
In the 1852 discourses of *The Idea of a University*, the qualified definition of the gentleman, now more narrowly conceived as scholar and philosopher, does not come across very positively, for it is really Shaftesbury's secular ideal. The Oratorian ideal of the gentleman, on the other hand, is about the transformation of the whole person as a believing, purposeful, and devout Catholic, no matter the means to that Christian refinement and nobility. The Shaftesburian description of the gentleman, often so ironically thought to be Newman's own, is of one who never inflicts pain, of a culturally refined, and prudently reserved man of good taste who never "rocks the boat." Though many of the attributes of the ideal man of the world and the ideal Oratorian seem exteriorly the same, there could hardly be two more opposite depictions of the gentleman than the Shaftesburian aesthete and the Oratorian priest. Both types, however, are prone to the same temptation of pride, especially the lording it over those less educated and those less refined. Both kinds of gentleman Newman cautions as well against idleness, the waste of time, which he viewed as "the largest and most elementary waste" to which the privileged, both in learning and in religion, are so liable.¹⁰¹

Newman's full-blown ideal is the unity of the Catholic, the scholar and the gentleman—found not only in the same place, such as the university and the oratory, but in the same persons.

I wish the intellect to range with the utmost freedom, and religion to enjoy an equal freedom; but what I am stipulating for is, that they should be found in one and the same place, and exemplified in the same persons. . . . I want the intellectual layman to be religious, and the devout ecclesiastic to be intellectual."¹⁰²

In composing *The Idea of a University*, particularly Discourse 8, Newman seems almost to have abstracted the Shaftesburian sketch of the gentleman from out of his own historically detailed earlier portrayal of the ideal Oratorian gentleman. Of the Dublin discourses, he writes:

I am investigating in the abstract, and am determining what is in itself right and true. For the moment I know nothing, so to say, of history. I take things as I find them; I have no concern with the past. . . .¹⁰³

The Oratory papers, on the other hand, are factually, empirically, and historically grounded. They show that when the English Oratory was still in its infancy, Newman was already giving his community addresses on the origin, development and spread of the Oratory, just as he would later do with respect to the rise and progress of universities. In a chapter address of 1878, Newman said:

A congregation like this, in the intention of the Church, and of those who set it up, is in its idea everlasting, one and the same through all time, until the end of all things comes. Its members change, but it remains; to be ever one and the

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 190.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 348.

¹⁰² *SVO*, 13. Preached in 1856, the year of the opening of the university church in Dublin.

¹⁰³ *Idea*, 24.

same, to be ever changing, both together, one as much as the other, is its normal state. . . . Of necessity, it is by change, that it perpetuates its identity; . . . succession is the principle and the law of its being.¹⁰⁴

The Idea of a University is decidedly and by intention a series of ahistorical discourses dedicated to the "perfect handling of a theory,"¹⁰⁵ that is, to the laying out and presentation of a bare idea or type by the isolation of its essence and the clarification of its definition.

I say, a University, taken in its bare idea, and before we view it as an instrument of the Church, has this object and this mission; it contemplates neither moral impression nor mechanical production; it professes to exercise the mind neither in art nor in duty; its function is intellectual culture¹⁰⁶

In Newman's Appendix to the 1852 publication of *The Idea*, he writes: "The question before us is as to the idea on the whole, or the formal conception of a University."¹⁰⁷

Because Newman felt strongly that everything must be done on an idea, it would seem as though, in very different ways, he wanted to isolate both the idea of the Oratory and the idea of the university, from all of their externals and accidents of time and place—the idea of the Oratory by means of historical analysis, the idea of a university more philosophically by means of an abstraction from its embeddedness in historical instances.

[A great idea's] vital element needs disengaging from what is foreign and temporary. . . . Its beginnings are no measure of its capabilities, nor of its scope. . . . Old principles reappear under new forms. It changes with them in order to remain the same."¹⁰⁸

If he could mentally grasp the essential idea of the Oratory, he must have thought, he could transplant it to England, a very different circumstance and setting, without losing its substance as the Oratory. And if he could mentally locate the bare idea of a university, he could transplant it de novo into the reality of Catholic Ireland. According to biographer Ian Ker, "It was one of Newman's deepest convictions that to cling to the literal letter of the past was to lose its essential spirit, and therefore to betray it."¹⁰⁹ One of the ways Newman put it was this: "The past never returns; the course of events, old in its texture, is ever new in its colouring and fashion."¹¹⁰

It is not insignificant that Newman had just published his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* in 1845, two years before beginning the Santa Croce papers and but five additional years before composing the Dublin discourses. Newman had an abiding interest in how the seminal ideas of Church, University, and Oratory arose, expanded, developed, and spread by working themselves out on the large field of history. Murray sees the Oratorian ideal develop from Italy to England through the "preservation of type" and the "continuity of principles."¹¹¹ Murray writes:

¹⁰⁴ *Opp*, 384.

¹⁰⁵ Walter Pater, as quoted by I. T. Ker, "Editor's Introduction," *Idea*, xlii.

¹⁰⁶ *Idea*, 114.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 435.

¹⁰⁸ JHN, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 1989), 40; hereafter cited: Development; available at <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/development/index.html>; hereafter cited as *Dev.*

¹⁰⁹ Ian Ker, *John Henry Newman A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1988), 441.

¹¹⁰ *Idea*, 31.

¹¹¹ Murray, 104 and 113.

Having thus penetrated to the centre of things and seized on the heart of the Oratorian idea, he could all the more easily shed its outward Italian complexion. . . . He was able to introduce the Oratorian idea into English Catholic life, without any direct supervision, direction, support or backing from Italy.¹¹²

In truth, the ideal of the Oratorian gentleman includes, subsumes, yet reaches beyond all that is positive and compatible in the ideal of the “mere” university gentleman, for what is wanted in the English Oratory, according to Pope Pius IX’s Brief, is “a society of men outstanding in learning and holiness.”¹¹³

In an Aristotelian understanding, the essence or form or idea of an entity is left intact throughout an only accidental change. So the university Newman describes and the Oratory he idealizes exist nowhere in their full reality, but exist rather as “ideal types” that can be patterns or models for any particular university and oratory that is instituted. Each type suggests antecedent probabilities of what form the university or the oratory ought to imitate, probabilities based on tradition, on other institutions of the same kind, and on the reality that ought to be.

The term “ideal type” was made famous by Max Weber (1864–1920) in his writings on methodology in the social sciences. Newman employs the concept over a half-century earlier, in particular as the first note of an idea’s valid development in its advance through history. “*Unity of type* becomes so much the surer guarantee of the healthiness and soundness of developments, when it is persistently preserved in spite of their number or importance.”¹¹⁴ An ideal type, being neither an abstraction nor a particular example, might be described as a “concrete universal.” A kind of conceptual apparatus, it is an aid to understanding because it already entails both description and interpretation.

Were it a mere generalization, it would have varied with the subjects from which it was generalized; but though its subjects vary with the age, it varies not itself These variations imply, instead of discrediting, the archetypal idea. . . .¹¹⁵

An ideal type includes prepredicative suggestions of what Newman calls “antecedent probabilities,” that is, one brings to the “type” some preconceived sense of its meaning. Just as “Capitalism” and the “Protestant Ethic” are illustrations of Weber’s meaning of the ideal type, so “the Gentleman” is for Newman. And so are “the University” and “the Oratory.”

. . . . Whereas all great ideas are found, as time goes on, to involve much which was not seen at first to belong to them, and have developments, that is enlargements, applications, uses and fortunes, very various, one security against error and perversion in the process is the maintenance of the original type, which the idea presented to the world at its origin, amid and through all its apparent changes and vicissitudes from first to last.¹¹⁶

The ideal type, the gentleman, had to be disentangled from its counterfeits: from his rowdy schoolmates; the nineteenth-century English country gentleman; Aristotle’s

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 92.

¹¹³ *OrP*, 422.

¹¹⁴ *Development*, 178.

¹¹⁵ *Idea*, 102–103.

¹¹⁶ *Development*, 207.

self-sufficient magnanimous man; Shaftesbury’s rationalist man of the world; distinguished even from the faithful and devout, though uneducated, Catholic Christian. Newman’s ideal type of the gentleman is found, not only in its essence, but in its integrity and completeness, in the gentleman-scholar of the Oratory. He is a man who lives in a Christian community of faith by means of an enlarged and illumined mind and the gentlemanlike accoutrements that flow from a liberal education. Newman’s ideal Oratorian is what John Dryden conceived of in another context: “His tribe were God Almighty’s gentlemen.”¹¹⁷

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

64. “A BLIGHT”

Verses on Various Occasions, 121.

WHAT time my heart unfolded its fresh leaves
In springtime gay, and scatter’d flowers around
A whisper warn’d of earth’s unhealthy ground,
And all that there love’s light and pureness grieves;
Sun’s ray and canker-worm,
And sudden-whelming storm;—
But, ah! my self-will smiled, nor reck’d the gracious
sound.

So now defilement dims life’s memory-springs;
I cannot hear an early-cherish’d strain,
But first a joy, and then it brings a pain—
Fear, and self-hate, and vain remorseful stings:
Tears lull my grief to rest,
Not without hope, this breast
May one day lose its load, and youth yet bloom again.

Lazaret, Malta. January 19, 1833.

Available at: <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/verses/verse64.html>

¹¹⁷ John Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, Part i, line 645; available at: <http://www.bartleby.com/100/191.html> and <http://www.theotherpages.org/poems/dryden03.html>.