

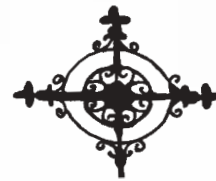


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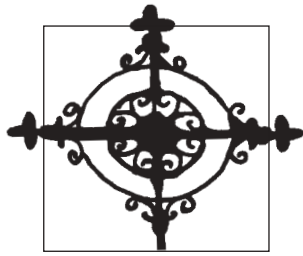
Newman and the Restoration of the Interpersonal in Higher Education

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Santa Clara Lecture
Santa Clara University
November 14, 2006

Vol. 13



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Prenote

We have come together this evening to think about higher education, and to do so within a history in which two dreams cross. Neither of these was present to the other at its beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century, and each has traced over 150 years a remarkable career. I speak of the founding in the United States of Catholic secondary schools and colleges out of the hopes of a few men and women; I speak of the dream of John Henry Newman that the Church would establish in Dublin a Catholic University in many ways modeled in its government upon Louvain and serving all the English-speaking Catholics. What emerged eventually from the dream of the American founders was often a secondary school become a college, a college become a university. Santa Clara has written such a history. What emerged from Newman, almost by counterpoint, was an inconstant structure, continually threatened and transmogrified, eventually altered beyond recognition, but also a series of what he called “discourses”—a book, a masterpiece, *The Idea of a University*—of such immense moment that the great Cambridge professor of literature, Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, could commend to his students that “the book is so wise—so eminently wise—as to deserve being bound by the young student of literature for a frontlet on his brow and a talisman on his writing wrist.”¹ Even more for our purposes, John M. Cameron claimed that “modern thinking on university education is a series of footnotes to Newman’s lectures and essays.”²

Our hope this November evening is to enter modestly, but in very different ways into both dreams, becoming part of this “series of footnotes” in what Hans-Georg Gadamer calls a “fusion of horizons.”³ Such a fusion will occur when the accomplishments and the deficiencies of the American university draw our attention to perhaps unattended virtualities in Newman’s work, and conversely when we allow *The Idea of a University* to pose questions and even serious challenges to our American institutions of higher learning—provoking that critical assessment of possibilities which is the irritating condition

for growth. In such a fusion of horizons, one learns more about the text and one learns more about oneself. Perhaps a bit painfully because Newman seriously calls into court some of the usages of American higher education that have become almost axiomatic among us. This intersection of dreams focuses the question I should like to pursue with you this evening: What issues/resources does *The Idea of a University* present for contemporary higher education in the United States, perhaps especially for Catholic higher education?

Part One. Newman's Understanding of the University

Let us begin our assessment of *The Idea of a University*, then, in the same way that Newman began his book—with the preface. For within the very first paragraph of this preface, we find the university defined by two coordinates: [1] its characteristic activity and [2] its appropriate subjects.

The activity characteristic of the university, for Newman, is teaching—not research. The university, as Newman understood it in the nineteenth century, was primarily a place for the education of students, of the inculcation within them of knowledge and habits, of the formation of a mental culture. And he distinguished the university from other institutions also dedicated to teaching by the subject appropriate to its teaching, namely, universal knowledge. Thus, the book opens with this first sentence: “The view taken of a University in these Discourses is the following: —that it is a place of teaching universal knowledge. This implies that its object [purpose] is, on the one hand, intellectual, not moral; and, on the other, that it is the diffusion and extension of knowledge rather than the advancement.”⁴ So Newman initiates his discourses by distinguishing the *teaching* of students from that scientific contribution to *knowledge* that goes today by the name of research and discovery. And he insists repeatedly that the university exists above all for teaching, not for research. How many American universities today would subscribe to that thesis? Please notice, as so many have not, that Newman is speaking about the

university, not about its component residential colleges. We shall have occasion to consider later the unique contribution that these colleges offer.

Let us first weigh Newman's insistence on teaching. What counted evidentially and apodictically in this conviction were the presence, the importance and the needs of students. “If its object [the university's] were scientific philosophical discovery, I do not see why a University should have students.”⁵ In contrast to the university, Newman marked off the “academy,” as a research institution. Its central activity was scientific inquiry or research and its purpose was the creation and the advancement of new knowledge. Such an academy was the Royal Society or the Ashmolean or Architectural Society, “which primarily contemplates Science itself, and not students.”⁶ We must make the distinction between the university and the academy in terms of teaching and research. But this distinction would be seriously miscast—as seems frequently done today in rendering Newman's theory—by simply isolating teaching from research. Newman recalls that the Royal Society originated in Oxford University as did the Ashmolean and Architectural Societies. He reminds his readers that academies have “frequently been connected with Universities, as committees, or, as it were, congregations or delegacies subordinate to them.”⁷ In his establishment of the Catholic university in Dublin, as Ian Ker notes, Newman did not want his faculty “overburdened with lectures” so that they would have time for writing and research, and he established a university journal that would twice a year present the research of the faculty in arts and sciences.⁸ It is crucial to underline that the primacy of teaching did not entail the elimination or denigration of research and scholarship. On the contrary, good teaching, i.e., education, necessitated research and original inquiry. But it did require in the university as such—in the time and concentration given these variant academic commitments and interests—their subordination to the education of students.⁹ To be secondary and subordinate is not to be inessential.

As in their purposes, so also in the habits of mind or skills that the academy and the university foster or require, the contrast is sharp: “To discover and to teach are distinct functions; they are also distinct gifts, and are not commonly found united in the same person. He, too, who spends his day in dispensing his existing knowledge to all comers is unlikely to have either leisure or energy to acquire new.”¹⁰ And finally the university and the academy differed profoundly in the human life that was consequent upon their purposes. The life of research is solitary, and “the common sense of mankind has associated the search after truth with seclusion and quiet.”¹¹ The life of teaching in higher education is essentially communal. The university is itself and essentially a common good.¹²

Teaching, then, defines the purpose of the university, and this gives centrality and primacy to the two major components of the university: the teachers and the students. Above everything else—above library and books, degree programs, buildings and systems, administrators and religious ministers—teachers are what the university above all offers uniquely to its students. This may seem somewhat overdrawn, but in his *Rise and Progress of Universities*, Newman even contrasted two kinds of education: [1] education through books and [2] “the ancient method, of oral instruction, of present communication between man and man, of teachers instead of learning, of the personal influence of a master, and the humble initiation of a disciple, and, in consequence, of great centres of pilgrimage and throng [i.e., the universities], which such a method of education necessarily involves.”¹³ There are many ways of getting an education, and books do not a university make. Teachers and students, however, do make a university. One does not need a university for books; they can be found at home and in libraries. But one does need a university to have a congress of teachers. Books are obviously critical and essential, and Newman’s *Apologia pro vita sua* records the great influence they exercised over the direction of his life; but in the university, books become “an instrument of teaching in the hands of a teacher.”¹⁴ Texts mediated the living presence and influence of the teacher. What the university

uniquely gives—as a library cannot—is the personal interchange and influence of great teachers. Let us pause to examine this prodigious claim to supremacy—perhaps shocking in its very enunciation.

Newman contended that “the general principles of any study you may learn by books at home; but the detail, the colour, the tone, the air, the *life* which makes it live in us, you must *catch* all these from those in whom it lives already.” [Note the principal terms in the latter part of that sentence.] Only personal contact, conversation, argument and instruction can endlessly explore the “special spirit and delicate peculiarities of its subject with that rapidity and certainty which attend on the sympathy of mind with mind, through the eyes, the look, the accent, and the manner, in casual expressions thrown off at the moment, and the unstudied turns of familiar conversation.”¹⁵ This is obviously not to question that the written works of human genius offer an endless possibility of education and wisdom, but to note that Newman rated personal contact and influence as supreme, even prior to books. Such teachers were definitional in a university—the unique offer of a university: “the fulness [of human wisdom] is in one place alone. It is in such assemblages and congregations of intellect [i.e., in universities] that books themselves, the masterpieces of human genius, are written or at least originated.”¹⁶

Let me contrast this understanding of a university with another formulation of higher education, one radical and deep, liberal and liberating, one to which I am much indebted and before which I pause in the greatest admiration. There was a proposal discussed and argued, adopted and perhaps even executed for a time at the University of Chicago under the great Robert Maynard Hutchins. In his *University of Utopia*, Hutchins suggested that if a prospective student could present herself at matriculation, sit successfully for a series of fourteen general examinations that covered the subject-matter of the undergraduate curriculum, she should be awarded the BA and proceed on to more specialized studies—without taking its classes or participating in its life.¹⁷

I think that Newman's theory poses some significant disagreement. Hutchins gave a decisive priority to the reading of books and the passing of comprehensive, lengthy examinations as an indication of knowledge and skills. But for Newman, the actual years lived within the university—with all of its galaxies of personal influences—were equally critical, granted that their product was more subtle, atmospheric, and much more difficult to certify. There are simply too many intellectually formative, but intangible influences in university life that cannot be measured by a few hours of examination and whose agency only becomes effective and perceptible in the complex and subsequent interchanges of life itself. Such are casual conversations and chance remarks, more formal presentations and lectures, the give and take of papers or of extended arguments, the intellectual excitement and idealism evoked or communicated by battling convictions regnant in various sections of the campus, the wonderful leisure given over to “bull-sessions,” the witness emerging over time to academic investment and engagement and integrity—all of these come and only can come, thought Newman, from that “which nature prescribes in all education, the personal presence of a teacher, or, in theological language, Oral Tradition.”¹⁸

Education with its interchanges of personal reflections and sensitivities is something that is caught like fire from great teachers, as Newman indicated. And if one catches this fire from peers and from chance acquaintances, then these have become for him or her teachers. No set of examinations—only life itself can judge the success of such a university education. Perhaps that is the reason that Jacques Maritain could say so many years later that great thoughts and great friendships require great waste of time.¹⁹

Newman's stress on the interpersonal in education brings us to the other component encompassed by the university: the students. As teaching was the university's essential activity, so its essential product was not science nor art nor the advancement of knowledge; its essential product was the students, the development of the students. “To make

them something or other is its great object,” wrote Newman.²⁰ What is this “something or other” that the university is uniquely to effect? It is their growth in liberal knowledge, the “culture of the intellect.”²¹ This must be the defining effect of university teaching, as surely as discovery and invention of new knowledge must be the result of serious research. For if the teacher or—more properly—the teachers together are the agents of that activity proper to the university, the student is the product or, more precisely, the change, the growth, the intellectual maturation of the student is the product. It is here that the university fails or succeeds in being what it is.²² It is by this that its teaching must be judged.

Research and new discovery, the inquiry that advances a field or the discoveries that contribute to the progress of science—obviously these must exist in the university. One must love and so will spontaneously advocate what one teaches, and this necessarily means its advance through research and public conversations. But in Newman's stark delineations, they exist in a subordinate, if essential, position in the university as such because they further the great end of the university: the cultivation of the minds of its students, their intellectual culture.²³ The university is to develop, to enlarge the student in two respects: [1] in her *habits* of acting—the manner in which she regularly conducts herself; and [2] in the *objects* that she knows.²⁴ Let us look at each of these.

A liberal education is to foster in the students certain “habits of acting.” Examples of these are: “... the force, the steadiness, the comprehensiveness and the versatility of the intellect, the command over our own powers, the instinctively just estimate of things as they pass before us ... This is real cultivation of mind ... It brings the mind into form.”²⁵ The purpose of the university as such is neither moral nor religious excellence. It is this beauty of the intellect, the human mind's being brought into form: Allow me to cite Newman on this beauty of the intellect.

Intellect too, I repeat, has its beauty, and it has those who aim at it [the teachers]. [Education is] To open the mind, to correct it, to refine it, to enable it to know, and to digest, master, rule, and use its knowledge, to give it power over its own faculties, application, flexibility, method, critical exactness, sagacity, resource, address, eloquent expression, is an object as intelligible ... as the cultivation of virtue, while, at the same time, it is absolutely distinct from it.²⁶

Such are the habits of acting that the university is to engender. And if you asked who in our world embodies such a mental culture, I should think spontaneously of such figures as George Keenan, Isaiah Berlin, Karl Rahner and Newman himself.

For the general content of such a university education or the objects of this knowledge—what one comes to know and love in liberal education is unlimited. Its boundaries are those of universal knowledge. The student is not to be confined to any particular specialty, but she should have some grasp of the character and the interrelationships among the various forms of human knowledge, among which she will select her future direction and profession. Newman called these various knowledges “the sciences.”

There is obviously no way that the human intellect can comprehend all that is. It needs to abstract some aspects of things and to prescind from others and so to formulate and concentrate upon various sciences that will themselves “embrace respectively larger or smaller portions of the field of knowledge.”²⁷ Thus, there is an inescapable pluralism or manifold among the various knowledges, a diversity among them in principles, components, evidence and method that must be respected.

The student must come to see that ethics, for example, is not anthropology nor experimental psychology nor economics nor literary studies—but each will tell something fragmentary about what it means to be a human being. You cannot reduce all social problems to ethics

and then persuade yourself—even self-righteously—that you have solved complicated issues in economics and psychology. To acquire some understanding of the intricate thing that is a human being or a human culture or a human society—all of these sciences and many more must be brought into play.²⁸ To exclude any of them or to reduce all of them to one—because that is the only science you happen to know—“prejudices the accuracy and completeness of our knowledge altogether.”²⁹ In that exclusion, the individual science can become cancerous; substituting its own disordered growth in the place of its missing sister. So political economy can illegitimately subsume ethics, moving from arguments about the acquisition and distribution of wealth to the constitution of the good life; scientists will write books on the validity of religious convictions and theological claims; literary criticism will declaim apodictically on social and economic structures; and Roman theologians pronounce on the hypothetical character of the planetary system or of evolution.³⁰

Each of the disciplines represents an aspect of what is; collectively they form the educational pattern that the Hellenistic Greeks called *enkuklios paideia*, what has been classically translated “the circle of the arts” or—since the nineteenth century—liberal or general education. This education comprises the skills and knowledge of free human beings that they need to realize the possibilities and promise of a human life. Such an education gave an abiding temper or quality to the intellect and human sensibility and issued in what Newman called the “philosophical habit of mind.”³¹

This common purpose demands that the faculty, the professorial body itself become a genuine community, one based upon interchange and collaboration and evoking or instilling that culture of the intellect which is the philosophical habit of mind. Such an effect requires that unique intellectual community which is the university with the faculty at its heart. Obviously, no student can take up and master all of these disciplines; “the philosophical habit of mind” is not another word for dilettantism or high pedantry. But students can

obtain some sense of this academic plurality and the endless richness of an educated sensibility by living in the university where this plurality is represented in the faculty and curriculum. As Newman wrote, “They [the students] will be the gainers by living among those and under those who represent the whole circle. This I conceive to be the advantage of a seat of universal learning . . . an assemblage of learned men, zealous for their own sciences, and rivals of each other, are brought, by familiar intercourse and for the sake of intellectual peace, to adjust together the claims and relations of their respective subjects of investigation. They learn to respect, to consult, to aid each other. Thus is created a purse and clear atmosphere of thought, which the student also breathes, though in his own case he only pursues a few sciences out of the multitude.”³² This is the community that is the faculty as the constant dynamic source of the university, and this community by its avocations and inquiries is itself continually teacher.

One understands such a communal institution better if one respects how it comes to be. So Newman insisted in his *Historical Sketches* upon the genesis of a university out of a series of preceding and succeeding, but imperfect academic communities, and finally out of the constituent colleges. For “generally speaking, it [the university] has grown up out of schools, or colleges, or seminaries, or monastic bodies, which had already lasted for centuries; and, different as it is from them all, has been little else than their natural result and completion.”³³ Indeed, one of the deadly problems besetting the Catholic University of Dublin was its lack of such an organic history. It did not emerge out of previous academic communities. The colleges of the universities, as Newman envisaged them, continued in their own analogous way the Museum of Alexandria, the great Muslim colleges at Cordoba, Granada, and Malaga, and the cathedral schools and colleges of Medieval Europe.³⁴

Newman in this insistence upon the organic growth of the university within its colleges reminds one very much of Aristotle in contrast to Plato. When in the *Republic*, Plato had wanted to give a

more adequate instantiation to justice so that this virtue—“writ large”—could be better discussed, he embodied justice in the *polis*, the city-state. He built this community rationally and artificially, that is, in terms of functions that were to supply human needs. Thus we get a farmer, a builder, a weaver, a shoemaker, and so forth “and when these partners and helpers are gathered together in one habitation, the body of inhabitants is termed a *polis*”³⁵ These constituents could address all human needs, and the congeries of these functionaries makes up the city. Aristotle, in sharp contrast, traced the *polis* as it organically and actually developed out of previous communities: the families grew into the household or clan; these households, to the village or town; the towns finally into the *polis*.³⁶ Because of his care and respect for these evolving and component communities, Aristotle could never eliminate the family for the authorities or the guardians; the family was a constituent unit of the *polis*.

So Newman dwells, even lovingly, upon the residential colleges of the university—these abiding constituents of a university. Devoted to study, they are to be a home for those who live within them. Newman’s choice of “home” for the residential college carried much of the English connotations of that beloved word. The college was to provide security, refuge, shelter, moral training, instruction for the young and to become for them over the years, Newman wrote, “the shrine of our best affections, the bosom of our fondest recollections.”³⁷ These residential colleges continued into the nineteenth century the schools that preceded the rise of the university, but they contrasted almost by counterpoint with the university they constituted. Let me cite Newman as he drew these distinctions:

The University is for the Professor, and the College for the Tutor; The University is for the philosophical discourse, the eloquent sermon, or the well contested disputation; and the College for the catechetical lecture. The University is for theology, law, and medicine, for natural history, for physical science, and for the sciences generally and their promulgation;

the College is for the formation of character, intellectual and moral, for the cultivation of the mind, for the improvement of the individual, for the study of literature, for the classics, and those rudimental sciences which strengthen and sharpen the intellect. The University being the element of advance, will fail in making good its ground as it goes; the College, from its Conservative tendencies, will be sure to go back, because it does not go forward. It would seem as if a University seated and living in Colleges, would be perfect institution, as possessing excellences of opposite kinds.³⁸

If one stays with Newman's name of "university," attempting to equate it with the contemporary American institution of that name, and fails to attend to its radical differences and to the critical character and contribution of Newman's colleges, the humane and religious formation of the student will escape him. Much of the university was worked through the life of the colleges. Since the Middle Ages, the colleges had grown to become "the medium and instrument of University action."³⁹ The university was to be "seated and living in the colleges."

It is imperative also not to miss the religious and pastoral office that was a province of the College tutors, the tutors within the college, living with the students the life of the college. Newman had struggled to restore in Oriel the essential personal relations, the guidance, and the influence that the tutors should exercise in the lives of the students. At great personal cost, he had insisted upon this irreplaceable relationship between the tutors and their students, scoring the distance between the tutors and students as a fundamental corruption of the tutorial collegiate system. As an old man, he could recall:

When I was Public Tutor of my College at Oxford, I maintained, even fiercely, that my employment was distinctly pastoral. I considered that, by Statutes of the University, a Tutor's profession was of a religious nature. I never would

allow that, in teaching the classics, I was absolved from carrying on, by means of them, in the minds of my pupils, an ethical training. I considered a College Tutor to have the care of souls ... To this principle I have been faithful through my life.⁴⁰

And what Newman remembered after so many years, his former students retained with great gratitude. Thomas Mozley, who became a student at Oriel the same year that Newman became a fellow, remarked that "there were plenty of college tutors in those days whose relation to the undergraduates about them was simply official and nominal," but in contrast Newman "stood in the place of a father, or an elder and affectionate brother."⁴¹

It was such a college—and through it, such a university—to which young instructors would also be affiliated as tutors. To this college, they would become bound as permanent members; according to its expectations they would year after year meet a set of responsibilities. As the tutor passed through various positions at the university, he would remain a formative member of the college. He would live within the society of other members of his college whether at high table or public lectures or evensong, while caring for the multiform progress of the student. The college and the university would command his loyalties through all of his life. He might—and often did—leave the university for another career, but seldom would he leave it for another university or college. With Newman, this loyalty was to Trinity as a student and to Oriel as a fellow. He speaks of being "proud of my college," and it is about Trinity that the *Apologia* becomes poignant. Trinity had welcomed him as a boy and was to honor him as an old man. Saying good-bye to his former tutor at Trinity, Newman recalled as he ended the history of his conversion in the *Apologia*:

In him I took leave of my first College, Trinity, which was so dear to me, and which held on its foundation so many who had been kind to me both when I was a boy, and all through

my Oxford life. Trinity had never been unkind to me. There used to be much snap-dragon growing on the walls opposite my freshman's rooms there, and I had for years taken it as the emblem of my own perpetual residence even unto death at my University.⁴²

Part Two: Newman's Challenge to the Contemporary University

It might be appropriate at this juncture to raise once more our governing question: What challenges does Newman's understanding of the university—even as we have so sparsely inventoried it here—pose for the contemporary American university, perhaps especially for Jesuit higher education?

Primary, and foundational to everything he wrote, is obviously the centrality given to teaching. But the world has turned many times since such a proposition would pass muster unchallenged. Clark Kerr, former president of the University of California, traces two revolutions in the understanding of a university since the teaching university of Newman. At the very time in which Newman's discourses were appearing—the American universities were shifting their paradigm from the Oxford inspired university living in its colleges, to Berlin and the research university of Wilhelm von Humbolt established by the Prussian Ministry in 1809.⁴³ Van Wyck Brooks locates the beginning of this revolution in American higher education in the *Wanderjahre* of Edward Everett and, especially, of George Ticknor at Göttingen in 1815 -1816. The subsequent decades were to import this German influence into Harvard and through Harvard into American higher education.⁴⁴ The university was increasingly to be defined and evaluated primarily by research and publications and distinguished by its graduate departments and professional schools, a development in specializations fostered by such distinguished leaders in American higher learning as Daniel Coit Gilman at Johns Hopkins in 1876 and

Charles W. Eliot at Harvard from 1869-1909. The major state universities followed suit.⁴⁵

With the primary emphasis increasingly given to research and specialization, as Clark Kerr points out, “each professor had his own interests, each professor wanted the status of having his own special course . . . Freedom for the student to choose became freedom for the professor to invent; and the professor's love of specialization has become the student's hate of fragmentation.”⁴⁶ This became the modern research university, eventuating in what the American philosopher Sidney Hook perceived as what he called the “subtle discounting of the teaching process.”⁴⁷ In the undergraduate practices of many universities—whatever their proclaimed values—research and publication came to outweigh serious teaching; it is obviously easier to total up the scholarly articles in refereed journals than to assess serious, provocative, and formative education. In such a world, the undergraduate courses become larger; the mode of teaching, invariably lecture; more core courses are taught by graduate students; the content of the courses is increasingly influenced by research interests of the faculty, and the personal contact between teacher and student is rationed to a unit within the office hours of the professor.

If there is a core curriculum, it can represent the various power blocks within the faculty much more than a collaborative attempt to achieve anything remotely like Newman's comprehensive philosophic habit of mind that bespeaks an intellectual culture. Students' calling upon the faculty for whatever reason can even be seen as threat, taking the valuable time that would otherwise be given to discovery and scholarship. Horror stories abound. One very distinguished professor at a well known university enthused to me that a major perquisite at his institution was that there is no need to talk to the students. At another, it is by no means unknown that tenure can be denied to a member of the faculty recently honored as “teacher of the year.” Some thirty-five years ago, Christopher Jencks and David Riesman noted this same depreciation of teaching in favor of research in American higher education:

While we do not think that there are many brilliant teachers who never publish, we do think many potentially competent teachers do a conspicuously bad job in the classroom because they know that bad teaching is not penalized in any formal way. They have only a limited amount of time and energy, and they know that in terms of professional standing and personal advancement it makes more sense to throw this into research than teaching.⁴⁸

Newman can seem little more than quaint in such an academic world. Indeed contemporary reflections on higher education patronize the style of *The Idea of a University* but employ its content as a benchmark to celebrate how far we have progressed beyond “the academic cloister.”⁴⁹

Clark Kerr insists that by 1930, the United States had advanced significantly beyond even this modern university of German influence into the “really modern university—the multiversity.”⁵⁰ The new term seemed appropriate, and one could call this development a “second revolution.”

But in all of these revolutionary advances one cannot help but question what is happening to teaching and to the student. One can even ask if the very concept of a university—a unity out of the many—has been quietly evanescent. Can the vast departments that now divide the multiversity not settle into so many contiguous seminaries, closed off in their own specialties, languages and research interests of their faculty? Do you not need to be small enough—as well as large enough—to be a university, i.e., to achieve the unity and the collective day-by-day interdisciplinary conversations and influence upon the students that once entered definitionally into the notion of a university? And—even further—if one is to search for this unity of interchange today will one not find it better served in the more distinguished colleges in the United States than in the undergraduate programs of many of its major universities?

Perhaps Newman’s distinction between the university and the academy can suggest for us a second and even more radical consideration, i.e., a somewhat different structure for the university itself. Perhaps American higher education needs a sharper differentiation of undergraduate education from graduate education and a distinct academic institution or faculty that would field this undergraduate education, an institution that would possess its own educational finality and intensely collaborative structures within the more general collectivity that is the university. This could be the college within the university, and there are universities where this already obtains. Teaching and the intellectual formation of its students would be its focus, not to the elimination of research and writing but to the promotion of teaching as its central activity and the intellectual culture of the students as its central product. This product should define the college.

Does not vital teaching figure importantly in graduate education also? Of course. But for Newman teaching in graduate education does not focus so much upon the general mental culture of the student as upon an increasingly specialized knowledge of a particular field or profession or discipline. The focus in graduate teaching should be the induction of the student into a specialization and the development towards mastery, research, publication and the advancement in this field of genuinely new knowledge. The student is assimilated into the life and specialized habits of scholarship. The primacy of teaching in the undergraduate school focuses upon the general mental culture of the student, as we have said, the humane empowerment of her mind and sensibility for the tasks and the life of human being.

As has been repeatedly asserted in these reflections, giving such a primacy to teaching would not eliminate a responsibility for research and publication, even if it would place this latter in a secondary, albeit essential role. Why essential—essential even in undergraduate education? Because with very rare exception, teachers who do no

serious research and engage in little scholarship sever contact with what is vital in their field. Their love for this world dies, and their teaching dies with it. To be alive in their classroom, they must love what they teach and this love is nourished as they live in their field and contribute to it. Vital teaching requires research, even when the primacy is given to teaching. Nor does this suggestion exclude institutions or universities whose primary, even comprehensive, purpose is research.

I am suggesting, then, that the first challenge American higher education can receive from Newman is to restore to undergraduate or collegiate education a unique primacy: wise and intellectually formative teaching, and a unique finality, the comprehensive mental culture of the students that is the product of this teaching.

Can we/should we not go further? Would it be possible and even wise, as we have just suggested, to establish in some places the undergraduate school as a distinct institution within the university, an institution with its own faculty, its own institutional structures, all because it possesses its own distinct educational purpose? I willingly grant that the same instructor could be a member of these undergraduate and graduate faculties, but these academic communities have different emphases. If the current situation in American higher education is to change, excellent teaching—formative, provocative, and wise—that proposes the mental culture of the student as its primary purpose must constitute the promise held out to the students in such undergraduate teaching; it would name the primary care of such a faculty and the stated purpose of the school. This focus, promise, capacity in teaching, consequently, would figure predominately in the affiliation or hiring of new faculty, the granting of tenure, and the awarding of academic promotion.

A centrality given to teaching and the formation of an integral undergraduate or collegiate institution—these could constitute the first two challenges of Newman's to which we might attend. Let us consider a third.

Together with the academic development of the students, the university needs to care for that community support, that moral formation and development of character, that academic and religious life which Newman thought the province of his colleges. Is it unthinkable that Catholic universities in the United States should take from Newman different ways of housing undergraduate students than are presently in vogue? The restoration of the residential college as an academic and—yes!—even a religious community might constitute Newman's third challenge, building upon the significant progress that has recently been made in university residential life. At present, in many universities, young men and women in the United States are removed from the familiarity of their own homes and neighborhoods, from the accepted mores and expectations of their parents and neighbors, sisters and brothers, elderly relatives and life-long friends. In other words, they are removed from much of what will in the future constitute the manifold of their lives as, indeed, it has formed them in the past. In many universities, they often have been placed with thousands of others of the same age in large buildings with lengthy corridors or subdivisions into suites. There is an inevitable and artificial void of what has been familiar, formative and even home.

In the absence of a more varied and more mature company, the culture of their years can take over. Educators wonder at American students' heavy drinking and their hours slumped in front of third rate programs on TV. Residential administrators with limited success deliver exhortations, warning against promiscuity, drugs, and cheating. So much in the atmosphere of the students can become wasted and superficial; it can encourage or occasion regressive habits that inhibit personal development or smother an idealism commensurate with their talents and even counter the humanistic values their education is to impart. American students have attempted over centuries to modify or escape a dormitory culture or residence-halls with fraternities and sororities, but it would be difficult to be very sanguine about the results. Further, dormitories have been modified into "residential life" and suites; some leaving the academic and religious life of the students

to the university in favor of a therapeutic concentration in residential communities upon various forms of good health and social life. These latter settlements can actually excise from the normal patterns of residential life the concomitant academic education, the religious practices, the social commitments, and even any significant presence of the faculty as well. They can lack any vital and a necessary contact with the processes of education fostered by the university.

For Newman, the university must of necessity live most of its life—academics insistently included—in those residential colleges which the student and tutors and subsequent generations affectionately called home. For the hours of instruction, if they possess any vitality, must give way to the lengthy conversation of the students, and these in turn must be supported by a common academic, social and religious life in those institutions in which they live their daily lives. Education, to be effective, must be a matter of the day by day and the interpersonal.

I have seen the residential colleges at the University of Notre Dame, communities of four years into which all the students are divided, each of which provides a home for its members and a formation that is academic, social, ethical and religious. One can find somewhat analogous communities in the houses at Harvard and Yale. But these are not many in American higher education. I understand that Santa Clara University is inaugurating residential learning communities, integrating into each of these communities the core-curriculum of the University, community service, a shared presence of the faculty, religious practices, and social life in a way that realizes so much of Newman's contention that the life of the university is in great part lived within the colleges. If Santa Clara is successful in this attempt, it will make a contribution to higher education in the United States.

If I had time, I would also like to contrast the continuous attachment of the faculty to the colleges of Newman's years with the present. In that dispensation, one became a fellow of a college and

remained there, as the epithet had it: "to live and die a fellow of Oriel." Much of this affection and constancy has passed. Now in American higher education, instructors often get a sense of identity and career from their individual fields rather than from the collegiate community to which they belong; and so they move as opportunity presents itself for advancement in this field. The primary loyalties are focused upon the individual field rather than upon the concrete academic community of college or university. I wonder if something here has not been lost.

It is interesting that so much of this—the focus upon teaching and the relationship between the teacher and the student, the residential college that was home for its members and the academic, social, and religious life therein—is not simply Newman's reading of Oxford and Louvain. It is also the tradition of education in the Society of Jesus. In Rome for example, the students attend the university, i.e., once called the Roman College now the Gregorian, but live for the most part in such residential colleges as the German College, the English College, the Maronite College or the French College—some 45 of them. These colleges are to sponsor and sustain—as they do today—much of their academic, religious, and community life. At their inception, the focus was on teaching and the bond between the professor and his students so prolonged, that very often the same teacher would accompany the students through rhetoric, the years of philosophy, and theology.⁵¹ The life lived in the colleges and university was to develop the students in what the Jesuit *Constitutions* called "learning and good habits of life."⁵²

Conclusion

The remarks that I have made are necessarily fragmentary, impressionistic, and shamefully incomplete. It could not be otherwise—in the interest of saying anything at all. I have attempted to dwell only on three—possibly four—of the many challenges that Newman may raise for us.

There is a way, even here, in which the challenges of Newman and the initiatives that seek the restitution of the centrality of teaching and the retrieval of the residential colleges come into a single focus. It is this: all three of these initiatives attempt to restore or strengthen the primacy of the interpersonal in higher education.

Newman knew that the system that informed the university was essential: the allocations of curricula and responsibilities, the requirements for admission and successful progress, the site and buildings and library and fields, the inter-coordination of these units over the course of the academic term are all important. But when the ultimate evaluation was done, the most crucial of all of the constituents was personal influence: an interchange of teacher with students, of teacher with colleague, of student with student. This was not so much the Oxford of his day, but what he had attempted to restore to Oriel. “I say then, that the personal influence of the teacher is able in some sort to dispense with an academical system, but that the system cannot in any sort dispense with personal influence. With influence there is life, without it there is none; if influence is deprived of its due position, it will not by those means be got rid of, it will only break out irregularly, dangerously. An academical system without the personal influence of teachers upon pupils is an arctic winter; it will create an ice-bound, petrified, cast-iron University, and nothing else.”⁵³

Endnotes

¹ Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, *On the Art of Writing* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1916), 37.

² John M. Cameron, *John Henry Newman* (London: 1956), 24-25, quoted in I. T. Ker, ed., preface to *The Idea of a University: Defined and Illustrated: I. In Nine Discourses Delivered to the Catholics of Dublin; II. In Occasional Lectures and Essays Addressed to the members of the Catholic University*, by John Henry Newman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), v (hereafter cited as *Idea*).

³ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd rev. edition. trans. J. Weinsheimer and D.G. Marshall. New York: Crossroad, 1989. passim.

⁴ Preface to *Idea*, 5.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Ian Ker, *John Henry Newman: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 455, quoting Newman, *My Campaign in Ireland*, Part I, ed. W. Neville (privately published, 1890), 110.

⁹ See Ker's remarks in *Idea*, 575 nn. 5, 6.

¹⁰ Preface to *Idea*, 8.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹² Over and over again. Newman stresses “this division of intellectual labour between Academies and Universities,” and traces the history of inquiry from Pythagoras in his cave and Thales in his seclusion through the isolation of Isaac Newton—so intense that his concentration threatened his mental health—to the current separation of astronomical observatories from connection with the universities (*Ibid.*, 8).

¹³ John Henry Cardinal Newman, “Rise and Progress of Universities,” (hereafter cited as *Rise*). in *Historical Sketches*, vol. 3 (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1888), 8.

¹⁴ *Rise*, 8.

¹⁵ *Rise*, 8-9 (emphasis added).

¹⁶ *Rise*, 9.

¹⁷ See Robert M. Hutchins, *The University of Utopia* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953), 58: “Somewhere between the ages of eighteen and twenty, or *whenever he is ready*, the Utopian presents himself for examinations that cover the whole of his education up to that point. These examinations, which are constructed by an outside board, reflect what the educational profession of Utopia thinks of as a liberal education, the education appropriate to free men. If the student passes these examinations, he is awarded the degree of Bachelor of Arts” (emphasis added). See also, William C. McNeill, *Hutchins’ University. Memoir of the University of Chicago 1929-1950* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1991), 28.

¹⁸ *Rise*, 14. Newman is explicitly speaking of religious teaching, but as an illustration of all teaching.

¹⁹ Jacques Maritain, *Reflections on America* (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1958) 3:18. Maritain’s actual words are: “friendship requires a great waste of time, and much idleness; creative thinking requires a great deal of idleness.”

²⁰ Preface to *Idea*, 9.

²¹ For this notion and its centrality in Newman’s understanding of university education, see *Idea*, 10, 142, 144-145.

²² So Newman saw the university rather as “a place of education, than of instruction,” because “education is a higher word; it implies an action upon our mental nature, and the formation of a character; it is something individual and permanent, and is commonly

spoken of in connexion with religion and virtue” (“Discourse 5: Knowledge its Own End,” in *Idea*, 105).

²³ Preface to *Idea*, 10-11.

²⁴ In the preface, Newman wrote: “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 comprehensiveness and the versatility 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.

“This is real cultivation of mind; and I do not deny that the characteristic excellences of a gentleman are included in it. Nor need we be ashamed that they should be, since the poet long ago wrote, that ‘Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes /Emollit mores.’ Certainly, a liberal education does manifest itself in courtesy, propriety, and polish of word and action, which is beautiful in itself, and acceptable to others; but it does much more. It brings the mind into form” (*Idea*, 10).

And what is that form? It learns “to have a connected view or grasp of things” (*Idea*, 11). As Newman indicated here and elsewhere, such an education will include the habits of a gentleman, but it is not exhausted by them (*Idea*, 10).

²⁵ Preface to *Idea*, 10.

²⁶ “Discourse 5: Knowledge its Own End,” in *Idea*, 112.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 53.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 54.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 57.

³⁰ Richard P. Feynman, *The Meaning of it All: Thoughts of a Citizen-Scientist* (Reading, MA: Perseus Books, 1998). In this work, Feynman takes up the nature of science, political questions, religious questions, and “how society looks to me,” (3).

³¹ For the use and meaning of this curious phrase, see *Idea*, 57.

³² “Discourse 5: Knowledge its Own End,” in *Idea*, 95.

³³ *Rise*, 2.

³⁴ *Rise*, 213.

³⁵ Plato, *The Republic II*. 369a-d; V. 457d See B. Jowett (ed.), *The Dialogues of Plato* (9th printing; New York: Random House, 1937) 1:631-632.

³⁶ Aristotle, *The Politics* I. 2. 1252a24-1253ae38. See Richard P. McKeon (ed) *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1941), 1127-1130.

³⁷ *Rise*, 214-215.

³⁸ *Rise*, 228-229.

³⁹ Newman, “Christianity and Letters,” 211.

⁴⁰ Newman, *Addresses to Cardinal Newman, with His Replies, 1879-81*, ed. W. P. Neville (London, 1905), 184, quoted in A. Dwight Culler, *The Imperial Intellect: A Study of Newman's Educational Ideal* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), 72.

⁴¹ Thomas Mozley, *Reminiscences, Chiefly of Oriel College and the Oxford Movement*, vol. 1 (London: 1882), 181, in Culler, *The Imperial Intellect*, 79 n. 132.

⁴² John Henry Newman, “History of My Religious Opinions from 1841 to 1845,” in *Apologia pro vita sua: An Authoritative Text, Basic Texts of the Newman-Kingsley Controversy, Origin and Reception of the “Apologia,” [and] Essays in Criticism*, ed. David DeLaura (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1968), 182-183.

⁴³ Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University*, 5th ed. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2001), 9-10.

⁴⁴ Van Wyck Brooks, *The Flowering of New England, 1815-1866* (1936; reprint, New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1937), 73-88. For the twenty-months spent at Göttingen, see 83-84.

⁴⁵ Kerr, *Uses of the University*, 10.

⁴⁶ Kerr, *Uses of the University*, 11.

⁴⁷ Sidney Hook, “The Impact of Expanding Research Support on the Universities,” in *Research and Medical Education*, ed. Julius H. Comroe, Jr. (Evanston, IL: Association of American Medical Colleges, 1962), 238, quoted in Kerr, *Uses of the University*, 48.

⁴⁸ Christopher Jencks and David Riesman, *The Academic Revolution* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1968), 532. This assessment of energies sounds remarkably like Newman's.

⁴⁹ Kerr, *Uses of the University*, 1.

⁵⁰ Kerr, *Uses of the University*, 5.

⁵¹ See Michael J. Buckley, S.J., *The Catholic University as Promise and Project: Reflections in a Jesuit Idiom* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1998), 101.

⁵² Ignatius of Loyola, Constitutions, pt. 4, ch. 7, no. 392, in *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, ed. and trans. George Ganss, S.J. (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970), 198.

⁵³ *Rise*, 74. For his judgment upon Oxford as the “reign of Law without Influence, System without Personality,” see *Rise*, 75.