

God, the University, and Human Flourishing

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THE MOST WIDESPREAD CONCEPTION of the nature and function of the university today is that it is a place where research and teaching takes places in order to advance the economic and political well-being of the society it exists to serve.¹ Economic and political interests that come to bear on universities lead to a favoring of research-led universities in which researchers focus their energies on narrow areas of specialization. Success, as measured in economic terms,

¹ Thus, Michael Oakeshott writes: “Somehow or other the idea of a university in recent years has got mixed up with notions such a ‘higher education,’ ‘advanced training,’ refresher courses for adults,’—things admirable in themselves, but really very little to do with a university. And it is time something was done to unravel the confusion. For these ideas belong to a world of power and utility, of exploitation, of social and individual egoism, and of activity whose meaning lies outside itself in some trivial result of achievement—and this is not the world to which a university belongs. It is a very powerful world; it is wealthy, interfering, well-meaning. But it is not remarkably self-critical; it is apt to mistake itself for the whole world, and with amiable carelessness it assumes that whatever does not contribute to its own purposes is somehow errant. A university needs beware of the patronage of this world, or it will find that it has sold its birthright for a mess of pottage; it will find that instead of studying and teaching the languages and literatures of the world it has become a school for training interpreters, that instead of pursuing science it is engaged in training electrical engineers or industrial chemists, that instead of studying history it is studying and teaching history for some ulterior purpose, that instead of educating men and women it is training them exactly to fill some niche in society”; see *The Voice of Liberal Learning: Michael Oakeshott on Education*, ed. Timothy Fuller (New Haven, CT / London: Yale University Press, 1989), 103.

depends on such specialization.² Economic and political influence seeps its way down to undergraduate education as well. Alasdair MacIntyre explains: "Undergraduate education has by now become largely a prologue to specialization and professionalization, and prestige in providing undergraduate education for the most part attaches to those institutions that prepare their students most effectively for admission to prestigious graduate programs. So the curriculum has increasingly become one composed of an assorted ragbag of disciplines and subdisciplines, each pursued and taught in relative independence of all the others, and achievement within each consists in the formation of the mind of a dedicated specialist."³

Catholic universities do not, by and large, furnish an exception to the rule. They "often mimic the structures and goals of the most prestigious secular universities and do so with little sense of something having gone seriously amiss."⁴

To many people, it will not at all be clear that anything has gone amiss with third-level education. The more prestigious a research university becomes, the more funding it draws down. In effect, it becomes a good business corporation. Successful students can also entertain good career prospects. This is surely a win-win situation, is it not? Those who have received nothing more than this kind of education will no doubt answer in the affirmative precisely because they lack the range of vision afforded by a liberal arts education. MacIntyre contends that they are, in fact, blind to the disasters that this kind of education has wreaked on the world: "A surprising number of the major disorders of the latter part of the twentieth

² Indeed, in contemporary society, the university itself constitutes an important economic entity. As Ronald Barnett writes, "In any estimation . . . higher education is big business"; see *The Idea of Higher Education* (Bristol, PA: Society for Research into Higher Education / Open University Press, 1990), 3.

³ Alasdair MacIntyre, *God, Philosophy, Universities: A Selective History of the Catholic Philosophical Tradition* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009), 173–74. See also Gerard Loughlin, "Theology in the University," in *John Henry Newman*, ed. Ian Ker and Terrence Merrigan (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 230: "Today's university no longer offers a unified education, for there is little consensus as to what this might entail, little sense of a shared culture for which it might fit people. Today universities offer vocational courses, but little or no sense of vocation, of being *called* to a way of life, let alone a way of life for others, and through others for God. Today universities seek merely to meet the tastes of their customers and the whims of their paymasters. Today the university lies in ruins."

⁴ MacIntyre, *God, Philosophy, Universities*, 179.

century and of the first decade of the twenty first century have been brought about by some of the most distinguished graduates of some of the most distinguished universities in the world and this as the result of an inadequate general education, at both graduate and especially undergraduate levels, that has made it possible for those graduates to act decisively and deliberately without knowing what they were doing.”⁵ Examples he adduces include the Vietnam War, United States policy towards Iran for more than half a century, and the present economic crisis. While MacIntyre does not argue exhaustively for this claim, he does offer a short illustration of it by way of reference to the genesis of the recent economic crisis.⁶

While I agree with MacIntyre’s claim, I cannot attempt a substantiation of it in this article. What I write does, however, presuppose the idea that the results of modern specialized education are not as happy as we would wish. I will argue that this situation is due to the fact that university curricula are not structured so as to reflect the nature of the universe. Many will no doubt find this claim to be very strange. Nevertheless, I contend that successful human agency depends on action respecting the natures of things. Attaching a pair of wings will not enable me to fly, but getting on an airplane will because those who designed and built it have respected the laws of aerodynamics. A university curriculum that prepares students to deal with the nature of reality as it is will more likely produce well-functioning citizens and a more harmonious world than a curriculum that is dictated simply by economic interest.

In this regard, I contend, we have much to learn from St. Thomas Aquinas and John Henry Cardinal Newman. While I do not wish to claim here that Newman simply represents a working-out of Thomas’s thought, he, like Thomas, is an Aristotelian and his thought can be related to Thomas’s in important respects.⁷ With respect to the subject at hand, Newman’s educational theory can be construed as a phenomenological expression of the metaphysical foundations offered by Thomas. To state this perceived relation is not of course to argue that Newman consciously elaborates his ideas concerning university

⁵ Alasdair MacIntyre, “The Very Idea of a University: Aristotle, Newman and Us,” *New Blackfriars* 91 (2010): 17.

⁶ See *ibid.*, 17–18.

⁷ Thus, Newman tells us, “While we are men, we cannot help to a great extent, being Aristotelians,” and indeed, “in many subject-matters, to think correctly is to think like Aristotle”; see John Henry Cardinal Newman, *The Idea of a University* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1925), 109–10.

education with Thomas's metaphysical construal of reality in mind. The influence of Aristotle on both of them and a shared thirst for truth nevertheless effect a certain convergence between a view of university education derived from Thomas's thought and the detailed reflections concerning the same topic penned by Newman. In addition to the relationship that I posit between Thomas and Newman as between metaphysical foundation and phenomenological expression, it will also become evident that Thomas's philosophy of mind and understanding of prudence support MacIntyre's contention that a university curriculum constructed in line with Newman's vision would yield benefits for society that are currently not generally available.

In what follows I will first of all follow Aquinas in asking about the origin and end of the universe, and of human existence in particular, for these questions confront the most basic structure of reality. In the first section, I will therefore consider his second proof for the existence of God and the notion that God is the ultimate end of human striving. Central to these considerations is the notion of the impossibility of infinite regress in causes that are essentially ordered to each other. The implications of these inquiries for the general design of university curricula will then be considered by drawing out the educational implications of various aspects of Thomas's thought and by the light of Newman's reflections.⁸ In particular, it will be argued

⁸ Thomas, of course, did not apply the principles of his thought to the issue of the kind of curriculum best suited to a Catholic university. One can, however, point to the founding and governing document of Thomas Aquinas College, *A Proposal for the Fulfillment of Catholic Liberal Education*, for an example of what a curriculum constructed according to Thomistic educational principles might look like (last accessed August 3, 2016, <http://www.thomasaquinas.edu/sites/default/files/a-proposal-forthe-fulfillment-of-catholic-education.pdf>). See especially ch. X, "The Curriculum" (49–56), whose introductory comments state that "the curriculum of this college introduces the student to a comprehensive study of theology, philosophy, mathematics, language and experimental science through reading and closely discussing the greatest scholarly works in these fields" (49). The affinity of this Thomistically constructed curriculum with Newman's educational philosophy is striking and, I contend, bears out one of the arguments of this article; namely, that Newman's educational theory, in effect, furnishes a phenomenological expression of the metaphysical foundations offered by Thomas. For another example of a curriculum constructed along the lines envisaged in this article, see the curriculum of Wyoming Catholic College (last accessed August 3, 2016, <http://www.wyomingcatholiccollege.com/academics/curriculum/index.aspx>).

The weakness of *A Proposal for the Fulfillment of Catholic Liberal Education*

that an educational curriculum that reflects the structure of reality will establish those conditions that promote the moral well-being of the student and, by extension, society in general. On its own, however, such a curriculum is unlikely to be sufficient. Also required is an attendant ethos that facilitates student appropriation of the demands of the curriculum, enables them to give practical expression to them in their decision-making, and habituates them in doing so.

Given the common religious orientation of both Thomas and Newman, it seems reasonable to apply the general philosophical arguments of this article to the specific context of Catholic universities. The fact that Newman has already done so provides an illustrious, widely-accepted precedent. At any rate, a philosophy of education that had no real application to a specific educational context would not be of any great value to anyone.

God as the Origin and End of All that Exists

Thomas begins the Second Way (*Summa theologiae* I, q. 2, a. 3) with an observation of empirical fact: “In the world of sense we find an order of efficient causes.”⁹ This incontrovertible fact is, however, not self-explanatory; it stands in need of explanation in terms of something else. Otherwise, something could be its own cause and, therefore, would precede itself, a state of affairs that is obviously impossible. Christopher Martin explains the next step of the argument as follows: “Anything which is a system of parts related by efficient causality, in which parts are effects, is itself an effect—something which cannot be the efficient cause of itself, and which requires an explanation in terms of a relation

(as distinct from the college for which it seeks to offer philosophical underpinnings!) is the absence of any consideration of the role that the ethos of an institute plays in the education its students. The present article aims to offer a corrective in this regard.

⁹ The following discussion is based on Kevin E. O'Reilly, “Efficient and Final Causality and the Human Desire for Beatitude in the *Summa Theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas,” *The Modern Schoolman* 82 (2004): 33–58, at 34–36. The scope of the present article does not allow an extended critical account of Aquinas’s “second way.” For a more critical and speculative engagement with the “five ways” see, e.g., C. J. F. Martin, *Thomas Aquinas: God and Explanations* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997); Anthony Kenny, *The Five Ways* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969); Joseph Owens, *St. Thomas Aquinas on the Existence of God: Collected Papers of Joseph Owens, C.Ss.R.*, ed. John R. Catan (New York: SUNY, 1980), 52–131; Thomas A. F. Kelly, *Language, World and God: An Essay in Ontology* (Dublin: Columba Press, 1996), 177–82; and Edward Feser, *Aquinas: A Beginner’s Guide* (Oxford, UK: Oneworld, 2010), 62–130.

to something else.”¹⁰ Of course, the series or system of causes referred to is the universe. As a series of effects itself, considered as a single whole, it constitutes an effect. It cannot therefore constitute its own cause; rather, it must be explained in relation to something apart from itself.

One cannot, however, posit an infinite series of causes and effects. Such an infinity is an impossibility. Thomas argues that the series of causes must cease at some stage. Since what is prior in such a series is the cause of what follows, if it is eliminated nothing can follow. Since an infinite regress in the series of causes would mean the elimination of the first cause, neither intermediate efficient causes nor ultimate effect would be possible, all of which is plainly false according to Aquinas.¹¹ Positing an infinite regress in the series of causes cannot explain the fact that there are causes and effects in the world. Thomas therefore concludes that there must be a first efficient cause, to which everyone gives the name God.¹²

There are, of course, objections to Thomas's rejection of the possibility of an infinite regress.¹³ Such criticisms seem to be grounded in a failure to distinguish between *per se* causes and *per accidens* causes, as indeed Thomas himself does elsewhere when he writes that it is impossible to proceed to infinity *per se* in efficient causes. Thus, “there cannot be an infinite number of causes that are *per se* required for a certain effect; for instance, that a stone be moved by a stick, the stick by the hand, and so on to infinity.”¹⁴ However, Thomas continues: “It is not impossible to proceed to infinity *accidentally* as regards efficient causes. . . . Thus it is accidental to this particular man as generator to be generated by another man; for he generates as a man, and not as the son of another man. For all men generating hold one grade in efficient causes—viz., the grade of a particular generator. Hence it is not impossible for a man to be generated by man to infinity.”¹⁵

Thomas does not therefore reject the possibility of an infinite

¹⁰ *Thomas Aquinas: God and Explanations*, 152. Martin critiques the objection that there could be parts of the world outside the system of efficient causality.

¹¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* (hereafter, *ST*) I, q. 2, a. 2. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from *ST* are from *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 5 vols. (Allen, TX: Christian Classics, 1981).

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ See, for example, Martin Henry, *On Not Understanding God* (Dublin: Columba Press, 1997), 126.

¹⁴ *ST* I, q. 46, a. 2, ad 7.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

regress in the case of *per accidens* causes such as *a*'s being begotten by *b*, *b*'s being begotten by *c*, and so forth. To proceed to infinity however in the case of a *per se* causal series must be ruled out as impossible. We should note once again, as Patterson Brown observes, that "it is the composite causal series, and not the individual constituent causes, which Aquinas is contrasting as either *per se* or *per accidens* in the above quotation."¹⁶

It is imperative to understand that it is on account of being hierarchically ordered that a series of causes does not allow an infinite regress. As already noted, an infinite regress is possible in the case of *per accidens* causes. Thus, for example, one man can beget another, who in turn begets a third, and so on, *ad infinitum*. However, the question concerning what makes a man to be a man and, as such, capable of begetting another man cannot be answered by appeal to *per accidens* causes that are on the same level as he is. We are therefore compelled to attribute to a superior being the cause of man's existence precisely as a man capable of begetting another man. The causal explanation of this being requires, in turn, the existence of a being superior to it. Since an infinite regress in *per se* causes is impossible, there must be a first term, a term that, as Gilson remarks, "will, in fact, virtually contain the causality of the whole series and also of each term composing it."¹⁷

The notion of the impossibility of an infinite regress of causes crops up again in the course of Thomas's treatise on beatitude (*ST* I-II, qq. 1–5), where the principal focus is on final causality:¹⁸ "If, in a number of causes ordained to one another, the first be removed, the others must, of necessity, be removed also."¹⁹ Since the final cause or end constitutes the first of all causes, if it were removed, the exercise of efficient causality would be annulled. As Thomas delineates the point: "If the agent were not determinate to some particular effect, it would not do one thing rather than another: consequently in order that it produce a determinate effect, it must, of necessity, be

¹⁶ Patterson Brown, "Infinite Causal Regression," in Anthony Kenny, ed., *Aquinas: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Anthony Kenny (London: Macmillan, 1969), 217.

¹⁷ Étienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Edward Bullough (Cambridge, UK: W. Heffer and Sons, 1924), 63.

¹⁸ The following discussion is based on Kevin E. O'Reilly, "Efficient and Final Causality and the Human Desire for Beatitude in the *Summa Theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas," *The Modern Schoolman*.

¹⁹ *ST* I-II, q. 1, a. 2.

determined to some certain one, which has the nature of an end.”²⁰ In contrast to other beings that achieve their ends on the basis of an innate natural appetite, human beings determine their own ends by virtue of the will/rational appetite.

Thomas's consideration of whether human life is ordered towards an ultimate goal (*ST* I-II, q. 1, a. 4) occasions further reflections on causality. Once again, he rules out the possibility of an infinite regress in a system of efficient causes, since “then there would be no first mover, without which neither can the others move, since they move only through being moved by the first mover.”²¹ He applies this logic to the case of final causality in relation to the intention of the agent: if what originally moves desire were taken away, desire itself would not be moved. As Thomas explains: “The principle in the intention is the last end; while the principle in execution is the first of the things which are ordained to the end.”²² As in the case of efficient causes, infinite regress is impossible in the case of final causes. Indeed, in the absence of an ultimate end, deliberation would never cease and no action would ever be accomplished.²³ Such a state of affairs clearly does not obtain.

While Thomas invokes notions of causality many more times throughout his treatise on beatitude, it would be redundant for the sake of the present argument to outline these occurrences. In brief, we can say that Thomas appeals to the notion of the impossibility of infinite regress with regard to both efficient and final causality in order to establish the existence of God both as the efficient cause of all that exists and the final cause of all that exists. As such, God is the ultimate object of both intellect and will. Thomas's proofs for the existence of God and his reflections on God as the final end of human striving, moreover, support the contention that the human intellect and will possess a potentially infinite capacity despite the contingency of our finite and created condition: “The object of the will, i.e. of man's appetite, is the universal good; just as the object of the intellect is the universal true.”²⁴ God has inscribed within the human soul a

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ *ST* I-II, q. 1, a. 4.

²² Ibid.

²³ Thomas is here concerned with things that possess an essential order of dependence. In this case of accidental causes, an infinity of proximate ends and of steps leading to a particular end would be possible. See also *ST* I, q. 46, a. 2, ad 7.

²⁴ *ST* I-II, q. 2, a. 8.

structure according to which it is intrinsically ordered to the pursuit of Truth and Goodness. Our existential situation in the created ontological space between God as First Efficient Cause and God as Final Cause furnishes the context in which the life of mind unfolds. With these considerations in place we now turn to a consideration of the educational implications of God as both First Efficient Cause and Final End of the universe.

If one understands the task of education to be at least in part to acquaint students with the truth of things and to facilitate and direct them in their desire for human fulfillment, then the existential fact of humans being situated between God as First Efficient Cause of all that exists and God as the Final End of all that exists provides the overarching context within which education must unfold. Any approach to education that ignores or attempts to jettison the reality of this existential situation distorts the nature of education and, in so doing, undermines the efforts of students in their search for authentic happiness in this life.

The investigation of the universe in its manifold aspects constitutes an examination of the effects of the First Cause. All these effects tell us something about their Creator. Newman understands the relationship of the universe to God as its creative cause in a similar way. Thus, as he puts it, while God's being is infinitely separate from the universe, he has nevertheless "so implicated Himself with it, and taken it into His very bosom, by His presence in it, His providence over it, His impressions upon it, and His influences through it, that we cannot truly or fully contemplate it without in some main aspects contemplating Him."²⁵

The next section delineates Newman's thought concerning the implications of this metaphysical position for the construction of the university curriculum. In brief, the curriculum ought to enlarge the intellectual horizons of students so that they can appreciate the interrelatedness of the manifold aspects of the universe in the light of their creative cause—God. Failure in this regard by cultivating early specialization by students will likely prevent the mind from attaining its specific perfection and entail undesirable consequences for society at large, as we have already suggested. Appeal to Thomas's distinction between the speculative and practical intellect provides a theoretical grounding for this contention.

²⁵ Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 51.

God and the Construction of the University Curriculum

As proceeding from the Creator as their unique ultimate cause, all parts of the universe are interrelated. Newman expresses this idea when he concludes that all knowledge forms a whole, since “the universe in its length and breadth is so intimately knit together, that we cannot separate off portion from portion, and operation from operation, except by a mental abstraction.”²⁶ With regard to the various sciences, Newman argues that they furnish “a logical record of this or that aspect of the whole subject-matter of knowledge.”²⁷ He continues: “As they all belong to one and the same circle of objects, they are one and all connected together; as they are but aspects of things, they are severally incomplete in their relation to the things themselves, though complete in their own idea and for their own respective purposes; on both accounts they at once need and subserve each other.”²⁸ MacIntyre makes the same point: “It is only through the relationships of the different parts of and aspects of the universe to God that its unity and intelligibility can adequately be grasped.”²⁹

The unity and intelligibility of the universe with the interrelatedness of its parts has profound significance for educational philosophy, a significance that Newman astutely observes and expounds on at great length. In brief, as Avery Dulles states the point, Newman “argues primarily from the nature of the university as a seat of universal learning and from the interconnectedness of all truth.”³⁰ Displaying a breathtaking breadth of knowledge of many disciplines as well as depth of reflection thereupon, Newman adumbrates the ways in which disciplines “complete, correct, balance each other.”³¹ Thus, he argues, “the conclusions of Anatomy, Chemistry, Dynamics, and other sciences, are revised and completed by each other.” He contin-

²⁶ Ibid., 50.

²⁷ Ibid., 51.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ MacIntyre, *God, Philosophy, Universities*, 175.

³⁰ Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J., *Newman* (London and New York: Continuum, 2002), 138.

³¹ Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 99. The section from which this quotation is taken, Discourse III.3, contains various other examples. Thus, for instance, Newman argues: “Did we proceed upon the abstract theory of forces, we should assign a much more ample range to a projectile than in fact the resistance of the air allows it to accomplish. Let, however, that resistance be made the subject of scientific analysis, and then we shall have a new science, assisting, and to a certain point completing, for the benefit of questions of fact, the science of projection” (ibid., 49).

ues in the same place: “Those several conclusions do not represent whole and substantive things, but views, true, so far as they go; and in order to ascertain how far they do go, that is, how far they correspond to the object to which they belong, we must compare them with the views taken out of that object by other sciences.”³² In “The Idea of a University,” Michael Oakeshott expresses this point in the following words: “The pursuit of learning . . . is a conversation. And the peculiar virtue of a university (as a place of many studies) is to exhibit it in this character, each study appearing as a voice whose tone is neither tyrannous nor plangent, but humble and conversable.”³³

Logical consistency demands that one not limit the university curriculum of studies in the manner that is all too common nowadays in excluding religion. Newman appeals to our appreciation of the fact that knowledge assumes various forms. Different forms of knowledge are distinguished from each other on the basis of their appeal to sensory evidence, intuition, testimony, abstract reasoning, and so on. If, therefore, we were to limit our idea of university knowledge to that furnished by the evidence of our senses, for example, then ethics would have to be jettisoned; if intuition were our sole benchmark for authentic knowledge, then there would be no place for history; if testimony were the exclusive requirement for true knowledge, then metaphysics would not be entertained; and if abstract reasoning were the only measure of knowledge properly speaking, then physics would have to be omitted. No serious educationalist would entertain any of these possibilities, and so they should be deterred by the force of Newman’s argumentation from displacing religion from the university curriculum. This argumentation is couched in the form of a rhetorical question: “Is not the being of a God reported to us by testimony, handed down by history, inferred by an inductive process, brought home to us by metaphysical necessity, urged on us by the suggestions of our conscience?”³⁴ Further on, he appeals to the idea that we have already outlined, namely that positing the existence of God has ramifications for the way in which the curriculum is constituted: “Admit a God, and you introduce among the subjects of your knowledge, a fact encompassing, closing in upon, absorbing, every other fact conceivable. How can we investigate any part of any order of Knowledge, and stop short of that which enters into every order?

³² Ibid., 49.

³³ *The Voice of Liberal Learning*, 98.

³⁴ Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 25.

All true principles run over with it, all phenomena converge to it; it is truly the First and the Last.”³⁵

Instantiated in a Catholic university context, religion naturally takes on the form of Catholic theology. If one accepts the Catholic faith as true, Newman’s logic demands that one subscribe to Catholic theology as an integral part of the university curriculum. A Catholic university “cannot teach Universal Knowledge if it does not teach Catholic theology.”³⁶ It must be emphasized that this point, while it bears upon the teaching of revealed religion, is nonetheless philosophical in its import. The Catholic faith to which the university subscribes provides, as it were, the matter that is informed by the idea that religion should be accorded recognition in the university curriculum.

Omission of any one subject in one’s educational trajectory is bound to affect the completeness of our knowledge in a way that is proportionate to the subject’s importance. In this view, a specialized range of studies does not result in an ability to survey reality with a sense of balance and make connections between its constituent parts. The breadth of vision that is the hallmark of an enlarged mind is lacking: “That only is true enlargement of mind which is the power of viewing many things at once as one whole, of referring them severally to their true place in the universal system, of understanding their respective values, and determining their mutual dependence.”³⁷ The pursuit of intellectual excellence so that the mind will advance ever more and more to a vision of the height, depth, and breadth of the universe in the vastness of its expanse is what constitutes the essence of a liberal education. In contrast, as MacIntyre puts it, “to develop highly specialized knowledge only in one particular sphere, to focus one’s mind on only one subject-matter, may certainly be valuable, but it will not enable the mind to achieve its specific perfection and is apt to prevent the mind from doing so.”³⁸ Indeed, when one discipline asserts its authority in an absolute way, it becomes an error.³⁹ In this

³⁵ Ibid., 26.

³⁶ Ibid., 214.

³⁷ Ibid., 136–37.

³⁸ MacIntyre, “The Very Idea of a University,” 10.

³⁹ See Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 74: “No science whatever, however comprehensive it may be, but will fall largely into error, if it be constituted the sole exponent of all things in heaven and earth, and that, for the simple reason that it is encroaching on territory not its own, and undertaking problems which it has no instruments to solve.” Angelo Bottone writes that, “According to Newman, all our knowledge must fit into a framework of connections and

situation the mind is prevented from attaining its specific perfection.

Exclusive attention to one discipline will not only hinder the mind from attaining its specific perfection; it will, according to MacIntyre, also bring about undesirable results in society. In other words, speculative engagement with ideas does have its effects in the practical domain. Speculative engagement that does not reflect the true constitution of things will produce disastrous consequences. If MacIntyre is correct—and I suspect he is—we encounter here some kind of evidential support for Aquinas's assertion that the practical intellect is an extension of the speculative intellect.⁴⁰ By the same token, Aquinas's doctrine provides a theoretical underpinning for MacIntyre's position.

According to Thomas, the practical reason presupposes the theoretical and is rooted in it. In effect, practical reason translates what is perceived by speculative reason into action. Obviously, therefore, this reality furnishes the measure of human action: since reality is the measure of reason in its speculative mode of activity and practical reason is grounded in and is an extension of speculative reason, it follows that reality is also the measure of practical reason and action. Practical reason is the measure of right action precisely because it has received this measure from objective reality by way of the speculative intellect, of which it (practical reason) is an extension. However, insofar as the speculative intellect is rendered deficient on account of too narrow and specialized a training, so too will practical reason be undermined in its efforts to effect actions that conduce to the true flourishing both of individuals and of society—on the presupposition that acting in accord with human nature and with the structure of reality in general conduces best to the attainment of human happiness, both of this life and of the next.⁴¹

It seems clear that human perception of reality is action guiding. An announcement that a bomb will definitely explode in ten minutes in the building that I and many others currently occupy, even with-

relations by and through which they gain sense"; see *The Philosophical Habit of Mind: Rhetoric and Person in John Henry Newman's Dublin Writings* (Bucharest, RO: Zeta Books), 28–29.

⁴⁰ ST I, q. 79, a. 11, sc.

⁴¹ This presupposition finds expression in the following words of Goethe: "In our doing and acting everything depends on this, that we comprehend objects clearly and treat them according to their nature"; quoted in Josef Pieper, *Living the Truth*, trans. Lothar Krauth and Stella Lange (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1989), 108.

out any request for people to evacuate the building, would doubtless lead to a complete exodus. The nature of the reality of an imminent bomb explosion translates into the action of leaving the building in pursuit of safety. Indeed, the constitution of reality as we perceive it informs our every action. However, the notion of "perception" is crucial, for this can be affected for good or bad in many instances by any number of factors. In this context, we are concerned with the way in which education can enhance or undermine it. In this regard, it seems clear that a purely specialized educational trajectory serves to distort one's view of the overall shape of reality. Practical reasoning based on this kind of education, since it will fail to meet the criteria for success demanded by reality itself, will run the risk of failure, if not disaster, for the individual and/or society at large.

Appeal to God's efficient causality thus affords the rationale for an educational curriculum that is not overly specialized at too early a stage in the intellectual development of students. Human practical reasoning processes, however, are not mechanical: particular inputs do not necessarily result in predetermined outputs. Practical reasoning is, in fact, rendered highly complex and influenced for good or for bad by appetite, as we will see. Since the human appetite ultimately desires final beatitude with God as its Final End, a consideration of the educational implications of God as the Final End of human striving is in order. We now turn our attention, therefore, to Thomas's consideration of the virtue of prudence, a consideration that necessarily makes reference to the notion of "right appetite."⁴²

Since prudence enables one to order appropriately the various goods of human existence in the light of the final end of beatitude, the cultivation of conditions that conduce to its proper development in the lives of students is of paramount importance in an educational curriculum that seeks to prepare them for life. This point, as was noted at the outset, all too often goes unappreciated in contemporary educational establishments and therefore merits an extended treatment in order to establish it firmly. A treatment of prudence, which is an intellectual virtue, also involves an account of its relationship to the other moral virtues. The implications of Thomas's understanding of the relationship between prudence and the moral virtues for the educational enterprise are clear: any educational endeavor has moral implications on account of the intellectual nature of prudence and its unifying function with respect to the intellectual and moral virtues.

⁴² *ST* II-II, q. 47, a. 4.

The Cultivation of Prudence

In talking about that perception of reality that guides one's conduct, we are clearly in the realm of Thomas's understanding of *prudentia*. In this regard, appetite is crucial—or rather “right appetite”—for as Thomas argues, “it belongs to prudence . . . to apply right reason to action, and this is not done without a right appetite.”⁴³ An analogy between speculative and practical reason is illuminating once we understand that the ends to which we are disposed furnish the principles from which practical reason takes its point of departure in its deliberations. Just as we are rightly disposed to the principles of speculative truth (such as the principle of contradiction) by the natural light of the active intellect, so too we are rightly disposed to the principles of the reason of things to be done by the rectitude of the will.⁴⁴ In other words, the principles of the reason of things to be done are determined by the constitution of a person's will. For, a person's affective responses either facilitate or impede his prudential reasoning, determining to what degree the latter is in conformity with truth. This dynamic obtains regardless of which species of prudence is in question: what is directed to one's own good (prudence simply so called), what is directed to the common good of the home (domestic prudence), or what is directed to the common good of the state or kingdom (political prudence).⁴⁵

It is true that, while the other intellectual virtues can be possessed without moral virtue, prudence (the right reason about things to be done) “requires man to have moral virtue.”⁴⁶ If this were all, however, we would have to agree with the idea that even the best liberal arts education cannot avoid producing intellectually brilliant and socially refined “gentlemen” who are nonetheless scoundrels. There is, however, significantly more to Aquinas's conception of the relationship obtaining between prudence and the other moral virtues, for moral virtue has the character of virtue insofar as it partakes of reason. In other words, “moral virtue has the aspect of virtue, in so far as it partakes of intellectual virtue,”⁴⁷—that is to say, insofar as

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ *ST* I-II, q. 56, a. 3.

⁴⁵ *ST* II-II, q. 47, a. 11. Thomas's assertion that there are three species of prudence points to his understanding that our knowledge of human nature and of what contributes to its flourishing is acquired on both an individual plane and a communal plane, a point to which contemporary educational practice might do well to pay attention.

⁴⁶ *ST* I-II, q. 58, a. 5.

⁴⁷ *ST* II-II, q. 47, a. 5, ad 1.

it partakes of prudence. Thomas compares prudence to a genus that is operative in every species that falls under it.⁴⁸ The relationship between prudence and the other moral virtues is one of dynamic reciprocity. As Josef Pieper puts it, “prudence, upon which all virtue depends, is in its turn dependent at its very fundamentals on the totality of the other virtues, and above all the virtue of justice.”⁴⁹

While the relationship of dynamic reciprocity between prudence and the moral virtues complicates matters immensely, it nonetheless remains clear that education conceived along Thomistic lines cannot be devoid of moral implications on account of the intellectual nature of prudence and its role in unifying the intellectual and moral virtues. As Reinhard Hütter explains, “since prudence is an intellectual virtue, its formation and refinement fall under the competency of a liberal arts education along Thomistic lines,”⁵⁰ and this formation and refinement will in turn spread their influence among the moral virtues, “even as the sun has an influence over all bodies.”⁵¹

Education need not limit itself—indeed, it ought not to limit itself—to cultivating the intellectual virtues while completely ignoring the moral virtues. Attention to the moral virtues, if it is to have any existential import, cannot of course be constrained to explanations in lectures and books. It is indeed unlikely that such an approach would yield much, if any, success on its own. There is, however, the question of the ethos of a university and the manner in which this ethos is cultivated and brought to realization in the student body. The ethos of any human institution will reflect its apprehension of the meaning and value of human existence. In the case of a university, this ethos will have some degree of influence on students that is in some way related to their free choice to submit themselves to its formative influences.

One fundamental formative influence is the way in which the curriculum is constructed. Thus, for example, the message proclaimed by a dedicated business college whose sole focus consists in turning out graduates who earn huge sums of money is likely to forge different qualities in many of its students than a liberal arts college whose aim is to form individuals who can savor the value of

⁴⁸ *ST* II-II, q. 47, a. 5, ad 2.

⁴⁹ Joseph Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), 15.

⁵⁰ Reinhard Hütter, “God, the University, and the Missing Link—Wisdom: Reflections on Two Untimely Books,” *The Thomist* 73 (2009): 271.

⁵¹ *ST* II-II, q. 47, a. 5, ad 2.

all things because they have the breadth and depth of vision afforded precisely by this kind of education. In a specifically Catholic context, a code of moral conduct that is in accord with Catholic moral teaching serves to facilitate the practical expression of what is learned in the lecture hall and hopefully to habituate students to the living out of this teaching in their lives, lives that will ultimately make some impact on the wider society, however small that impact might be. Other elements that contribute to a distinctively Catholic ethos include the cultivation both of a sense of the importance of personal prayer and of a vibrant sacramental life. Again, these elements assist in imparting an experience and vision of the world that is at least implicitly communicated through the curriculum.

To return to a fundamental thrust of our argument, however, the ability to appreciate and savor the true value of things is closely bound up not only with recognizing their interrelatedness on account of being effects of God as First Efficient Cause of all that exists but also with acknowledging their ordering towards God as the Final End of all that exists. For moral beings possessed of free will, the unity and intelligibility of the universe resides not only in the creative efficient causality of God but also in his final causation. In a Christian context, the manner in which we move toward God as our Final Cause receives a particular character in view of the teaching and example of Jesus Christ and the transmission of this teaching in the Church's Tradition.

As we return to the source whence we have come, the possession of free will means that we have the possibility of choosing among competing proximate goods or ends as we pursue the unfolding of our particular conceptions of what constitutes the good life. A tragic aspect of human experience is, however, the real possibility of being mistaken about what conduces to one's objective flourishing or, indeed, of not being mistaken but nonetheless opting for some course of action that, on account of its disordered nature, deflects one's trajectory towards God.⁵² As Thomas maintains, there are some finite goods that contain within them the capacity to deflect our attention from our Final End. Let us not be mistaken: wealth, power, fame, and so on are not bad things. They are goods. Wealth, in particular,

⁵² This kind of action, in Thomas's scheme of things, is nevertheless chosen under the rubric of the good. In other words, while the agent recognizes its objectively disordered nature, there is something in it that he finds attractive, something that will, in some respect, fulfill him. Anything we choose, we choose under the aspect of the good.

when pursued appropriately, furnishes us with the one condition for the attainment of the relative happiness of this life and of the good of ultimate happiness to which all true goods in this life are ordered. To pursue any finite good as an end in itself, however, deflects one from the path that leads to the ultimate realization of one's being in eternal beatitude.

Such a pursuit also undermines the operation of true and perfect prudence that requires right appetite concerning the true end of human action.⁵³ Thomas, in discussing whether prudence can be in sinners, distinguishes three kinds of prudence: false prudence, true prudence, and prudence that is true and perfect. The rationale for this division is based on the fact that the operation of prudence takes its starting point from the ends pursued by the moral agent. A prudent man is one who disposes well of those things that need to be done in order to attain a good end. False prudence entails disposing of such things in view of an evil end, an end that "is good, not in truth but in appearance."⁵⁴ True prudence is indeed concerned with an end good in itself, yet it is imperfect from a twofold source: "First, because the good which it takes for an end, is not the common end of all human life but of some particular affair; thus when a man devises fitting ways of conducting business or of sailing a ship, he is called a prudent business-man, or a prudent sailor. Secondly, because he fails in the chief act of prudence . . . [which is] to make an effective command."⁵⁵ True and perfect prudence, in contrast to the foregoing, "takes counsel, judges and commands aright in respect of the good end of man's whole life."⁵⁶ It is only in the light of the ultimate end of human life that other more proximate ends can be ordered and appropriate means proportioned to those ends pursued—which ultimate end Thomas, like Newman, views in the light of Christian revelation.

An educational curriculum that purports to prepare students for life cannot be true to its aim unless it is constructed in such a way as to reflect the structure of the universe in terms of its ultimate origin

⁵³ By "the true end of human action" I mean the end whose attainment conduces to objective human flourishing/happiness. As such, this end is ordered towards ultimate happiness or beatitude—that is to say, the vision of God in eternity.

⁵⁴ *ST* II-II, q. 47, a. 13. Thus, continues Thomas, "a man is called a *good robber*, and in this way we may speak of a *prudent robber*, by way of similarity, because he devises fitting ways of committing robbery" (*ibid.*).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* (punctuation amended). On command as the chief act of prudence, see *ST* II-II, q. 47, a. 8.

⁵⁶ *ST* II-II, q. 47, a. 13.

and end. In the case of a Catholic university, this aim receives further specification in the light of Christian revelation in keeping with the notion that grace perfects nature. Thus, Newman's claims for the role of theology in the university certainly stand vindicated when viewed in a Thomistic light.⁵⁷ If the educational curriculum is to be faithful to the structure of reality, it must grant to theology an overarching ordering role. As MacIntyre puts it in a discussion about Newman, "if the curriculum is to have the unity that it needs to have, if it is to disclose the unity of the order of things, then the discipline of theology is indispensable." He continues: "For it is theology that provides the curriculum with its unity and we will not understand the bearing of the other disciplines on each other adequately, if we do not understand theology's bearing on them and theirs on theology."⁵⁸

The next section of my present discussion turns to an examination of ethical considerations by Newman—a treatment analogous to the one we have just set forth—in order to show forth what ultimately results in a vision of university education that converges with a Thomistic account of the same. Contrary to a misunderstanding of Newman as envisaging education to be concerned merely with the formation of intellectual virtue and not moral virtue, he does in fact recognize the intimate connection between intellectual and moral formation and appreciates how the perfection or otherwise of the intellectual virtues has a bearing on the moral tenor of society in general. He is also aware of the distortions that inevitably attend a purely secular ethics and, therefore, of the need for faith—and hence for ecclesial jurisdiction over a Catholic university. This contention seems to be in line with the insights afforded by hermeneutical philosophy concerning the various factors that condition human knowledge, with the important caveat that Newman would regard faith as a criterion—indeed, *the* criterion—that secures the moorings of epistemic objectivity.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Again, it must be emphasized that the vindication offered here is philosophical in nature, even though it bears on the place of theology in the university curriculum.

⁵⁸ MacIntyre, "The Very Idea of a University," 12.

⁵⁹ For an engagement of Thomas's thought with contemporary hermeneutical philosophy, see Kevin E. O'Reilly, "Transcending Gadamer: Towards a Participatory Hermeneutics," *The Review of Metaphysics* 65 (September 2011–June 2012), 841–60. For a specifically theological treatment of Thomas's thought with contemporary hermeneutical thought, see O'Reilly, *The Hermeneutics of Knowing and Willing in the Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Leuven, BE: Peeters,

The Practical Link between Knowledge and Religious Morality

A superficial and incomplete reading of Newman's *The Idea of a University* can easily make the mistake of discerning a subtle, but nonetheless very important, point of difference between educational philosophy as conceived by Newman, on the one hand, and a Thomistically conceived educational philosophy, on the other hand. Central to this erroneous interpretation is the following passage in which Newman writes, "Knowledge is one thing, virtue is another; good sense is not conscience, refinement is not humility, nor is largeness and justness of view faith. Philosophy, however enlightened, however profound, gives no command over the passions, no influential motives, no vivifying principles. Liberal education makes not the Christian, nor the Catholic, but the gentleman. . . . Liberal Education, viewed in itself, is simply the cultivation of the intellect, as such, and its object is nothing more or less than intellectual excellence."⁶⁰ If this is read in isolation from the broader context of Newman's educational thought, it might seem that, for Newman, a university education concentrates on the formation of those intellectual virtues that perfect the intellect in its consideration of truth but can lay no claim to the cultivation of virtue.

Newman goes on in "Discourse VIII" of the work, however, to argue that the intellectual culture in society exerts an influence upon our moral nature and "all upon the type of Christianity."⁶¹ He lists a number of virtues that are the fruit of an intellectual culture—"veracity, probity, equity, fairness, gentleness, benevolence, and amiableness"⁶²—albeit allowing that this culture requires "a soil naturally adapted to virtue"⁶³ for these character traits to develop. In a striking turn of phrase, Newman writes: "It is enough to refer you, Gentlemen, to the various Biographies and Remains of contemporaries and others, which from time to time issue from the press, to see how striking is the action of our intellectual upon our moral nature, where the moral material is rich, and the intellectual cast is perfect."⁶⁴ Newman also recognizes that the cultivation of the intellect affects

2013). For a treatment of the hermeneutical dynamics of Newman's religious thought, see Thomas K. Carr, *Newman and Carr: Towards a Hermeneutics of Religious Knowledge* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1996).

⁶⁰ Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 91–92.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 189.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 190.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

not only the individual but society as well.⁶⁵ In this regard, it is to be noted, as Angelo Bottone remarks, that “the intellectual recreations that are present in modern cities may lead to an advancement of the social ethical tone.”⁶⁶

At the same time, however, Newman proves to be acutely aware of the distortions that inevitably attend an approach to ethics that prescind from religion. The intellectualism that underpins it may well begin by repelling sensuality, but in fact “ends by excusing it.”⁶⁷ Reason in fact needs faith if the morality that it inspires is not to go astray. As Newman puts it: “Under the shadow indeed of the Church, and in its due development, Philosophy does service to the cause of morality.”⁶⁸ In contrast, when reason asserts its independence of faith, any system of ethics that it formulates and the moral education that it imparts “does but abet evils to which at first it seemed instinctively opposed.”⁶⁹

Thus, while a university is, in essence, a place in which universal knowledge is imparted, so that its object is necessarily intellectual and not moral, it nevertheless cannot fulfil this end properly without the Church’s assistance. As Bottone explicates, while Newman “has stated his belief in the theoretical autonomy of knowledge from religious morality, he maintains that a practical link exists between the two.”⁷⁰ We have, in fact, two modes of access to the moral law that has its source in God. The first is by way of conscience that is inscribed within our nature, enabling us to discriminate right from wrong. The second is afforded to us by way of divine revelation that enlightens, strengthens, and refines. Thus, Newman contends: “Nature warrants without anticipating the Supernatural, and the Supernatural completes without superseding Nature.”⁷¹ As Bottone

⁶⁵ See *ibid.*, 189: “Cheap literature, libraries of useful and entertaining knowledge, scientific lectureships, museums, zoological collections, buildings and gardens to please the eye and to give repose to the feelings, external objects of whatever kind, which may take the mind off itself, and expand and elevate it in liberal contemplations, these are the human means, wisely suggested, and good as far as they go, for at least parrying the assaults of moral evil, and keeping at bay the enemies, not only of the individual soul, but of society at large.”

⁶⁶ Bottone, *The Philosophical Habit of Mind*, 192.

⁶⁷ Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 202.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Bottone, *The Philosophical Habit of Mind*, 193.

⁷¹ John Henry Newman, *Rise and Progress of Universities*, vol. 3 of *Historical Sketches* (London / New York: Longman, Green and Co., 1909), 79; also avail-

comments concerning these two modes of access to the moral law: "They are interactive, recognising and bearing witness to each other."⁷²

Hence Newman's conviction that the Church necessarily ought to have an active jurisdiction over the university—otherwise there is the danger that has all too often been realized in practice since Newman's time that the university becomes "the representative of the intellect, as the Church is the representative of the religious principle."⁷³ In other words, a divorce between faith and reason ensues—to the detriment of both. As a result of this divorce, not only is natural reason and its expression in moral conduct adversely affected, but so also is the understanding of the faith. In brief, a university that operates on the basis of a divorce between faith and reason has a tendency "to view Revealed Religion from an aspect of its own,—to fuse and recast it, to tune it, as it were, to a different key, and to reset its harmonies,—to circumscribe it by a circle which unwarrantably amputates here, and unduly develops there."⁷⁴ In this regard it is not sufficient even that "the whole of Catholic theology" should be taught in a university "unless the Church breathes her own pure and unearthly spirit into it, and fashions and moulds its organization, and watches over its teaching, and knits together its pupils, and superintends its action."⁷⁵

The contention that the Church should exercise jurisdiction over a Catholic university may be regarded, as Ian Ker points out, "as hardly more than a specific application of the general principle that a university is inevitably limited and defined by its concept of what constitutes knowledge and truth."⁷⁶ Consequently, Newman's insistence on ecclesial control ought not to be construed as being in any way sinister. He certainly does not envisage the university as being a mere instrument of the Church.⁷⁷ His insistence on ecclesial author-

able at <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/historical/volume3/universities/chapter7.html> (last accessed August 3, 2016).

⁷² Bottone, *The Philosophical Habit of Mind*, 194.

⁷³ Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 215.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 217.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 216.

⁷⁶ Ian Ker, *John Henry Newman* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1988), 389.

⁷⁷ See Newman, *The Idea of a University*, ix: "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 is, on the one hand, intellectual, not moral; and, on the other, that it is the diffusion and extension of knowledge rather

ity simply serves to remind us that “a university must teach all the knowledge it professes to teach—in accordance with its idea of what constitutes knowledge—unequivocally and without compromise.”⁷⁸ Thus, while Newman’s position might seem at first sight to be simply theological, further reflection reveals its theological elements to be perfections of a basic philosophical stance with regard to knowledge and truth. It is arguably an instance of grace perfecting nature. Nature—in this case, university education—still remains, however; it is in no way annulled.

Newman, in his *University Sketches*, indicates how he construes the practical structures of a university that would function according to his ideals. There it is clear that the university constituted according to his vision is structured in a collegiate manner. The various colleges within the framework of the university concern themselves with “the

than the advancement. If its object were scientific and philosophical discovery, I do not see why a University should have students; if religious training, I do not see how it can be the seat of literature and science. Such is a University in its essence, and independently of its relation to the Church. But, practically speaking, it cannot fulfil 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. Not that its main characters are changed by this incorporation: it still has the office of intellectual education; but the Church steadies it in the performance of that office.” See also Dulles, *Newman*, 141: “For Newman the university is not a mere instrument of the Church. It requires a measure of autonomy because it has its own proper end, distinct from that of the Church. Its specific aim is not the salvation of souls but higher education.” Further on, Dulles comments that the university “exercises sovereignty over the various disciplines, maps out their respective territories, and adjudicates disputes among them. But the sovereignty of the university, in Newman’s view is limited. Insofar as grace and revelation are superior to nature and reason, the Church, which is sovereign in speaking about these higher realms, has a certain authority over the Catholic university. The infallible pronouncements of the Church must be accepted without question” (ibid.).

⁷⁸ Ker, *John Henry Newman*, 389. Elsewhere, Ker writes that Newman likens the Church and the university “to political organisms, where the many individuals are brought into unity, not uniformity, and where the conflict of the various parts ensures and enhances their own vitality. Both paradoxically bring peace and harmony out of the very rivalry which they encourage, by fostering ‘Private Judgment’ in the one case, and the different branches of knowledge in the other. Both preserve and promote freedom of thought not in spite of but by virtue of the authority which each exercises in defence of the whole circle of truth against individual aberrations and excesses”; see his “Editor’s Introduction,” in John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, ed. Ian Ker (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1976), lxxv.

formation of character, intellectual and moral”⁷⁹ among other things. Newman does not conceive a university without colleges or colleges standing alone as sufficient for the educational task as he understands it. Either the university or the college on its own would be “insufficient in itself for the pursuit, extension, and inculcation of knowledge.”⁸⁰ The ideal would seem to be “a University, seated and living in Colleges, as possessing excellences of opposite kinds.”⁸¹ In *My Campaign in Ireland*, moreover, Newman indicates his appreciation of the role that an ethos of faith and devotion plays in the educational endeavor. Thus, he emphasizes the role of the university church and university preacher: “I cannot well exaggerate the influence, which

⁷⁹ John Henry Newman, *University Sketches*, ed. Michael Tierney (London / Newcastle-on-Tyne, UK: Walter Scott Publishing, 1903), 222. In this regard, Melanie M. Morey and John M. Piderit, S.J., point out that “The self-perpetuating and formative collegiate culture Newman describes has its modern parallels in residence halls in Catholic colleges and universities”; see *Catholic Higher Education: A Culture in Crisis* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2006), 143. Morey and Piderit then proceed to echo concerns surrounding the health of these halls: “Senior administrators would acknowledge . . . that in many instances, modern residence hall living is a far cry from the positive reinforcement Newman describes. What appears to prevail in many residence halls is a shadow culture that is antithetical to Catholic teachings” (ibid.).

Morey and Piderit consider two manifestations of this shadow culture: substance abuse (ibid., 145–46) and sexual intimacy (ibid., 146–48). As distinctive features of the wider culture in the contemporary Western world, neither would have posed the same difficulties for a Catholic university intent on maintaining its distinctive ethos in the time of Newman as they do for Catholic universities in our own time. Morey and Piderit conclude the section on substance abuse with the a Newmanian injunction: “The rules of a Catholic university should reflect the moral teachings of the Church, and the formation programs should invite students to understand the wisdom of these teachings” (ibid., 146). In concluding their discussion of sexual intimacy, they write: “Clearly, a Catholic university should act against . . . abuses, both to educate students about the teachings of the Church concerning intimacy and to uphold those teachings. . . . The Catholic university educates the whole person, and an important part of that educational mission involves helping students understand and appreciate relational justice, what constitutes appropriate limits and boundaries in relationships, the true meaning of relational intimacy and friendship, and the importance of lifelong commitment as the context for loving sexual expressions between man and women. When students disregard these norms, university authorities should act to support the Catholic culture” (ibid., 148).

⁸⁰ Ibid., 221.

⁸¹ Ibid.

a series of able preachers, distinguished by their station and their zeal, will exert upon the young men entering into life, externs and interns, and the students of various professions, who will constitute the mass of University residents.”⁸² He continues by stating that this institution “will force the University upon public notice, and raise it in public estimation by the presence of the most sacred of all schools, the school of faith and devotion.”⁸³ As David Fleischacker comments: “[B]ecause of the close unity of culture and the university, university church and preacher are a profound center in which spiritual realities are illuminated in the context of faith and reason, and then brought forth into the horizon of a culture.”⁸⁴

Conclusion

If the argument I have put forward is correct, a Thomistic construal of the university educational enterprise will naturally flower in the manner envisaged by Newman, and his vision of university education presupposes a metaphysical vision that is essentially Thomistic. The Thomistic and Newmanian elements of the educational enterprise are related as foundation and phenomenon respectively. There can, however, be absolutely no guarantee that any curriculum that is predicated on a Thomistic understanding of prudence and construed along the lines proposed by Newman will produce virtuous citizens who will seek the good both of their society and of the whole world in the light of humankind’s ultimate destiny. It has certainly not been my intention to make such an untenable claim here. Recognition of the connection between the intellectual and moral virtues by way of prudence does, however, entail the necessity of putting into place in the curriculum components that will, if appropriated, conduce to the fulfillment of those conditions that are necessary for the true flourishing of students and, by extension, of society at large, as well as cultivating an ethos hospitable to the realization of these conditions in the lives of students.

Most fundamental among all these conditions is the recognition of God as the First Efficient Cause of all that exists and God as the Final End to which all being tends. These conditions may well not be actualized in actual practice, but they will always remain at least

⁸² John Henry Cardinal Newman, *My Campaign in Ireland*, part I: *Catholic University Reports and Other Papers* (Aberdeen, UK: A. King and Co., 1896), 24.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ David Fleischacker, “The Place of Modern Scientific Research in the University According to John Henry Newman,” *Logos* 15 (2012): 110.

in potency to actualization. While these conditions may well not be actualized in practice, the cultivation of an appropriate ethos in the manner envisaged by Newman can be rightly considered an important—indeed, indispensable—facilitating factor. The absence of those curricular components that promote the conditions that are indispensable for that attainment of true human happiness simply means that they can never be translated into action and that the enterprises of individual lives, as well as that of the common good, will inevitably go astray, and perhaps badly so. The absence of an appropriate ethos inevitably vitiates the realization of the fruits that a well-structured curriculum is designed to cultivate.

When both the suitable curricular conditions and appropriate ethos are in place, the seeds of hope for the future are sown, seeds that will likely bear some kind of fruit. Indeed, given the powerful influence that the university exerts on the shaping of society at large, a curriculum constructed according to the vision of reality espoused in this article (a vision that is shared in common by Aquinas and Newman, albeit articulated by them in quite different ways) and an ethos proportioned to the demands of the curricular structure and content (as implicitly contained in the principles of Thomas's thought and as delineated by Newman) can only serve to safeguard and to promote the moral fabric of society. N·V