Raymond William's Reading of Newman's *The Idea of a University*

Introduction

This article engages with an example of Newman's reception in 20th Century thought which is not high on the agenda of most Newman scholarship, and one for which a connection with Newman might seem a little surprising. It is surprising because the territory under discussion here was not recognized as a discrete area of intellectual endeavour in Newman's own day, nor for half a century or so after his death: Cultural Studies. As will be seen shortly, a text credited with having stimulated the formation of this discipline, Raymond Williams's *Culture and Society*, gives considerable attention to the opening statement of Newman's sixth discourse in *The Idea of a University*. There, Newman states:

> "It were well if the English, like the Greek language, possessed some definite word to express, simply and generally, intellectual proficiency or perfection".

But, because there is no specific word for intellectual perfection, he says:

> "many words are necessary, in order [...] to bring out and convey what is surely no difficult idea in itself – that of the cultivation of the intellect as an end;"[1]

Williams says of these comments, that "[t]he most surprising fact about this paragraph is that Newman does not meet the want of 'some definite word' for intellectual perfection with the word "culture".[2] For Williams, the gap in English usage in the 1850s, could easily have been filled with the word "culture", as indeed related ideas tended to be around the same time and after.

My purpose in this article is to explore this juncture between Newman and 20th Century thought, to undertake three tasks. Firstly, it is necessary to respond to a challenge immediately presented by Williams's comment, insofar as the words "culture" and "cultivation" do feature heavily in the *Idea*.[3] In what follows, therefore, this article will establish whether Williams simply misreads Newman in his supposition that the omission of the word "culture" is "the most surprising fact about this paragraph". Williams situates Newman in the long trajectory of what he considers an English tradition of reflection on what "culture" is. The second task is, then, to inquire as to whether Williams is right to locate Newman where he does in this tradition. On this front, we shall see there are some problems with his interpretation of *The Idea of a University*, particularly in terms of how Williams relates the text to the idea of "culture" as an alternative to religion. This in turn presents a third task, related to the question of whether investigating Newman's understanding of what is classed under the term "culture" today, is best approached by discussing why the word is not used for the "intellectual perfection" described by Newman in the *Idea*. Here, there are grounds to suggest that elements of what we today relate to the term "culture" can be detected in Newman's work, in a way which suggests a much broader definition for that term than intellectual perfection. These elements pertain, not to Williams's English tradition, but to something we might term a "sensibility"; a set of tendencies, predispositions, and qualities. This will be seen to resonate with certain contemporary approaches in Cultural Studies, showing how

[1] John Henry Newman, *The Idea of University* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1996), 91-2
[2] Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society* 1780-1950, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1963), 120
[3] E.g. *Idea*, 92; 147; 158

Newman can continue to contribute to intellectual discussions beyond his own primary spheres of interest.

Culture and Society: 1780-1950

Raymond Williams is not the first thinker who comes to mind in discussing Newman's influence on intellectual history. But Williams is an impressive figure, who was initially trained in dramatic literature, and then went on to write various works which have had considerable influence on the academy in diverse areas. This influence is attested to by the formation of a "new" academic discipline, Cultural Studies, which, it is said, "emerges" from a particular "moment, [in Britain], in the mid-1950s",[4] and for which Williams's *Culture and Society 1780-1950* is considered seminal. The book follows the complex trajectory of what Williams considers an English tradition. It begins by claiming that "in the last decades of the 18th Century, and in the first half of the 19th, a number of words, which are now of capital importance, came for the first time into common English use, or, where they had already been generally used in the language, acquired new and important meanings".[5] Culture is, unsurprisingly, the paradigmatic keyword in this. By means of a careful semantic analysis of its use, Williams tracks "a general pattern of change…[in meaning, which] can be used as a special kind of map". He considers "the questions…concentrated in the meanings of the word *culture*' to be 'questions directly raised by...great historical changes",[6] namely industrialisation and the widespread social upheaval it brought with it from around 1780 onwards.

The book proceeds by way of close readings of specific texts often taken in pairs, in an interesting methodical and hermeneutical move. Williams states, "the growth of the new society was so confusing, even to the best minds, that positions were drawn up in terms of inherited categories, which revealed unsuspected and even opposing inclinations". This, he says, is "no more than one would expect in the early stages of so great a change".[7] The point seems to be that by embarking on dual, or comparative, close readings, precise variations in the uses of terms can be disclosed in proximate contexts, which reveal the morphing and metamorphosing of particular words like "culture", thus reflecting and giving voice to the pressure they are being put under by the "great historical changes" of industrialisation.

In order to hone in on what Williams says of Newman, important aspects of the preceding discussion need to be touched upon. In Edmund Burke, Williams finds a "basis" for what was to become a quintessential definition of culture in Matthew Arnold's work "seventy years later". This basis is found in Burke's oft-repeated statement: "the stock [of reason] in each man is small, and... individuals would do better to avail themselves of the general bank and capital of nations and ages".[8] Burke is of course critiquing some of the thinking associated with the French Revolution, with "reason" as an abstract and totalising faculty authorised to carve-up and discard tradition and long-established praxis.[9] Wisdom might be a better word to give voice for what Burke includes in the concept of reason. He is pointing to an intergenerational reserve of "wisdom" which, says Williams, was "[i]mmediately [after Burke]... called the "spirit of the nation", and by the "end of

[4] Stuart Hall, "Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms", Media, Culture and Society, 2: 57-72, 57
[5] Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society* 1780-1950, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1963), 13
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid., 38
[8] Burke quoted in Williams, Ibid., 28
[9] Ibid., 29 But, by pointing to a "general bank and capital of nations", Williams highlights that Burke is presenting "[t]he whole progress of man...[as] dependent,…on the nature of the particular community into which he has been born".

the 19th century,..."national culture"".[10] But note the important point: the word "culture" is not at Burke's disposal in the late 18th Century.

Subsequently, Williams points to how William Wordsworth was influenced by Burkean social theory, to hold to the idea of "[an] 'embodied spirit' of a People's knowledge, as something superior to... the actual run of the market".[11] Williams sees Burke's "general bank and capital" of a nation's wisdom, morphing into a "court of appeal in which real values were determined, usually in opposition to the "fictitious" values thrown up by market-driven operations. Williams reminds us that, in the 18th Century, the adjective "cultivated" had meant the "general state of habit of the mind" having been trained in something. But, after Burke, Wordsworth, and then Samuel Taylor Coleridge, it develops into two nominal forms which are "abstracted" from any particular form of training in a specific skill, and rather gesture toward some vaguely articulated state of human perfection. The nouns "cultivation" and "culture" then emerge as things involved in seeking after some moral or intellectual perfection, which Williams says means that the word "culture" becomes "the normal antithesis to the [economic] market".[12] Presumably, economics as it was understood in these writers, lacked any intrinsic directedess; it was without sentient agency, and thus seen as haphazard or thoughtless.

The move shown by Coleridge's use of "cultivation" and "culture", can also be seen in the writings of J. S. Mill, and his attempts to restrain or correct the utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham. Williams claims Mill was provoked by Coleridge, who critiqued the "accepted [utilitarian, social] practice of... considering *only* what seems *expedient* for the occasion, disjoined from all principle".[13] Mill takes this critique to argue that straightforward expedience is not enough for healthy social organisation, which we can see in his attempts in *On Liberty* to preserve "the rights of individuals and minorities against Public Opinion".[14] That is, Mill recognises that there needs to be a repository of values, a place for moral safeguards and decency, which can preserved somehow from the brute force of the will of the greatest number of people. In searching for this, Mill decides that "Man...[is] a being capable of pursuing spiritual perfection as an end".[15] That is, the human being is not mere automaton that gravitates toward pleasure over against pain. The word "culture" emerges again here; as a safeguard against the new world, having its *telos* in human perfection, not material satisfaction.

Williams then moves on to Thomas Carlyle, whom he credits with taking the Burkean reserve of a nation's wisdom, and combining it with Wordsworth"s spirit of such a nation as "a body of values superior to the ordinary progress of society". Carlyle's well-documented fondness for the heroic is of course involved in this, insofar as he "never failed to emphasise [the] conception of a "spiritual aristocracy", a highly cultivated and responsible minority, concerned to define and emphasise the highest values at which society must aim".[16]

Newman in *Culture and Society*

Having given attention to the elements of *Culture and Society* which we proceed the discussion of Newman, we can now turn to his arrival in the book. The Carlyle text under

[10] Ibid., 30
[11] Ibid., 52
[12] Ibid., 53
[13] Coleridge quoted by Williams, Ibid., 73
[14] Ibid., 71
[15] Mill quoted by Williams, Ibid., 76
[16] Ibid., 96

discussion is "Signs of the Times", from 1829. Some twenty years later Newman was invited to act as rector for the founding of the Catholic University in Dublin, and the VIth Discourse of the *Idea* is the text Williams examines next. He embarks on a dual reading of Newman and Matthew Arnold, showing the afore mentioned comparative method: to disclose "unsuspected...inclinations" between two proximate thinkers. The inquiry begins with the statement of Newman's which I drew attention to at the outset, in which Newman describes the need for the English language to have 'some definite word' to express, simply and generally, intellectual... perfection".[17] Williams works with this passage on the basis of his key contention about Newman: that the intellectual perfection spoken of in the *Idea* can be slotted in to his scheme of development in the English tradition around "culture". Or, in his own words, "[t]he... surprising fact... that Newman does not meet the want of 'some definite word' for intellectual perfection with the word "culture".[18]

Before evaluating this, we need to discuss how this chapter of *Culture and Society* proceeds in dialogue with Matthew Arnold. First, it needs to be recalled that Williams is tracking the development of the word "culture" as referring originally to having been trained in some specific skill, before moving onto something related to "the idea of human perfection". He will then go on to argue that the term subsequently morphs into meaning "the general state of intellectual development, in a society as a whole", before eventually getting to culture as "a whole way of life".[19] The key point is that he seems to consider Newman and Arnold to occupy a cusp between culture as related to "human perfection" and its subsequent phase, "the general state of intellectual development, in a society as a whole". Arnold is central in this, for he moves away from human perfection as the preserve of an elite few determined by traditional class structures (Carlyle's "spiritual aristocracy"), into a relatively more democratised approach. Between Newman and Arnold, says Williams, a new consideration has come on the horizon: "the general reaction of the social effects of full industrialisation, and in particular to the agitation of the industrial working class".[20] The old pre-industrial order had, in Burke, been accepted with a strong sense of providential rationale apportioned to it. With Arnold, "culture" is no longer the preserve of a social elite (i.e. the aristocracy), for "in each class", he claims, there is "a minority" or "remnant" which is "led…by a general *humane* spirit, by the love of human perfection".[21]

This brings us to a suitable juncture at which to tackle the first task outlined at the outset, to establish whether Williams simply misreads Newman in his supposition that there is an important omission of the word "culture" in his opening paragraph to Discourse VI. After all, Newman makes plentiful use of phrases like "the cultivation of the intellect" in the same Discourse, and plentifully in VIII and IX, not to mention his writing of the "cultivated intellect" at numerous points.[22] On closer inspection, however, it seems Williams has appreciated the nuances of Newman's phrasing. In Discourse VI, Newman describes the word he is searching for as an analogue to "health" in relation to the physical body, and "virtue" in relation to "our moral nature".[23] He does not opt for "talent, ability, genius", he writes, because these refer not to the perfected intellect, but to innate capacities for perfection, what he calls the "raw material" and not

[17] Newman quoted in Williams, Ibid., 120
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid., 18
[20] Ibid., 121
[21] Arnold quoted by Williams, Ibid., 130
[22] E.g. *Idea*, 92; 147; 158;
[23] Ibid., p. 91

"that excellence which is the result of exercise and training".[24] Similarly, he opts neither for "judgement, taste, [or] skill" because these refer not to the *condition* of intellectual perfection as such, but rather foster and administer one's progress toward perfection. In his own words, they are "powers or habits bearing upon practice or upon art, and not to any perfect condition of the intellect considered in itself".[25] When, in the same paragraph, Newman refers to the "cultivation of the intellect as an end", then, it is clear that "cultivation" does not refer to intellectual perfection, which is its result, but rather to the progress made toward perfection, or the business of seeking after that perfection.

In the context of Williams's scheme, it is important to bear in mind that Newman arrives somewhere *between* culture as related to "the idea of human perfection", and its morphing into referring to "the general state of intellectual development, in a society as a whole".[26] Why Newman is so interesting to Williams, it seems, is that he does not consider the word culture for the end of intellectual cultivation – it no longer denotes perfection – but now moves toward referring to the *process* of developing the intellect, "culture" is rather analogous to exercise in relation to health, and right action in relation to virtue. Having established that Williams' does not misread the word "culture" itself in the *Idea*, we can turn to the second task of this article, to inquire as to whether Williams is right to locate Newman where he does in this developing scheme.

Newman and Arnold are seen by Williams as occupying a peculiar diversion in the English tradition related to *religion*. Williams considers that Arnold – like Newman - holds explicitly to the idea of culture as "a process and not an absolute", meaning a seeking after perfection (or "becoming"), and not a condition of stable perfection in itself. But, Williams claims that, implicitly (in Arnold's actual "emphasis" in the "detail" of his argument), "[c]ulture at times seems very like... Salvation; a thing to secure first, to which all else will then be added". When Arnold states, "culture hates hatred, culture has one great passion, the passion for sweetness and light",[27] Williams says: "it is difficult not to feel the pressure of Saint Paul's description of Christianity, and it seems not impossible that there has been a... transference of emotion from the old concept to the new".[28] Williams is critical of this transference. He argues that "culture as a substitute for religion is a very doubtful quantity".[29] Arnold, he says, is "caught between two worlds", and "snatches towards an absolute" – "culture" as surrogate religion.[30]

Williams clearly prefers Newman to Arnold, saying "[t]he description of human perfection, in Newman, comes through with remarkable purity that commands respect even where assent is difficult", whereas in Arnold, he finds "a kid of witty and malicious observation better suited to minor fiction".[31] Nonetheless, Williams implies that Newman inhabits roughly the same juncture in the developing tradition. This arises from an interpretation of Newman's comments on the beauty of the cultivated mind, and that beauty's "furthest extent and its true limit" can mean one is led to "the Eternal and Infinite". So the assessment of Williams's situating of Newman requires not only that we establish whether Newman's description of the perfection (or "cultivation") of

[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid., 18
[27] Arnold quoted by Williams, Ibid., 134
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.
[30] This is understandable, considering that culture was related to the idea of human perfection and seen as a measure of the general state of society as a whole.

[31] Ibid., 125-6

the intellect in the *Idea* could just as well have been called "culture", but also whether Newman is gesturing toward some sort of religious or pseudo-divine authority to this unnamed condition which is the end of intellectual striving. That is, Williams finds it so "surprising" that Newman omits to use the word "culture" for intellectual perfection, because elsewhere in this Discourse the result or end of "the cultivation of the intellect" is described with pseudo-religious authority. Is Newman merely a "purer" example of the same stage of the English tradition as Arnold; witnessing, unwittingly, to the supposition that culture is functioning as a rival or even replacement to what was once the preserve of religion?

The idea of a particular mode of cultural expression serving as surrogate religion is a common trope of the mid-late 19th Century scene. Richard Wagner famously apportioned it to his operatic *Gesamtkunstwerken*, but in Arnold it is poetry which is given this supreme status. As T.S. Eliot pointed out, while "Wordsworth and Shelley [saw] poetry [as] a vehicle for one kind of philosophy or another" in Arnold we reach a new stage, whereby "the best poetry supersedes both religion and philosophy".[32] Similar sentiments are seen in Walter Pater's famous *The Study of Poetry* from 1880, which concludes that "most of what now passes for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry".[33] Pater himself draws on Newman in a way not entirely dissimilar to Williams. He claims that "[t]hose who maintain the...older and narrower forms of religious life against the claims of culture are often embarrassed at finding the intellectual life heated through with the very graces to which they would sacrifice it", he then names "Dr. Newman" as one in whom a "modern aspirant to perfect culture seem[s] to find the expression of the inmost delicacies of his own life".[34] To say that Newman's writing in *The Idea of a University* is so beautiful, that it exemplifies one in whom culture threatens usurp religion, might seem permissible at first glance. Newman holds that appreciating the end of intellectual cultivation "as a good in itself" is ultimately to see it as something "beautiful", and, as we have seen, the apprehension of beauty, when "pursued to its furtherst extent", is described as leading to "the Eternal and Infinite, [that is] the intimations of conscience and the announcement of the Church".[35]

Moreover, Edward Short argues that it was Newman who actually "first suggested that poetry might be a substitute for religion". He finds this Newman"s comments on John Keble"s *Lyra Innocentium* of 1846. Newman states that "[a]ctual England is too sad to look upon" so the "poet seems to turn away from the sight; else, in his own words, it would "bruise too sore his tender heart".[36] Pointing back to Keble's *The Christian Year*, Newman says that book "did that for the Church of England which none but a poet could do: he made it poetical", that, "[c]lear as was his perception of the degeneracy of his times" Keble "threw the poetry of his own mind" on it by turning "to the memory of better days".[37]

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[32] T. S. Eliot quoted by Edward Short, *Newman and His Contemporaries*, (London & New York: T & T Clark Continuum), 337

[33] Walter Pater quoted by Short, Ibid., 338

[34] Walter Pater quoted by Short, Ibid., 339

[35] Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 150

[36] Newman, Lyra Innocentium, *Dublin Review XX*, (London: Thomas Richardson & Co, 1846) 434-460, 442

[37] Ibid., 338. Short also points, helpfully, to a shared view between Arnold and Newman on the dangers of self-will. For Arnold, the antithesis of culture is anarchy, and "Barbarians, Philistines, or Populace, imagine happiness to consist in doing what one's ordering self likes". For Newman, as we know, self-will is rooted in conscience, which is not "a long-sighted selfishness, nor a desire to be consistent with oneself, but a messenger from Him who […] speaks to us behind a veil". Moreover, Arnold was an undergraduate during Newman's vicariate at St Mary's University Church, and he himself cited Newman and the Oxford Movement as an important influence, a point well recorded in the literature.

On reflection, however, Williams, Pater *et al* are quite far off the mark in relating the 19th Century view of culture as surrogate religion to Newman. As Short states, they "are so far off the mark it is funny".[38] In the *Idea*, yes, Newman connects the end of intellectual cultivation with the beauty that at its "furthest extent" can see one being led to "the Eternal and Infinite". But the important point is that we are *led* to the Eternal and the Infinite, we do not cultivate ourselves up into heaven. Williams and others are mistaking a natural tending toward perfection in the sphere of the intellect, for the graced perfection of sharing in divine life, which for Newman is of course something radically different. As put by C. F. Harrold: "Newman is un-Romantic insofar as he fought the implicit or explicit Pelagianism of his day".[39] Louis Bouyer"s forward to the *Parochial and Plain Sermons* says that Newman's Oxford preaching brought "all... aspects of Catholic theology" into "constant reference to the cultural situation of the day", and claims that it is in the *Idea* that Newman "elaborated a full analysis of the relation between culture and the Christian religion".[40] If we turn to those sermons, we find repeated recourse to the qualified and relative status of what we would today term "culture" over against the unqualified and absolute status of Christianity. Let us follow Bouyer and take these sermons as offering, *in nuce*, important orientation for the *Idea*. In one sermon, for example, Newman suggests the intended message of Christ's washing of the feet was that the disciples "should be full of lowly services one to the other".[41] But, he notes, they might have said to themselves, "we have heard this before", and so Christ acted "by way of an example", for "their minds would not [otherwise] rest sufficiently on the *practical* direction of the instruction vouchsafed to them".[42] The disciples are said to have loved and reverenced Christ "as their Lord and Teacher", but would have gravitated toward love and reverence as notions or convictions, not stimulative prompts for obedience to God's will.

Newman goes on to say "[t]he multitude of men even who profess religion are in this [notional or passive] state of mind", and this is particularly true of those "who are in better circumstances than the mass of the community". These people "are well educated", we read, and "they go on respectably and happily, with the same general tastes and habits which they would have had if the Gospel had not been given them". Therefore, "their religion is based upon self and the world, a mere *civilisation*". Such people "adopt…a certain refined elegance of sentiments and manners" and often "love religious poetry and eloquent preaching".[43] They may even have "turned their attention to [...] promoting the happiness of their fellow creatures, and have formed a system of morality and religion of their own".[44] He concludes that we "live in an educated age. The false gloss of a mere worldly refinement makes us decent and amiable. We all ...think ourselves wise".[45][46]

It should be clear from this, that intellectual cultivation and sophistication are certainly not to be seen as imbued with a religious or pseudo-divine status for Newman. In the earlier sermons the emphasis is rather on how this cultivation will more commonly actually work *against* our sharing in God's grace. This negative stance is present in the *Idea* too, although it seems to have been missed, or deemed superfluous, by Newman's cultural commentators. This is particularly true of

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[38] Short, *Newman and His Contemporaries*, 350
[39] C. F. Harrold, quoted by Edward Short, Ibid., 98
[40] Louis Bouyer "Foreward" to John Henry Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997), xii-xiii
[41] to John Henry Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, 23
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid., 24
[44] Ibid., 25
[45] Ibid., 25-6
[46] See Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons* 143-4: "instead of considering a common faith to be the bond of union between Christian and Christian, they dream of some other fellowship of civilisation, refinement…"

Discourse VIII and IX. There, Newman states that a Liberal Education "concurs with Christianity in a certain way", but then "diverges from it; and consequently proves in the event, sometimes its serviceable ally, sometimes, from its resemblance to it, an insidious and dangerous foe".[47] Here, what was termed earlier "a mere worldly refinement" which causes us to form systems "of morality and religion" of our own, corresponds to a point where Newman describes the benefits of Liberal Education in the *Idea*. He says such an education exerts "a subtle influence in throwing us back on ourselves, and making us our own centre, and our minds the measure of all things." He then claims, "the "perception of the Beautiful becomes the substitute for faith".[48] And again, the intellectual cultivation provided by a Liberal Education "has a special tendency…[in] beings such as we are, to impress us with a mere philosophical theory of life and conduct, in the place of Revelation."[49]

A Broader Understanding of Culture

A modest gain for this discussion has thus been made. Newman cannot be inserted into the Williams's trajectory in the development of English cultural criticism, insofar as he is not one of those apportioning culture a pseudo-divine status. This is not any great surprise, really. Even when writing on matters not directly about faith, what Newman says can only be genuinely understood from a faith-centered perspective, a perspective which writers in Cultural Studies might not share. As put by Mary Katherine Tillman, there are times when Newman is "humanly speaking", "[b]ut we...know that all Newman"s "humanly speaking" views really stem from his [overarching] faith-filled vision".[50] So, having established that, while Williams shows an impressive grasp of the nuances of Newman's use of related to words to "culture", he is misguided in associating Newman with that juncture in his scheme where culture functions as surrogate religion, a third and final task presents itself. This is to inquire as to whether Newman's concept of what would today be included under the term "culture", is best approached as something primarily intellectual at all, notwithstanding the fact that the word itself is functions as such in the *Idea*. In other words, it might be argued that Williams is, in a sense, looking in the wrong place in his aim to situate Newman in his trajectory of the developing meaning of "culture", because Newman frequently discusses matters we would today relate to this term, in ways, arguably, which are prescient for Cultural Studies today.

The first observation to made on this front, is that Newman uses the word "civilisation" in the *Parochial and Plain Sermons*. Civilisation is described as closely related to education, but it is broader than formal learning. As we have seen, he mentions "general tastes and habits" as well as a "refined elegance of sentiments and manners". This points us to aspects of what we today term "culture", which Williams, if he is concerned about them at all, would situate them in the closing parts of the book. That is, culture is not about the intellect alone, but also involves certain enduring characteristics or qualities pertaining to a particular people, that is, elements of a "whole way of life". Newman's general approach to Anglicanism in this connection, chimes exactly with the statement by Dr Greene in Ronald Knox's *Let Dons Delight*, for he says it "has come down to us in our history as part of English life, as the religion of a nation, adapted to its temper, and modelled on its history".[51] This would suggest that, in Newman's own words, there is a question of temperament or "sentiment" involved in identity, what he calls in the Oxford sermons a "temper

[47] Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 148–9.
[48] Ibid., 151. cf: "[S]atisfy yourself with what is only visibly or intelligibly excellent, as you are likely to do, and you will make…beauty the practical test of truth, and the sufficient object of the intellect.", 150
[49] Ibid.
[50] M. Katherine Tillman, *John Henry Newman: Man of Letters*, (Marquette, Marquette University Press, 2015), 66
[51] Knox, quoted by Short, *Newman and His Contemporaries*, 55

of mind" and a "manner of life".[52] After all, how else is one to understand Newman's comments in the *Apologia* about Thomas Scott and Hurrell Froude, one being "a true Englishman", and the other "an Englishman to the backbone",[53] or his comment to Gerald Manly Hopkins, that "the Irish character and traits are very different to the English".[54]

Time will not permit a full examination of all the various aspects of what Newman includes in this English "temper" or "habit" of mind, but an affection for reserve is surely central, as indeed is a tendency toward empirical reality over against the grand idealist speculation of the Continental mainland. Another importantly valued characteristic is termed in the *Idea,* "moderation", or in the Oxford sermons, the habit of mind of being "temperate".[55] Overall, certain elements of what we would today term "culture" are, I contend, very important for Newman's work, but are not matters of intellectual perfection *per se*, rather, a linking of identity with characteristic tendencies. Indeed, it is salient that it is just this sort of thing which Arnold mentions as Newman's enduring influence on him: "nothing can ever do away the effects you have produced in me, for it consists in a general disposition of mind rather than in a particular set of ideas".[56]

This brings to a light a hitherto unexamined aspect of Newman's relation to Cultural Studies, because this latter aspect of culture has been the subject of much discussion in recent years, due to contested issues of cultural and national identity at the current time. Paul Langford, for example, speaks of a developing notion of "Englishness" taking place in Newman's day. He says the word originates in 1805, and was established by the ... middle of the 19th Century.[57] Englishness, in Langford's work, means "those distinctive aspects of national life that strike either outsiders or insiders... as characteristic",[58] something that came "increasingly [to be] described as a national character".[59] Terry Eagleton speaks of the notion of an "English sensibility" emerging in the 19th Century.[60] Peter Ackroyd, charts the development of what he calls "the English imagination" , or "English sensibility", right back to the earliest instantiations of native literature.[61] He writes, "a native spirit persists though time and circumstance, all the more powerful for being generally unacknowledged".[62]

Indeed, recalling the classically English quality of "moderation" or "temperance", this is certainly to be found in writers like Ackroyd. He speaks of an English "instinct for compromise",[63] mentioning William of Malmesbury for saying, the ""best is ever mete"", meaning "moderation in all things".[64] He also mentions the medieval mystic Richard Rolle for recommending "moderation" even in "penitential exercises".[65] He situates this "instinct" right back in the language of Middle English, as a tongue which combined and balanced two languages, arguing that

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[52] John Henry Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, 6
[53] John Henry Newman, *Apologia pro vita sua*, 5 and 26
[54] Newman in Gerald Manly Hopkins, *Further Letters of Gerald Manly Hopkins*, edited by C.C. Abbott, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956) 413-414
[55] John Henry Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, 53-4
[56] Matthew Arnold quoted by Edward Short, *Newman and His Contemporaries*, 15
[57] Paul Langford, *Englishness Identified Manners and Character 1650-1850*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1-3
[58] Ibid., 2
[59] Ibid., 7
[60] Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, (London: Blackwell, 1997), 1 & 33. Perhaps influenced by Williams, Eagleton considers this sensibility to have been "constructed as a subject to carry [the] ideological burden" caused by religion's inability any longer to "provide the social "cement"" by which "society can be welded together".
[61] Peter Ackroyd, *Albion: The Origins of the English Imagination*, (London: Vintage Press, 2004), 27; 35; 109; 128-9; 220
[62] Ibid., 176
[63] Ibid., 127
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid., 170

"it is in the nature of English language... to reside at [a] nodal point where two languages or perceptions meet".[66] Such a quality he claims is seen in Shakespeare too, who he sees a master of "the play of oppositions".[67]As Samuel Johnson noted, Shakespeare wrote plays which are strictly speaking neither "tragedies nor comedies...[but which mingle both] with endless variety of proportion".[68] Even the Coverdale Bible is mentioned here, as exhibiting "a pragmatic and conciliatory nature", which "took the middle way", along with English music, that Ackroyd considers to "spring out of moderation and conciliation".[69]

While Langford acknowledges that ideas of a national character threaten to seem "repugnant to the liberal conscience of the West",[70] Ackroyd offers a promising way to avoid making such notions in anyway implicative of ethnicity, by suggesting that this sensibility is somehow rooted in and shaped by natural and environmental factors. That is, they can be approached as rooted the lands of Britain, and not in any particular people who may inhabit it at any given time. Robert Winder has more recently taken this much further, to deal with the difficult question of how classically English "values" like "fair play" or "tolerance" are obviously not "exclusively English", and also, like Ackroyd, to give due attention to the deeply ethnically diverse nature of the inhabitants of England from the earliest of times to the present.[71]

The point is that any discussion of a distinct national "sensibility" can never present certain qualities as belonging exclusively to any one people, nor pretend that such qualities belong to every person within that people. From a theological perspective, this need for language of a certain "sensibility" always to be qualified and limited is rendered more acute, in that theology's subject matter must, to some extent, be applicable to people of any culture, and – somehow – able to articulate a transcendence pointing "beyond" culture too. On this front, I think Newman could be a promising interlocutor for these discussions, because his own relationship with what could be termed an "English sensibility" is, obviously, not straightforward, and is frequently wrought with tension.

For example, on the one hand, Newman seems relatively ambivalent about the English "temper of mind" he mentions at various points. In the *Apologia*, he states, 'if there is one consideration more than another which should make us English grateful to Pius the Ninth, it is that, by giving us a Church of our own, he has prepared the way for our own habits of mind, our own manner of reasoning, our own tastes, and our own virtues'.[72] That is, he seems to think this "temper of mind" is something the Church can be fitted to, notwithstanding it relative and qualified status. As put by Ian Kerr, "dignity and good taste were not necessarily qualities one found in Catholicism".[73] On the other hand however, Newman can make statements of the English like, "[w]e must beg God to change our tastes and habits",[74] presumably for when such considerations threaten ultimately to usurp the truth of Revelation. Nowhere are such sentiments more prevalent than when the mature Newman is discussing Anglicanism, of course; "the

[66] Ibid., 98-9
[67] Ibid., 228
[68] Ibid., 226
[69] Ibid., 296
[70] Robert Winder, *The Last Wolf: The Hidden Springs of Englishness*, (London: Little Brown Group, 2017)
[71] Ibid., 5
[72] John Henry Newman, *Apologia pro vita sua*, (London: Longman and Green, 1864), 373-430
[73] Ian Turnbull Ker, *The Catholic Revival in English Literature 1845-1961*, (Leominster: Gracewing, 2003) p. 26
[74] Newman, *Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman Vol XXII*, edited by Charles Stephen Dessain, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 194

decorous pieties of what Thackeray once called Church-of-Englandism".[75] In the *Present Position* he speaks of Anglicanism as "a religion which indulges" the "natural" English "turn of mind".[76] Insofar as the sensibility of the people was unavoidably linked to the national Church in the 19th Century, Newman's relationship with it is of course very complex. After all, as put by Short, "Newman left behind...an entire English way of life" in converting,[77] for Catholicism was seen as "profoundly un-English".[78]

An obvious example of this two-sidedness of Newman's relationship with an English sensibility arises from relating his Anglican *via media* to the afore mentioned "instinct for compromise", balance, proportion, and moderation. It is quintessentially English. But Newman"s conversion - by his own description - is closely linked to his realization that the moderate path is not necessarily that most aligned to God's will. The semi-Arians are those he claims, in the early Church, that took the "middle way" between Arius and Athanasius, and they were, strictly speaking, just as heretical as Arius himself. In short, by setting great store on the human value of moderation, he would have been as guilty as those he describes as forming their own systems of "religion", of being "thrown back on [themselves]...making [themselves] [their] own centre, [their] minds the "measure of all things". Newman"s difficult relationship with the English sensibility is well described by Harold Weatherby, who charts the tendency toward various types of "middle way" evinced by people like Edmund Spencer, Richard Hooker, Lancelot Andrewes, and John Donne, in order to bring out "Newman's departure from [what he terms] the old orthodoxy of England".[79] He can thus conclude that ""Newmanism" is...the name of a new sensibility in English theology... determined by two movements: that of loss and that of gain, of exile and homecoming..."[80]

Conclusion

To bring all this to close, there are XXX outcomes to be made explicit here, giving some pointers for understanding Newman's place in 20th Century Cultural Studies In the first place, Williams is correct in highlighting that "culture" is not, for Newman, a synonym for intellectual perfection. Secondly, however, Newman does not fit comfortably into Raymond Williams's scheme, insofar as he cannot really be included along with Arnold as evincing a lingering sense of "culture" as the condition of perfection by apportioning to it a pseudo-religious status. Thirdly, Williams's focus on the *Idea* to deduce how Newman relates to our understandings of culture today is questionable, because Newman's own use of a myriad of terms ("civilisation" / "sentiments"/ "temper of mind"/ "manner of living") and his connection of certain qualities with the "English", show that he offers resources for reflecting on what we would today term "culture" with a much broader purview than mere intellectual perfection; and we might term this a "sensibility". Finally, and unexpectedly, this aspect of Newman actually makes a discussion with contemporary Cultural Studies more potentially fruitful than it seemed at the outset. That is, language of an English "imagination" or "sensibility" has been on the horizon of Cultural Studies in recent years, and few people write about it which such bittersweet vigour as Newman himself. Because Newman has such a vexed relationship with his own Englishness, he promises to enable an honest appraisal of

[75] Short, *Newman and His Contemporaries*, 181
[76] Ibid., 166
[77] Ibid., 5
[78] Ibid., 11
[79] Harold L. Weatherby , *Cardinal Newman in His Age: His Place in English Theology and Literature*, (Nashville, Tenn., Vanderbilt University Press), 10
[80] Ibid., 115

the limits within which such a thing as a "sensibility" should be framed. He thus promises to inform Cultural Studies itself to this day, particularly with his abandoning of the *via media*. Because, for Newman, it is always: "holiness before peace".