

Newman and the Phenomenological Movement

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1. Newman as a philosopher

John Henry Newman (1801-1890) has long been recognised as one of the most outstanding theologians and literary geniuses of the nineteenth century. Pope John Paul II in his recent Encyclical, *Fides et ratio*, on the relationship between faith and reason gave Newman first place among his nine examples of important contemporary «Christian theologians who also distinguished themselves as great philosophers»¹. In spite of this clear recognition of his prowess as a philosopher Newman's endeavours in this field have been somewhat overlooked. Edward Sillem, a specialist of his philosophy, laments that «Newman's right to be considered a philosopher has scarcely been considered till comparatively recently. [...] Few historians of philosophy make any mention of him when they come to write about the nineteenth century»². However, judging by the interest shown in his philosophy during the latter half of this century this situation is gradually changing and his reputation as a significant philosopher of the nineteenth century is increasing. The number of authors who have considered his philosophical view worthy of serious attention is growing. Among these we can mention Frederick Copleston, Etienne Gilson, Stanley Jaki, Jean Guitton, Edward Sillem, Jan Hendrik Walgrave, A.J. Boekraad, Johannes Artz and Ian Ker.

Frederick Copleston, in volume eight of his authoritative *History of Philosophy*,

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¹ POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical *Fides et ratio*, 14-IX-98, n. 74.

² E. SILLEM, *General Introduction to the Study of Newman's Philosophy*, two volumes, 1969 and 1970 (the second volume is *The Philosophical Notebook of John Henry Newman*, which was edited by E. Sillem and revised by A.J. Boekraad), Nauwelaerts Publishing House, Mgr Ladeuzeplein 2, Louvain, Belgium, vol. I, p. 21.

dedicated a fifteen page appendix to the philosophy of Newman³. Etienne Gilson, in the *Introduction* that he wrote for a popular edition of Newman's *Grammar of Assent*, affirmed that «it is desirable to emphasise the originality of an undertaking whose importance is even more evident in our times than it was in 1870»⁴. Johannes Artz, after advocating Newman's recognition as a philosopher, continues by affirming that: «He was not indeed a systematic professional philosopher, but he did give us important philosophical stimuli and also the rudiments of a system»⁵.

Since Newman was neither a professional philosopher nor wrote any purely philosophical treatise, it is hardly surprising that, up until the present, he has not been generally recognised as a significant philosopher. Copleston suggests another reason for this lack of recognition when he says: «It will be obvious to any attentive reader that in distinguishing the currents of thought in the nineteenth century I have used traditional labels, "empiricism", "idealism" and so on, none of which can properly be applied to Newman». He then concludes that to omit him «because of the difficulty of classifying him, would have been absurd, especially when I have mentioned a considerable number of much less distinguished thinkers»⁶. Newman himself was well aware of his non-conformity to the philosophical schools of the day. This he made clear in a preface for his *Grammar*, which eventually was not published, where he states that he had not «recognised the tenets nor the language of existing schools of thought», and that he wished to «speak for himself»⁷. Referring to his originality Gilson affirms that: «Newman did not write as a disciple of the scholastic masters whose works illustrated the thirteenth century; he wrote in the free style of a twelfth-century master, full of classical erudition»⁸. His originality only adds of course to his merit as a philosopher, since his contribution to the

³ Cf F. COPLESTON, *A History of Philosophy*, volumes I-VIII, Burns and Oates, London 1968, vol. VIII, pp. 510-525.

⁴ E. GILSON, in an *Introduction* to an edition of *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, Image Books, Doubleday, New York 1955, pp. 20-21; cf *ibidem*, p. 9.

⁵ J. ARTZ, *Newman as Philosopher*, in «International Philosophical Quarterly», New York, n. 16, (September 1976), p. 287.

⁶ F. COPLESTON, o.c., vol. VIII, *Preface*, p. x; cf E. SILLEM, o.c., I, pp. 75-76.

⁷ J.H. NEWMAN, manuscript: O. A. B. 2.2, quoted by Ian Ker, *Introduction* and notes to a critical edition of John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, Oxford University Press, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1985, *Introduction*, pp. XLIII-XLIV; cf J.H. NEWMAN, *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, edited by Charles Stephen Dessain et al., volumes I-VI, Clarendon Press Oxford, 1978-1984, volumes XI-XXII, Oxford University Press London, 1961-1971, XXIII-XXXI, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1973-1977, vol. XXV, p. 36; *Fifteen Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford*, Longmans, Green and Company, London 1843, pp. IX-X; E. SILLEM, o.c., I, p. 238; F. COPLESTON, o.c., vol. VIII, p. 513; J.H. WALGRAVE, *Newman. Le développement du dogme*, Casterman, Tournai, Paris 1957 (English translation by A.V. Littledale, *Newman the Theologian*, London 1960), p. 19; P. FLANAGAN, *Newman, Faith and the Believer*, Sands, London 1946, p. 109; D.A. PAILIN, *The Way to Faith (An Examination of Newman's "Grammar of Assent" as a Response to the Search for Certainty in Faith)*, Epworth Press, London 1969, p. 90.

⁸ E. GILSON, in *Introduction*, cit., p. 18; cf O. CHADWICK, *From Bossuet to Newman*, Cambridge University Press, (1957), pp. 111-112.

advance of philosophy is his own, and not something needing the authority of others for its support.

The fact that Newman was not hailed as a significant philosopher during his lifetime is not a good guide as to the true value of his thought. Even he seemed to foresee this eventuality when he wrote in 1860: «If there be a subject, in which one is removed from the temptation of writing for popularity etc it is this, for if there is any thing at once new and good, years must elapse, the writer must be long dead, before it is acknowledged and received»⁹. The passage of time makes it easier to be more objective regarding the importance and influence of an individual philosopher. Likewise, it is possible to have a more universal vision of the development of philosophical thought in which to find the appropriate *locus* for a particular philosopher. I believe this to be the case with respect to the philosophy of Newman. It is only during the last fifty years that the value of his thought has been gradually realised and appreciated. At the same time it is now possible to consider later philosophical developments in the light of his contribution. In this context, Copleston tells us that «the growth of interest in his philosophical thought [...] has coincided with the spread of movements in philosophy [...] which, on our looking back, are seen to have certain affinities with elements in Newman's reflections»¹⁰.

This paper proposes to show that his thought does indeed bear certain similarities to a later development in philosophy: that of the Phenomenological Movement. At the same time I hope that it will contribute, albeit in some small way, to the promotion of Newman's cause as a philosopher.

It can easily be forgotten that philosophy played an important part in Newman's time at the University of Oxford¹¹. As an undergraduate he studied the three set books of Aristotle, namely *Rhetorica*, *De Poetica* and *Ethica Nicomachea*. After his graduation he continued his study of Aristotle along with other interests in the natural sciences¹². His first published essay, *On the Analogous Nature of the Difficulties in Mathematics and Those of Religion*, was clearly influenced by his study of Aristotle¹³. As a Fellow of Oriel College he met Richard Whately (1787-1863), also a Fellow of Oriel and fully engaged in a restoration of Aristotelian philosophy¹⁴. Newman learnt Aristotelian logic from him and contributed to Whately's celebrated work, *The Elements of Logic*¹⁵. Apart from a marked difference in character, little by

⁹ E. SILLEM, o.c., II (J.H. NEWMAN, *The Philosophical Notebook of John Henry Newman*), p. 86.

¹⁰ F. COPLESTON, o.c., vol. VIII, pp. 524-525.

¹¹ Cf E. SILLEM, o.c., I, pp. 149-250.

¹² Cf J.H. NEWMAN, *John Henry Newman Autobiographical Writings*, edited with introductions by Henry Tristram, Sheed and Ward, London, New York 1957, p. 55; E. SILLEM, o.c., I, pp. 150-153.

¹³ J.H. NEWMAN, *On the Analogous Nature of the Difficulties in Mathematics and Those of Religion*, published in the «Christian Observer» (6-III-1821); cf F.M. WILLAM, *Aristotelische Erkenntnislehre bei Whately und Newman*, Herder, Fribourg-Bale-Vienne 1960, pp. 142 passim, for an analysis of this essay.

¹⁴ Cf J.H. NEWMAN, *John Henry Newman Autobiographical Writings*, cit., pp. 10-66.

¹⁵ Cf R. WHATELY, *The Elements of Logic*, 1826, p. VIII; J.H. NEWMAN, *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, Longmans, Green and Company, London 1864, pp. 8, 11; ID., *John Henry Newman Autobiographical Writings*, cit., pp. 10, 67; L. BOUYER, *Newman, His Life and Spirituality*, Meridian Books, New York 1960, pp. 60-61; A.J. BOEKRAAD, *The Personal Conquest of Truth*

little Newman realised that Whately's influence was drawing him ever closer to the rationalistic attitude of mind that was prevalent at the time¹⁶. Consequently, after some six years, he gradually moved away from Whately's sphere of influence and went his own way¹⁷.

While at Oxford Newman became familiar with the writings of John Locke (1632-1704), especially his influential *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*¹⁸. Evidence shows that he had some knowledge of the thought of Abraham Tucker (1705-1774) and his *associationist* theories of psychology but was not influenced by him¹⁹. In 1857 Newman studied and wrote some comments on the influential work, *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive*, by John Stuart Mill (1806-1873)²⁰. In this way he became fully acquainted with the current theories of the mathematical-physical sciences which he later made use of in his *Grammar of Assent*²¹. He considered the thought of both Locke and Mill as representative of the tendency towards *liberal rationalism* prevalent at the time, and to which he was so opposed²².

To these strictly philosophical aspects of his education we must add those which, although more important in the formation of his theological view, played an indirect role in shaping his philosophical thought. I refer to his appreciation for the thought of Joseph Butler (1692-1752), especially his work, *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature*²³. Although he gave importance to Butler he only adopts those ideas which are in accord with his own²⁴.

According to J.H. Newman, Louvain, Nauwelaerts 1955, pp. 91-93; E. SILLEM, o.c., I, pp. 153-154, 157, 159.

¹⁶ Cf J.H. NEWMAN, *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, cit., p. 14; ID., *John Henry Newman Autobiographical Writings*, cit., pp. 69-70.

¹⁷ Cf J.H. NEWMAN, *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, cit., pp. 11-13; ID., *John Henry Newman Autobiographical Writings*, cit., pp. 67-71; ID., *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, cit., vol. XIV, p. 385; C.S. DESSAIN, *John Henry Newman*, Nelson, The Birmingham Oratory, London 1966, p. 8; E. SILLEM, o.c., I, p. 11.

¹⁸ Cf J.H. NEWMAN, *John Henry Newman Autobiographical Writings*, cit., p. 40; ID., *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, (1870), Longmans, Green, and Co., London 1947, pp. 121-124, 131-133; 240-241; 377; E. SILLEM, o.c., I, pp. 202-204; F. COPLESTON, o.c., vol. VIII, p. 512; D. PAILIN, *The Way to Faith (An Examination of Newman's "Grammar of Assent" as a Response to the Search for Certainty in Faith)*, cit., pp. 89-90.

¹⁹ Cf E. SILLEM, o.c., I, p. 218.

²⁰ Cf J. STUART MILL, *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive*, London 1851; J.H. NEWMAN, *The Theological Papers of John Henry Newman on Faith and Certainty*, partly prepared for publication by Hugo M. de Achaval, then selected and edited by J. Derek Holmes, published by Oxford University Press, London 1976, pp. 39-47.

²¹ Cf E. SILLEM, o.c., I, pp. 224-226.

²² Cf J.M. CAMERON, *Newman and the Empiricist Tradition*, in *The Rediscovery of Newman: An Oxford Symposium*, edited by J. Coulson and A.M. Allchin. S.P.C.K., London 1967, pp. 91-92.

²³ Cf J. BUTLER, *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature*, London 1736 (first edition), Macmillan, London 1900; J.H. NEWMAN, *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, cit., pp. 10-11; ID., *John Henry Newman Autobiographical Writings*, cit., pp. 78; J. WALGRAVE, *Newman. Le développement du dogme*, cit., p. 39; O. CHADWICK, o.c., pp. 86 passim. 124-125; L. BOUYER, o.c., pp. 70 passim.

²⁴ Cf J.H. NEWMAN, *Fifteen Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford*, cit., p. 286; ID., *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, Longmans, Green and Company, London

Newman's profound study of the early Fathers of the Church, especially those of the Alexandrian School, had a lasting influence on his philosophical view²⁵. To these more indirect influences on his philosophical thought we must add his intellectual pursuits after becoming a Roman Catholic in 1845. Here I refer to his subsequent assimilation of the entire Catholic tradition of philosophy and theology. I fear that this element in the formation of his philosophical thought is sometimes overlooked. While studying in Rome from 1846 to 1847 he became more acquainted with the thought of Aquinas and the Scholastic tradition which was still in vogue at the time²⁶. While this version of Scholasticism was not congenial to Newman's philosophical temperament he fully appreciated the importance of Aquinas and the role of Scholasticism in the development of Catholic theology²⁷. Although firmly grounded on the Aristotelian tradition Newman did not follow Aristotle in an uncritical way²⁸. While his thought developed within the general climate of British empiricism it is essential to emphasise that no single philosophical school dominated his view²⁹.

Newman was neither a professional teacher of philosophy nor wrote any purely philosophical treatise. Nevertheless, he was fully aware that, like every credible theologian, a solid philosophical foundation was necessary on which to build a truly coherent theology. His recognition of the importance of philosophy can be seen from the fact that, for many years he cherished the ambition of writing a philosophical treatise which he intended to call *Discursive Enquiries on Metaphysical Subjects*³⁰.

1845, pp. 50, 63-64, 71, 74, 75, 103-104; ID., *The Idea of a University Defined and Illustrated*, Longmans, Green and Company, London 1853, pp. 61, 100; ID., *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, cit., pp. 46, 242-243, 262, 290; E. SILLEM, o.c., I, pp. 179, 180-181; O. CHADWICK, o.c., pp. 86-95.

²⁵ Cf E. SILLEM, o.c., I, pp. 181-183; E. GILSON, *Introduction*, cit., pp. 17-18; T.J. NORRIS, *Newman and His Theological Method. A Guide for the Theologian Today*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, Netherlands, 1977, pp. 49-51, 152-155, 192-193, 200; D. PAILIN, o.c., pp. 87-88.

²⁶ Cf E. SILLEM, o.c., I, pp. 234-240.

²⁷ Cf J.H. NEWMAN, *Historical Sketches*, Longmans, Green and Company, London, 3 volumes, 1872-1876, II, p. 475; ID., *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, cit., p. 251; ID., *The Idea of a University Defined and Illustrated*, cit., pp. 134, 263-264, 354; ID., *Stray Essays on Controversial Points*, cit., volume I, p. 55; ID., *The Theological Papers of John Henry Newman on Faith and Certainty*, cit., p. 34; ID., *Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching*, Longmans, Green and Company, London, 2 volumes, 1850, 1875, vol. II, pp. 24, 246-247; E. SILLEM, o.c., I, pp. 238-239; ID., o.c., II, pp. 101, 104, 162, 177-178, 179; W. WARD, *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman*, 2 volumes, Longmans Green and Company, London 1912, volume II, pp. 501-502; F. COPLESTON, o.c., vol. VIII, p. 513; ID., o.c., II, pp. 246-247.

²⁸ Cf J.H. NEWMAN, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, cit., p. 327; ID., *The Idea of a University Defined and Illustrated*, cit., pp. 109-110; ID., *Fifteen Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford*, cit., p. 258. For a more detailed account of Aristotle's influence on Newman cf F. WILLAM, *Aristotelische Erkenntnislehre bei Whately und Newman*, Herder, cit. and *Aristotelische Bausteine der Entwicklungstheorie Newmans*, in «Newman-Studien», Heinrich Fries, Werner Becker and G. Biemer (editors from 1948), Glock und Lutz, Nürnberg, Germany, volume VI, pp. 193-226.

²⁹ Cf F. COPLESTON, o.c., vol. VIII, pp. 512-513.

³⁰ Cf J.H. NEWMAN, *John Henry Newman Autobiographical Writings*, cit., pp. 269; ID., *The Theological Papers of John Henry Newman on Faith and Certainty*, cit., p. XII; W. WARD, o.c., I, pp. 423-428; E. SILLEM, o.c., I, pp. 241-248.

From 1859 he began to compile a *philosophical notebook* as a preparation for writing his treatise which in the event never came to fruition. Sillem affirms that had he completed this work he «might even now be recognised as a modern St Augustine in Christian philosophical circles»³¹. Be that as it may, the major part of his mature philosophical thought come to light in 1870 with his publication of *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*. Its main purpose was to provide a rational justification for religious faith on the strongest philosophical grounds. He wished to show that religious faith was not *blind*, but an act of the human intellect appropriate to the dignity of man's rational nature. It is relatively easy to distinguish the philosophical foundation in his *Grammar* from its strictly theological application³². He himself referred to it as «half theological, half philosophical»³³. It is within this foundation that we find the most complete expression of his philosophical thought, and in particular his theory of knowledge³⁴.

Apart from this primary and most complete source for his philosophy there are some secondary sources. Most of these were written before the publication of his *Grammar*. They are useful in a complementary and confirmatory role in order to show the homogeneous development and general logical consistency of his thought over the years. Among these are his *Fifteen Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford*, first published in 1843³⁵. Then there are his private papers and notes which have subsequently been published. These have been given the titles, *The Philosophical Notebook of John Henry Newman*³⁶, and *The Theological Papers of John Henry Newman on Faith and Certainty*³⁷. His book, *Idea of a University, Defined and Illustrated*, should also be included since it completes his theory to knowledge in relation to education. Among minor sources are his *Development of Christian Doctrine* and *Apologia pro Vita Sua*.

2. The Phenomenological Movement

There is no evidence to suggest that Newman had any knowledge of the thinking of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), the recognised founder of what has now become known as the *Phenomenological Movement*. Likewise, there is no evidence to show that Husserl, living and working in Germany, was acquainted with the thought of Newman. As a consequence there is no suggestion that Newman played an explicit

³¹ E. SILLEM, o.c., I, p. 248.

³² Cf F. COPLESTON, o.c., vol. VIII, p. 516 (footnote 2).

³³ J.H. NEWMAN, *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, cit., XXIV, letter of December 1868, p. 184.

³⁴ E. GILSON, in *Introduction*, cit., p. 10.

³⁵ Cf I. KER, *Introduction*, cit., p. XXIII; J.H. NEWMAN, *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, cit., XXV, p. 35.

³⁶ Cf E. SILLEM, o.c., II; ID., o.c., I, pp. 241-242.

³⁷ J.H. NEWMAN, *The Theological Papers of John Henry Newman on Faith and Certainty*, partly prepared for publication by Hugo M. de Achaval, then selected and edited by J. Derek Holmes, Oxford University Press, London 1976.

part in the development of this Movement, nor that he was a precursor of it in the same way that Franz Brentano and Carl Stumpf are generally recognised to have been³⁸. This is quite clear since, in the years leading up to the birth of the Phenomenological Movement, Newman's thought was not generally known among professional philosophers within the German speaking milieu.

Along with Herbert Spiegelberg, I do not consider the term *phenomenology* as referring to a particular school of philosophy³⁹. Spiegelberg explains that it is far more appropriate to refer to it as a *movement* since, «its most characteristic core is its method»⁴⁰. Furthermore, the conclusions of many philosophers who have followed this *method* have been very diverse and sometimes directly contradictory. In this context we only have to think of the widely differing conclusions reached by such philosophers as Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Max Scheler, Edith Stein, Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. This in itself shows that it would not be correct to refer to *phenomenology* as a *school*, since a philosophical school should at least imply a general consistency of thought.

I am by no means alone in considering that Newman's approach shares some characteristics in common with the Phenomenological Movement. Newman scholars such as Sillem, Walgrave, Boekraad, Artz, Ker, Norris and Pailin have all drawn attention to these similarities⁴¹.

Beginning with the more general parallels, we find that, as occurred with the early phenomenologists, Newman's approach to philosophy was an attempt to break away from the philosophical moulds cast both by the empiricists and the idealists of the time⁴². It is also worth noting in passing that, at the beginning of their careers, both Newman and Husserl shared the same interest for the kind of empiricism represented by Locke and Mill. Curiously, for both of them, this later turned into a positive aversion⁴³.

I am of the opinion that Newman's thought should be placed within the general context of a *moderate realism*. Although it is not possible here to go into any great detail, it is a reasonable assertion if we consider that his thinking was firmly grounded on the philosophy of Aristotle. We do not find in his writings any discussion of a *metaphysics of being*. However they constantly bear witness to a *realist* approach to philosophy. He accepts the fact of the objective existence of reality quite independent from the knowing person⁴⁴. He continually affirms that our experience of reali-

³⁸ Cf H. SPIEGELBERG, *The Phenomenological Movement*, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, Holland 1969 (second edition), pp. 5, 6, 21, 27-69, 73-167.

³⁹ Cf ID., pp. XXVII-XXVIII, 1-2.

⁴⁰ Cf ID., pp. 5-7, 22, 653-656.

⁴¹ Cf E. SILLEM, o.c., I, pp. 19, 75, 127-139; J. WALGRAVE, *Newman. Le développement du dogme*, cit., p. 82; L. BOEKRAAD, o.c., pp. 138-140; J. ARTZ, o.c., pp. 282-283; and in the *Preface* to T.J. NORRIS, *Newman and His Theological Method. A Guide for the Theologian Today*, cit., p. XIII; I. KER, *Introduction*, cit., p. LV; T. J. NORRIS, o.c., pp. 14-16, 27-28; D. PAILIN, o.c., pp. 186-187.

⁴² Cf E. SILLEM, o.c., I, pp. 128-130.

⁴³ Cf H. SPIEGELBERG, o.c., pp. 91-124, 649.

⁴⁴ Cf J.H. NEWMAN, *Fifteen Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford*, cit., pp. 205, 225, 231; ID., *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, Longmans, Green and Company, London 1843, 8 vol-

ty is the source from which all knowledge is derived⁴⁵. His approach to philosophy shows that he held, as a self-evident truth, that the intellect's first apprehension of reality, in the metaphysical order, is that of being (*ens*)⁴⁶. His understanding of metaphysical self-evident truths is particularly relevant in showing his realist position⁴⁷. He considers that these truths of reality, while clearly derived from our sense experience, transcend the order of sense knowledge and are the result of the human intellect's grasp of the different aspects of being, as such. He does not consider them as if they were hypothetical premises or *a priori* ideas for the construction of some idealistic system⁴⁸. For example, in referring to the theory of knowledge he says that: «I am only contemplating the mind as it moves in fact, by whatever mechanism»⁴⁹. Newman's *realism* seems to find a distinct echo in the thought of those who took part in the beginnings of the Phenomenological Movement, with its leitmotif of, *Zu den Sachen (to the things themselves)*. This was their reaction to what they considered as *fossilised* philosophical systems or those constructed on idealistic prejudices⁵⁰.

Referring to Newman's *realist* approach in his *Grammar*, Walgrave comments: «Just as the grammarian confines his efforts to extracting from actual use the laws of language, so Newman aims at tracing out the structures of thought from his observations of mental life in its entirety, without any attempt at evaluation. [...] In other words Newman might have called his Essay *The Phenomenology of Assent*»⁵¹. On another occasion the same author concludes that: «If it is true that Husserl's programme of "going back to the things themselves" is the very mark of a great philosopher, then Newman is to be considered as an outstanding genius in the history of human thought»⁵².

Another general aspect of his approach, which I believe bears a certain resemblance to the Phenomenological Movement, is his insistence on a complete openness and readiness to *learn* from reality. It is from within the context of such an approach that one can then begin to discover and formulate a homogeneous yet developing

umes, IV, pp. 201-202; ID., *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, cit., pp. 120, 121, 179, 211, 237, 263; ID., *Stray Essays on Controversial Points*, cit., volume I, p. 229.

⁴⁵ Cf J.H. NEWMAN, *Fifteen Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford*, cit., pp. 205-206; E. SILLEM, o.c., II, pp. 87-91, 93-99; J.H. NEWMAN, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, cit., pp. 110-111; ID., *The Theological Papers of John Henry Newman on Faith and Certainty*, cit., p. 117; ID., *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, cit., pp. 78-79, 263.

⁴⁶ Cf E. SILLEM, o.c., II, pp. 8, 202-206; J.H. NEWMAN, *Fifteen Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford*, cit., pp. 330-331, 349 (footnote); ID., *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, cit., pp. 8, 18-19, 24, 25, 47-48, 120-121, 201, 203, 204, 211, 212, 215, 216, 219, 229, 241, 262, 268 (footnote 1); ID., *The Theological Papers of John Henry Newman on Faith and Certainty*, cit., p. 63.

⁴⁷ Cf J.H. NEWMAN, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, cit., pp. 46-57, 205; ID., *The Theological Papers of John Henry Newman on Faith and Certainty*, cit., pp. 63-70.

⁴⁸ Cf J.H. NEWMAN, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, cit., pp. 205, 261.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 49; cf *ibidem*, pp. 261-262.

⁵⁰ Cf H. SPIEGELBERG, o.c., pp. 121-122; 656-658, 666-668.

⁵¹ J. WALGRAVE, *Newman. Le développement du dogme*, cit., p. 82.

⁵² J. WALGRAVE, *Unfolding Revelation*, London 1972, p. 297.

philosophy⁵³. Such an attitude towards philosophy does not attempt to *tame* reality by trying to enclose it within an artificially constructed logical system. On the contrary, it is the endeavour of the intellect to learn the truths of reality by approaching it with a spirit of wonder and discovery. Spiegelberg confirms that this same approach is what characterises the Phenomenological Movement. He says: «What distinguishes phenomenology from other methods is not so much any particular step it develops or adds to them but the spirit of philosophical reverence as the first and foremost norm of the philosophical enterprise. The violation of this norm in an age of reductionism constituted the *raison d'être* for phenomenology at the time of its birth»⁵⁴.

While acknowledging these general similarities between Newman's approach and that of those who follow the Phenomenological Movement it is important to be aware of the differences. The protagonists of the first impulse of this Movement, who can be represented by the Göttingen and Munich circles, soon began to branch out along very different philosophical pathways. The history of Husserl's thought epitomises this process. After he had severely criticised certain forms of idealism, and firmly resolved to only seek reality, he turned to Descartes for inspiration. The consequent result was that he himself ultimately fell into a form of *reductionism*, and his *transcendental phenomenology* became a *phenomenological idealism*⁵⁵. Conversely Newman's thought evolved in a consistent and homogeneous way. His philosophical view was ever true to his realist position and developed in a coherent way finding its definitive and most explicit expression in his *Grammar*. The consideration of his method as *phenomenological* must exclude any form of *idealism*. Spiegelberg explains how it is quite feasible to employ the phenomenological method without necessarily espousing the conclusions of Husserl, Heidegger, Scheler, Sartre, or indeed any of the recognised phenomenologists in particular⁵⁶. There are examples of contemporary philosophers who, while recognising the value of the phenomenological method, have remained very definitely in the *realist* camp. Among such I would include Edith Stein, Dietrich von Hildebrand and Karol Wojtyła⁵⁷.

3. Descriptive phenomenology

Apart from these general parallels between Newman's approach and that of the Phenomenological Movement is it possible to find more specific points of comparison? I think there is a clear similarity with respect to methodology. That is to say,

⁵³ Cf E. SILLEM, o.c., I, pp. 134-135.

⁵⁴ H. SPIEGELBERG, o.c., p. 701; cf *ibidem*, pp. 75-88, 635-636.

⁵⁵ Cf *ibidem*, pp. 91-163, 649.

⁵⁶ Cf *ibidem*, p. 404.

⁵⁷ Cf *ibidem*, pp. 222-224; R. BUTTIGLIONE, *Il Pensiero di Karol Wojtyła*, Jaca Book, Milano 1982, pp. 305-314; K. WOJTYŁA, *The Acting Person*, D. Reidal Publishing Company, Dordrecht, Holland, London, England 1979.

there exist certain common characteristics between the method of the Phenomenological Movement and that of Newman. I think there is a clear similarity between Newman's approach and what is termed *descriptive phenomenology* within the Phenomenological Movement. The demonstration of this hypothesis rests on whether we can find specific parallels between the philosophical methods used in both cases. I use the term *descriptive phenomenology* in its *widest* sense⁵⁸. That is to say, it refers to those who, on being familiar with the basic tenets of the Phenomenological Movement would acknowledge their presence within their own thought. Nevertheless, they may not necessarily wish to be identified with the Movement as such.

Spiegelberg refers to three *stages* in the phenomenological method that are accepted, at least implicitly, and implemented by those who have aligned themselves with the Phenomenological Movement⁵⁹. To these three *stages* he designates the following terms: "investigating particular phenomena", "investigating general essences" and "apprehending essential relationships among essences". The *first stage*, "investigating particular phenomena", is further sub-divided into three distinguishable *steps*: «the intuitive grasp of the phenomena, their analytic examination, and their description". When this *first stage*, with its three *steps*, is used as a philosophical method for the investigation of some aspect of reality the resulting explanation is termed "phenomenological description".

Newman does not discuss his own specific philosophical methodology in his writings⁶⁰. Our knowledge of his method has to be derived from an analysis of his thought and the form in which he expresses it. The most systematic development of his philosophy, and in particular of his theory of knowledge, is found in his *Grammar*. It is here that we find the best examples of his philosophical method. His acute observations of all the *phenomena* associated with our cognitive acts seem to be in full accord with the first *step* of "phenomenological description". That is to say, they correspond to an "intuitive grasp of the phenomena". This aspect of his approach is supported by his constant warnings against applying any preconceived theories. He alerts us to the danger of indulging our imagination in our investigation of how the intellect operates, rather than a careful examination of the facts. He insists continually that we must consider the operations of the intellect, «*in facto esse*, in contrast with *in fieri*»⁶¹.

His way of describing the different elements involved in the intellectual operations seems to comply with the second *step* of "phenomenological description", namely, "analytic examination"⁶². The distinctions and divisions which Newman makes of the various aspects of the acts of the intellect greatly clarify our understanding of these different elements. Whether he is talking of "Real" or "Notional", "Simple" or "Reflex", "Formal" or "Informal", they are all terms which are derived

⁵⁸ Cf H. SPIEGELBERG, o.c., p. 6.

⁵⁹ Cf *ibidem*, pp. 658-684.

⁶⁰ Cf E. SILLEM, o.c., I, p. 128.

⁶¹ Cf J.H. NEWMAN, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, cit., pp. 261-262.

⁶² Cf H. SPIEGELBERG, o.c., pp. 669-672.

from his perception of the facts. His analysis is not the result of *theorising*, but of his endeavour to describe the actual process through which the human intellect attains knowledge.

The third *step*, “phenomenological description”, is integrally related to the intuitive and analytic steps⁶³. It refers specifically to the final result of describing and clarifying all the relationships between the various facets already identified in the previous steps. Such a description should serve as a reliable guide to the reader’s own, actual or potential, experience of the phenomena. It should help the reader perceive and understand the same truths. The *Grammar* certainly seems to follow this pattern as even its full title, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, suggests. Newman’s constant intention is to lead the reader towards a greater understanding of the various elements involved in the operations of the intellect in its acquisition of knowledge. To do this more effectively he often makes use of appropriate illustrations. These are carefully selected in such a way as to aid the sympathetic reader in his appreciation of the truths being considered. Newman does not adopt the attitude of one who is trying to *convince* by argument. On the contrary, his approach is one of guiding the reader towards a “realisation” of the truth. That is to say, to understand with a full sense of reality the various truths in all their ontological richness. Sillem, Boekraad and Norris are of the opinion that the importance that he gives to “realisation” forms an integral part of his phenomenological approach⁶⁴. To increase our knowledge in any particular field, time and experience are needed. An assiduous contemplation of reality by the intellect is necessary if the self-evident truths and the basic assumptions necessary for any true personal advance in knowledge is to be achieved⁶⁵. It is in this context that he uses the word *realisation*⁶⁶. To *realise* implies the acquisition of a more profound metaphysical appreciation of some aspect of reality, as opposed to possessing some superficial abstract concepts about it. Although he does not give us a precise definition of *realisation* it is clear that it implies a more *intensive reflection* in order to produce a fuller intellectual awareness of a particular aspect of reality; to know individual being (*ens*)⁶⁷. *Realisation* implies that we bring our whole *knowing being*, not just our ability to reason abstractly, into contact with the reality being considered using both our external and internal senses. For example, it suggests that we bring into play, in the terminology of Aquinas, not only our imagination and memory of past experience but also our consciousness (*sensus com-*

⁶³ Cf *ibidem*, pp. 672-676.

⁶⁴ Cf E. SILLEM, o.c., I, p. 136; L. BOEKRAAD, o.c., pp. 138-140; T.J. NORRIS, o.c., p. 16.

⁶⁵ Cf J.H. NEWMAN, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, cit., pp. 314-315; ID., *The Theological Papers of John Henry Newman on Faith and Certainty*, cit., pp. 30, 74, 106-112; ID., *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, cit., p. 190; E. SILLEM, o.c., II, p. 29; ID., o.c., I, pp. 10-13, 136; J. ARTZ, *Newman as Philosopher*, cit., p. 278.

⁶⁶ Cf J.H. NEWMAN, *Stray Essays on Controversial Points*, cit., II, 303; E. SILLEM, o.c., I, p., 103, 105, 136-139, 206.

⁶⁷ Cf THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae*, etc., Blackfriars edition (Latin-English), McGraw-Hill, New York, and Eyre and Spottiswoode, London 1963, 60 volumes, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 85. a. 3.

munis) and *cognitive power (vis cogitativa)*⁶⁸. Thus to know implies a personal relationship, of the knowing subject to the apprehended object, and that in knowing we come into a personal, although immaterial, possession of the things we know and of their more profound relationships with regard to other realities. Consequently, *realisation* provides us with a safeguard from the dangers of an *idealised* or purely abstract way of thinking: it protects us from the danger of confusing our *thinking* with knowledge.

To illustrate this concept we might consider the difference between a child's knowledge of death, before, and then after, encountering a corpse for the first time in his life. The child in question may have had some rather abstract, though perfectly correct, notions regarding the fact of human death. However, these *notions* can become vividly *real* when he is shown the dead body of his beloved grandfather who has died suddenly. His original rather abstract notions suddenly become very real as he *realises* the fact of death.

Spiegelberg says that those who make use of the first of the three *stages* of the phenomenological method may be considered as employing the method of *descriptive phenomenology*⁶⁹. That is to say, those who use the method of "investigating particular phenomena", with its corresponding three *steps*. According to this classification, in view of what we have just seen regarding Newman's philosophical method, we can conclude that it has a strong affinity with that of *descriptive phenomenology*.

The second *stage* of the phenomenological method according to Spiegelberg entails "investigating general essences" or "eidetic intuiting"⁷⁰. This *stage* seems to cover those concepts that, in the tradition of Aquinas, would come under such headings as *intellectual abstraction* and *universal concepts*. In his *Grammar* Newman continually reminds us of the distinction between "Real" and "Notional", between the *concrete particular* and the *abstract notion*. On occasions his distinctions seem so radical that he runs the risk of being accused of *nominalism*. At the same time he fully appreciates the all important role of the *notional* or abstract in the various forms of our reasonings. That is to say, he fully acknowledges the role of those inferences that can be expressed in a formal way which are so essential for the progress of science.

The third *stage* of the phenomenological method consists in «apprehending essential relationships among essences»⁷¹. Newman's analysis of the internal relationships between the various forms of Notional Assent might be regarded as an example of this *stage*. In brief, by Notional Assent he is referring to the content of a conclusion as being more suggestive of abstract concepts than referring specifically to something as part of contingent reality. He divides Notional Assent into various categories: «Profession, Credence, Opinion, Presumption, and Speculation»⁷². This

⁶⁸ Cf THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae*, cit., I, q. 84, a. 7.

⁶⁹ Cf H. SPIEGELBERG, o.c., p. 659.

⁷⁰ Cf *ibidem*, pp. 676-679.

⁷¹ Cf *ibidem*, pp. 680-684.

⁷² Cf J.H. NEWMAN, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, cit., pp. 33-57.

division is based on specific differences with respect to the apprehension of the given reality as expressed in the proposition of the Notional Assent. In a similar way his division of Assent into *simple* and *complex* can also be considered in this light, of distinguishing “essential relationships among essences”.

Spiegelberg describes four additional characteristics of the phenomenological method, for instance «suspending belief in the existence of the phenomena»⁷³. This “phenomenological reduction”, which became a central aspect of Husserl’s phenomenology, has not been universally accepted by those who consider themselves part of the Phenomenological Movement. However, any kind of *bracketing* of reality, even as a methodological ploy, is alien to Newman’s approach. It is interesting to notice his clear response to a suggestion of the use of the *methodical doubt*. While discussing, in his *Grammar*, the rationale of accepting certain assumptions in our Inferences he refers to certain authors, without giving any names, who employ the *methodical doubt*. He says that they wish to affirm that «as a general proposition that we have no right in philosophy to make any assumption whatever, and that we ought to begin with a universal doubt. This, however, is of all assumptions the greatest, and to forbid assumptions universally is to forbid this one in particular»⁷⁴.

It is not relevant to compare these additional characteristics of the Phenomenological Movement with Newman’s approach since, as Spiegelberg admits, they are not generally accepted as forming part of the basic tenets of the Movement. He explains that only the first three *stages* are generally «accepted, at least implicitly, and practised by all those who have aligned themselves with the Phenomenological Movement; the latter ones only by a smaller group»⁷⁵. These are precisely the three *stages* that I have just examined and shown to bear certain similarities to the method of Newman. In particular we saw that there is an important parallel with the first *stage* of the phenomenological method which would permit us to classify his approach as *descriptive phenomenology*.

4. The Illative Sense

Although it is not possible here to go into any great depth, I think it would be in order to give at least one specific example of Newman’s approach as *descriptive phenomenology*. In his theory of knowledge he gives a central importance to what he designates as our *Illative Sense*. It therefore seems rather appropriate to examine whether or not his way of treating this topic bears any resemblance to the method of *descriptive phenomenology*.

However, before entering into any detail, I think it would be useful to give a brief description of what Newman understands by the Illative Sense. It may be considered as that part of the virtue of prudence that has, as its proper object, the acquisition of truth. It can be designated as a specific intellectual virtue inherent in the intellect qua

⁷³ Cf H. SPIEGELBERG, o.c., pp. 690-694.

⁷⁴ J.H. NEWMAN, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, cit., p. 284.

⁷⁵ H. SPIEGELBERG, o.c., p. 659.

intellect. I think it can be identified in the thought of Aquinas as the *active habit of science*. Where the word *science* should be understood in its broadest meaning so as to include all fields of knowledge, whether of speculative truth or that of contingent reality. Newman did not consider that his Illative Sense constituted an original philosophical discovery. In a private letter he commented, with great simplicity, that it was «a grand word for a common thing»⁷⁶.

He presents the Illative Sense in the penultimate chapter of his *Grammar*⁷⁷. It is divided into three sections under the headings: “1. The Sanction of the Illative Sense”; “2. The Nature of the Illative Sense”; “3. The Range of the Illative Sense”. It would of course be simplistic to suggest that these three sections correspond directly to the three *steps* of the first *stage* of the phenomenological method. Nevertheless, there are some interesting parallels. For instance, the first section, “The Sanction of the Illative Sense”, deals with the existence and evidence for such a phenomenon from a rather *intuitive* point of view. At least we can say that it is suggestive of the first *step* of the phenomenological method, namely, “the intuitive grasp of the phenomena”. In like manner the second section, “The Nature of the Illative Sense”, could be seen as an “analytic examination”, since he compares and contrasts it with other similar phenomena and finally gives a summary of its specific nature. The final section, on “The Range of the Illative Sense”, discusses its role with respect to the self-evident truths and to the discursive process of reasoning. He omits its function regarding our Assent to the conclusions of our rational discourses since he had considered it earlier in his *Grammar*. Then he presents us with different examples and illustrations. Here we could say that he is completing his “description”, the third *step* of the method of “phenomenological description”. He describes the relationships of the Illative Sense with the different aspects of the intellectual operations and provides various illustrations to help the reader in his *realisation* of the Illative Sense.

However, let us exam his description of the Illative Sense in a little more detail. Newman begins by re-affirming his realist approach to knowledge and certitude. He affirms that “the common voice of mankind” bears witness to the reality of certitude, and that this is a sufficient warrant for our being able to attain it⁷⁸. He continues by repeating that he is primarily concerned with our certitude of the “truth of things”, of the contingent rather than the speculative or abstract. Certitude is considered as the subjective state of mind in which there is “an active recognition of propositions as true”. According to this approach it is the intellect of the person that provides the ultimate guarantee for our certitude. This of course is over and above all the rational *evidence*, from whatever source, which may warrant our Assents. Likewise, it does not preclude the existence of inferences which can be expressed and therefore prove very useful in terms of the possibility of being able to communicate them to others. In other words, that there are *scientific* grounds for the conclusion to be considered as true, and indeed certain. He wishes to emphasise the fact that ultimately it is still the mind that has the final prerogative, and unique role, to affirm or deny any partic-

⁷⁶ J.H. NEWMAN, *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, cit., XXIV, p. 375.

⁷⁷ Cf J.H. NEWMAN, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, cit., pp. 261-291.

⁷⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 262.

ular conclusion as true. That is to say, to give or refuse Assent to the conclusion under consideration. It is to this role of the intellect, which enables us to give the final Assent, that he designates as the Illative Sense. It is the intellect, working in practice, bringing to bear all the rational *evidence*, whether of facts, self-evident truths, inferences of whatever kind or the testimony of others, as a guarantee for the assertion of truth regarding the particular proposition under consideration. It is our Illative Sense which enables us to affirm truth with certitude. Newman states that «the sole and final judgment on the validity of an inference in concrete matter is committed to the personal action of the ratiocinative faculty, the perfection or virtue of which I have called the Illative Sense, a use of the word ‘sense’ parallel to our use of it in “good sense”, “common sense”, a “sense of beauty”, etc.: – and I own I do not see any way to go farther than this in answer to the question»⁷⁹.

After the introduction to his description of the phenomenon of the Illative Sense, which he places firmly in the context of certitude, he proceeds to explain the evidence for its existence. Here we can say he begins to describe his *intuitive grasp of the phenomena* in question. That is to say, he commences with the first *step* of the method of *descriptive phenomenology*. He observes that the contemplation of the nature of beings manifests the fact that they possess a principle of unity which serves the good of the whole. Also, that this nature includes all that is necessary for the being to flourish within the universal reality of which it is part. Likewise, the human being must follow his own nature, which is to “our interest as well as our necessity”. He says that if we consider our nature as we actually find it functioning in practice then we must conclude, «that there is no ultimate test of truth besides the testimony borne to truth by the mind itself, and that this phenomenon, perplexing as we may find it, is a normal and inevitable characteristic of the mental constitution of a being like man on a stage such as the world. [...] His progress is a living growth, not a mechanism; and its instruments are mental acts, not the formulas and contrivances of language»⁸⁰. Accordingly the existence of a function of the human intellect, designated as the Illative Sense, is based on the contemplation of our rational nature as it operates in practice.

Having completed the first *step* he passes on to the second, namely the *analytic examination* of the Illative Sense where he considers its specific nature. It is a genuine personal ability to know when it is truly *reasonable* to give, to a conditional conclusion in some field of knowledge, our unconditional Assent. He compares the Illative Sense with what he refers to as “parallel faculties”. The first example he gives is of our capability of judging with respect to all those matters which in some way pertain to the achievement of our own personal good. He refers us to the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle who designates to this power of the intellect the term *phronesis*⁸¹. *Phronesis* has the nature of an acquired habit which enables a per-

⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 262-263.

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 266; cf *ibidem*, p. 268.

⁸¹ Cf ARISTOTLE, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A., (1926), 1990, especially book VI, 1138b-1145a, on Intellectual Virtue.

son to make the right choices in pursuing his own general well-being. Following a brief explanation of its nature he concludes that it is through *phronesis* «from which the science of morals forms its rules and receives its complement»⁸². It is the practical wisdom acquired by an individual intellect which enables it to make that, here and now, judgement as regards his own good. Newman understands the Illative Sense as operating in an analogous way. It enables the individual to integrate all the inferences and evidence, of whatever kind, with respect to the likelihood of a particular conclusion being true. At the same time, it provides the sanction for giving or refusing Assent, to affirm or to deny this conclusion as true. The closer the relationship that the particular conclusion has with contingent reality the more clearly that the operation of the Illative Sense can be appreciated. It is the Illative Sense that will determine «the limit of the converging probabilities and the reasons sufficient for a proof» with regard to the conclusion referring to «concrete matter»⁸³.

While the object of Aristotle's *phronesis* is the *good* with regard to the individual, that of the Illative Sense is the truth⁸⁴. They operate in an analogous way where the role of the Illative Sense applies specifically to the attainment of truth as the objective of the intellect⁸⁵. He explains how the Illative Sense, like *phronesis*, does not operate equally in all areas. Just as *phronesis* manifests varying degrees of development within the different spheres of human activity, so the Illative Sense may be more developed in one domain of knowledge than in another⁸⁶.

After this comparison he indicates other similarities with "parallel faculties". He refers to the genius found in those who practice the fine arts and various skills which are not simply transferable from one sphere of art or craft to another. The implication is that the Illative Sense follows the same pattern, that its development in the individual varies from one field of knowledge to another.

He ends his *analytical examination* with a short summary of conclusions⁸⁷. It seems to me that this summary can be considered as the beginning of the third, *descriptive* step, of his *phenomenological description* of the Illative Sense. He divides his summary into four parts. In the first he says that the Illative Sense, «as viewed in itself», has the characteristic of being «the same in all concrete matter, though employed in them in different measures». In other words, since it is part of the general operation of our intellect it comes into play whenever we apply our intellect to any field of knowledge. There comes a moment when it is the human mind, «the more subtle and elastic logic of thought», rather than «the logic of language», which sanctions the Assent to any particular conclusion.

The second characteristic of the Illative Sense is that in practice it becomes more

⁸² J.H. NEWMAN, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, cit., p. 270.

⁸³ *Ibidem*, p. 273.

⁸⁴ Cf *ibidem*, pp. 268 (footnote 1), 270.

⁸⁵ Cf J.H. NEWMAN, *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, cit., XXIV, p. 105; XXV, p. 280; XXVI, pp. 40-41; XXIX, pp. 115, 119; E. SILLEM, o.c., I, p. 195; W. WARD, o.c., II, pp. 270, 589; J. ARTZ, *Newman as Philosopher*, cit., p. 268; F. COPLESTON, o.c., vol. VIII, p. 523; T.J. NORRIS, o.c., p. 149.

⁸⁶ Cf J.H. NEWMAN, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, cit., pp. 270-271.

⁸⁷ Cf *ibidem*, pp. 272-273.

developed in some «department of thought, for instance, history, and not in another, for instance philosophy». Our growing familiarity and experience in a particular field of knowledge enables us to develop and to improve our actual ability to make correct Assents in this field.

The third characteristic of the Illative Sense is that «it proceeds, always in the same way, by a method of reasoning, which [...] is the elementary principle of mathematical calculus of modern times». Newman is referring to his concept of Informal Inference where the conclusion is given in an “accumulation of probabilities”. That is to say, when we are dealing in particular with contingent reality, our inferences, of whatever kind, can only result in *probable* conclusions. It is the specific role of the Illative Sense to enable us to give our Assent to the conclusion which is indicated in the limit of an “accumulation of probabilities”.

The final characteristic is that, specifically with respect to contingent and “concrete reasonings”, there is no «ultimate test of truth and error in our inferences besides the trustworthiness of the Illative Sense that gives them its sanction». It is important to notice his insistence here on the role of the Illative Sense with respect to our conclusions regarding contingent matter. This is because it is precisely in this endeavour to know contingent reality that the function of the Illative Sense is most evident. For example, one only has to think of the difficulty in predicting the weather. In such cases there can be so many contingent factors involved that it needs a well developed Illative Sense in this area of knowledge in order to arrive at a correct forecast. It also follows that, the more elements of contingency involved then the more the intellect will need to have recourse to Informal Inference. Our mind «determines what science cannot determine, the limit of converging probabilities and the reasons sufficient for a proof»⁸⁸. The Illative Sense contemplates all the *evidence* that is pointing towards a particular conclusion as true, and determines the reasonableness of the truth of such a conclusion. And finally it sanctions, or not, the intellectual act of Assent to this particular conclusion as true.

He continues his phenomenological *description* by discussing “*The Range of the Illative Sense*”⁸⁹. He describes its role with respect to the various operations of the intellect. Its function is not restricted to any particular operation since, «it is the mind that reasons, and controls its own reasonings». The Illative Sense has a part to play in all the operations of the intellect. That is to say, with respect to the attainment of the self-evident truths and premises on which all inferences, of whatever kind, rely. Then with regard to the different kinds of reasoning processes themselves and finally, with respect to its most evident role, in the sanctioning of our Assent to a particular conclusion.

He gives several instances of the Illative Sense to «illustrate its presence and action in relation to the elementary premises, and, again to the conduct of an argument»⁹⁰. With these examples we can see how Newman is trying to lead the reader into a deeper *realisation* of the existence and nature of the Illative Sense. His first

⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 273.

⁸⁹ Cf *ibidem*, pp. 273-291.

⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 275.

example considers it in relation to the process of reasoning and is taken from the field of historical investigation. He cites a controversy involving five historians where each of them are in possession of the same evidence. This controversy is «on the subject of the state of Greece and Rome during the pre-historic period»⁹¹. He describes how their different treatment of the evidence and the arguments which they use brings them, not only to different conclusions, but even to apparently contradictory ones. This is not because of any particular fault in their reasoning, but rather because of the complexity of the topic, combined with their own individual approaches and inferences. He mentions how they finally resort to criticising each other personally to which he concludes: «Men become personal when logic fails; it is their mode of appealing to their own primary elements of thought, and their own illative sense against the principles and the judgment of another»⁹². He suggests that in such a controversy the experts ultimately have to rely on their own Illative Sense. And this, being personal to each, can lead them to different conclusions.

After considering another example from the field of historical research he turns his attention to the role of the Illative Sense with respect to the «first principles»⁹³. He presents us with some examples which show how the particular approach of an individual to reality can effect the subsequent operation of the Illative Sense. He also discusses the role of the Illative Sense with regard to «the implicit assumption of definite propositions in the first start of a course of reasoning, and the arbitrary exclusion of others». He concludes that the acceptance of such premises for our reasoning is «an act of the Illative Sense». He cautions us against attributing a *necessity* to such premises which in fact they may not possess. His chapter on the Illative Sense ends with the following words: «And in all these delicate questions there is constant call for the exercise of the Illative Sense».

From what we have just seen it seems clear that we can conclude that Newman's explanation of the Illative Sense does indeed contain the various elements which constitute the method of *descriptive phenomenology*. He begins by describing the *phenomenon* itself from a rather *intuitive* point of view. He proceeds with an *analytic examination* of its nature. Finally he gives a *descriptive* summary of his conclusions complete with examples to help the reader in his *realisation* of the Illative Sense.

5. Conclusion

The section on *The Phenomenological Movement* described some of the general similarities which can be found between this Movement and Newman's approach to philosophy. In particular I drew attention to his *realism* with its sincere openness to the acceptance of reality. The following section presented a more detailed comparison of his methodological approach to philosophy with that of the Phenomenological Movement. We were able to conclude that there are some very clear parallels

⁹¹ Cf *ibidem*, pp. 275-282.

⁹² *Ibidem*, p. 280.

⁹³ Cf *ibidem*, pp. 282-291.

between his approach and the method known as *descriptive phenomenology*. That is to say, between his approach and the first *stage*, with its three *steps*, of the phenomenological method. At the same time we saw that there was evidence to support the claim that there were also similarities with the second and third *stages*. Finally, by way of illustration, I demonstrated how his presentation in the *Grammar of the Illative Sense* shows some very clear similarities with the method of *descriptive phenomenology*.

Taking all these aspects into consideration I think we can reasonably affirm the following conclusion: that Newman's philosophical method has some striking affinities with that of the Phenomenological Movement, and in particular to that aspect of it known as *descriptive phenomenology*. This conclusion prompts us to ask, of what particular value does this feasible *classification* of his approach have, both with respect to his philosophy and in relation to its place in history? Sillem answers by stating that it is sufficient to «make him at least a forerunner of the Phenomenologists of the present day»⁹⁴. I think this evaluation needs some further qualification. For example, I would not consider it going beyond the bounds of reasonable speculation to propose the following hypothesis: that if Newman had been a professional philosopher, working and teaching at the University of Oxford, then he would have been recognised as having provided some of the groundwork for the Phenomenological Movement. The plausibility of this hypothesis would be increased if we substitute Oxford for some university in the German speaking milieu. If this had been the case then I have no doubt that his thought would have been considered as contributing, like that of Brentano and Stumpf, to the foundation for what would later be known as the Phenomenological Movement. In other words, Newman would indeed have been proclaimed as one of the pioneers of the Phenomenological Movement.

Irrespective of such an hypothesis, it seems to me that the points in common between Newman's approach and the method used by those associated with the Phenomenological Movement are sufficiently important that they cannot be ignored. There are very definite similarities between his approach and the method of *descriptive phenomenology*. I consider that they provide sufficient evidence for us to justifiably claim that he was at least a *latent* forerunner of the Phenomenological Movement. As a consequence we can say that this represents a very real contribution to the progress of philosophy.

To this contribution we must also add Newman's other more original philosophical insights. Here I am referring to such concepts as his distinction between Real and Notional with respect to the intellectual operations of Apprehension and Assent. This distinction enables him to emphasise the ability of the intellect to know, not only the abstract and universal, but also the individual and concrete of contingent reality. It also prepares the way for his rather original concept of *realisation*, which I have already mentioned briefly. Then there is his *person-centred* approach to knowledge, stemming from his profound appreciation for the unity of man, which permeates the whole of his philosophy. Finally, we must include his development of the concept of

⁹⁴ E. SILLEM, o.c., I, p. 135.

the Illative Sense. I think that here his originality lies in the pivotal importance that he gives to it in the theory of knowledge.

When these and other insights are added to the conclusion of this paper then I think there is more than sufficient evidence to show that his overall contribution to the progress of philosophy has been considerable. And, as a consequence, we can affirm that Newman truly deserves to be included among the ranks of the more significant philosophers of the nineteenth century.

The year 2001 will herald 200 years since the birth of Newman. We can be sure that this anniversary will be duly commemorated with international conferences, books and serious research, all rightly praising both his theological prowess and personal sanctity. God willing, by then we may also be able to celebrate his canonisation by the Church. It is my hope that on this anniversary we may also be able to celebrate his universal recognition as a philosopher, and that his initial omission from the history of philosophy will have been remedied.