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# The Achievement of John Henry Newman

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of nature and grace. Mary represents the human element in the Incarnation and, thus, the "natural" assent to grace. Does not a strong Marian theology, then, result in Pelagianism? Macquarrie thinks not (He supports his teaching in the final chapter "Mary and Modernity" by a fascinating commentary on Goethe's Gretchen). He notes Sander's emphasis on the importance of grace in the Judaism of the pre- and post-Christian eras, and, in good *Via Media* style, upholds a position on the nature-grace relationship close to that which McSorley in his *Luther: Right or Wrong?* suggested as Luther's, that is, that the Christian tradition has upheld, from the New Testament era to our own, a doctrine of human salvation as "resulting" fully from both God's grace and human free will. But whether the conclusions of a Roman Catholic Luther scholar and a Canon of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, can be made to fit a pure Protestant teaching remains an open question, a question which may perhaps only be answered after such Protestant piety risks its own nature by using the excellent liturgical models for ecumenical Marian devotions printed as the second part of the Macquarrie book.

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## The Achievement of John Henry Newman

Ian Ker

Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990  
 x + 209 pages

The year 1990 marked the centenary of the death of John Henry Newman (b.1801) whose life and work distinguished him as first among English-speaking theologians. Entering Trinity College, Oxford as a teenager, he was awarded a fellowship at Oriel following his graduation, was appointed Vicar of the University Church of St. Mary's, and stood from the beginning among the leading figures of the Oxford Movement until his eventual reception into the Roman Catholic Church in 1845.

From then until his death, he lived, for the most part, as an Oratorian priest at Birmingham continuing his theological and apologetic work. He is perhaps best remembered today, as he was in his own time, for his analysis of the nature of Christian tradition, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845, 1878), his autobiography *Apologia pro vita sua* (1864), his treatise on education, the *Idea of a University* (1873), and his philosophical study of faith and reason, the *Grammar of Assent* (1871).

Newman's writing, as Ker points out at several places, was "occasional", and because of this it is difficult for the beginner to gain a sense of the author's work and thought as a whole. Ker's volume serves as a good

introduction for such a beginner, outlining the main areas of Newman's activity, the major issues with which he was concerned, and the broad shape of his argument.

The opening chapter fittingly treats Newman as educator and focuses on his "philosophy of the imperial intellect", on "the intellect... properly trained and formed to have a connected view and grasp of things". Such discipline or "enlargement of the mind" is not mere acquisition of knowledge on the part of an individual; it occurs within community with catholic tastes. All knowledge is knit together, and Newman therefore warns against specialization much like Weber does against the iron cage. As Ker puts it, "In many ways Newman's idea of the university resembles his idea of the Church. Both are essentially communities of living people with a living tradition" (30).

In his chapter on Newman the philosopher, Ker initiates his discussion with reflections on Newman's realism and then goes on to treat the latter's teaching on the relationship between faith and reason, one of the most debated issues among Catholics in the nineteenth century. Already in his Anglican writings Newman makes certain not to separate the two and fall into the trap either of fideism or of rationalism. Faith acts on "antecedent probabilities"; "we must assume something to gain anything, and can gain nothing without a venture" (Newman quoted in Ker, 40). Faith rests on love; "it is a reasoning upon holy, devout, and enlightened presuppositions" (Newman quoted in Ker, 42). In the rest of the chapter Ker provides an excellent survey of the way Newman works out these principles in his greatest philosophical work, the *Grammar of Assent*.

The chapters on Newman as preacher and as writer provide fewer insights into Newman's work for the uninitiated reader, but that on Newman the theologian makes up for any shortcomings they might have with good, brief introductions to a number of Newman's major theological works and to some of the central themes in his work: the "careful balance" of his thought which avoids comprehensiveness (liberalism) and dogmatism, "the importance of Scripture without damaging the uniqueness of Scripture" (105), a concept of justification which "means literally 'counting righteous,' but includes *under* its meaning 'making righteous'" (107; the italicised "under" provides particularly fascinating possibilities for Lutherans who may wish to consider Newman's definition in light of "in, with, and *under*"), an imaginative theory of the living development of Christian doctrine, a theory of infallibility which maintains the need to "consult" the laity and the sovereignty of conscience, an understanding of the possibility and reality of corruptions in the Church without losing sight of the ideal.

To outline Newman's achievement is no easy matter, and of all those who might attempt it, Ker is certainly among the most qualified. In 1988 he published his large "intellectual and literary life" of Newman (*John Henry Newman: A Biography* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988]), having earlier edited Newman's *Idea of a University* (Oxford, 1976) and *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (Oxford, 1985). Certainly no single volume

could treat Newman's achievement in detail and Ker has no intention of making such an attempt. One must take care, then, in wishing for more than is possible or what is intended as a brief, readable, and useful guide, but the lack of any real discussion of the *Apologia* is surprising, particularly since Ker insists regularly on Newman's work as framed by "occasions" and as personalist. He is aware of the book's problems in this regard, however, indicating in the opening lines, the omission of discussion of Newman's poetry (although he might have commented on it at least briefly in his final chapter), political thought, and historical studies.

It is unfortunate that Ker felt constrained to omit the last two issues in particular. It was the problem of the relationship of the Established Church with the State which first spurred members of the Oxford Movement to frame their theological principles, and if it was not history which led Newman into the Catholic Church, at the least it can be said that he entered in the context of his historical studies. This shortcoming is not as serious as it initially appears however. Every reader of Newman's historical work is immediately aware of how intimately that author's theological concerns are bound to his historical writing and it is therefore fitting that Newman's *Arians of the Fourth Century* and his *Development of Christian Doctrine* are treated under the section on Newman as theologian.

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## **Dancing with a Ghost: Exploring Indian Reality**

Rupert Ross

Markham, ON: Octopus Publishing Group, 1992

xxvii + 195 pages \$15.95

Ross Rupert, a non-Native, writes with a sensitivity to his limitations as an "outsider" to native culture and reality. He is also well aware that what is true of his experience with the Cree and Ojibway peoples of northwestern Ontario may require some modification when applied to other aboriginal peoples farther west or on the coasts. He notes, however, that reaction to an earlier, shorter version of this same book by Native peoples seems to confirm the presence of a similar, common core among all Canadian Native peoples from Labrador to the Yukon.

The author writes out of his experience as a fishing guide and as an assistant crown attorney from the District of Kenora, Ontario. The title of this paperback reflects something of the challenge of his undertaking. One may indeed read too much into one or two local incidents when one is looking for cross-cultural differences. Attempting to bring together one's observations of Native habits and mindset is like "dancing with a ghost": it requires addressing things of which one has only caught a fleeting glimpse.