


ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Newman on emotion and cognition in the *Grammar of Assent*

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Abstract

This article considers the role of emotion in John Henry Newman's *Grammar of Assent* by distinguishing five different ways (or 'models') in which the emotions play a positive epistemic role in relation to cognition. The most important of these, the Cognitive-Emotion Model, offers a new account of Newman's crucial idea of real assent, one that stresses the primary role of the emotions in real assent rather than imagination. This model helps to explain the nature of real assent by highlighting Newman's portrayal of an emotional way of knowing an object that is personal or individual, incommunicable, vivid, and motive. In this study of the relations between emotion and cognition I hope to highlight unexplored aspects of the nature of real assent and the importance of the role of emotion in it and hope to show how Newman's epistemology offers a rich framework for exploring the positive epistemic contributions of the emotions.

Keywords: John Henry Newman; epistemology; emotion; cognition; real assent; religious beliefs

Introduction

Over the last few decades, a number of philosophers have argued that our emotions – states like fear, joy, and anger – are not obstacles to finding the truth, but in fact often play a positive role in our cognitive lives.¹ This movement has interesting applications for the study of the epistemology of John Henry Newman, whose work in the nineteenth century prefigured the current positive emphasis on the epistemic role of emotions. Newman's work has been met with objections on the grounds that the role he gives our emotional or 'passional' nature in our assent to belief opens the door to, or actively invites, fideism and prejudice.² This seems especially true in the context of religious beliefs, which are Newman's focus.³

Yet while recent scholars such as William Wainwright, Fredrick Aquino, Logan Paul Gage, and Mark Wynn have made good headway in responding to some of these objections on behalf of Newman, questions remain regarding the exact role that emotions play in our cognitive lives – that is, the exact relationship between cognition and emotion in Newman's thought. Since, as the objections against Newman testify, it is clear that our emotions can sometimes play epistemically harmful roles, it is necessary to clarify which model (or models) can account for a proper way emotions can influence belief in Newman's work. As we will see, there are several possible models of the relationship

between cognition and emotion exemplified in Newman's texts. This article will attempt to clarify which accounts are compatible with Newman's focus, and for what purpose.

In order to analyse the potential relationships between emotion and cognition, I will first clarify my terms, showing what Newman includes under the terms 'emotion' and 'cognition'. Next, through a survey of different interpretations of Newman's texts, I will outline five models relating the emotions to cognition in Newman's work and assess their plausibility. Finally, I will explore how these different models correspond to different aspects of Newman's epistemology. From this more in-depth study of the relations between emotion and cognition I hope to show how John Henry Newman's epistemology is not only psychologically profound but also offers a rich framework for showing the positive epistemic contributions of the emotions.

Setting out terms: emotions and cognition

Newman has a broad and multifaceted construal of the emotions, but he does not offer a systematic account of them, nor does he explicitly define what he means by the term.⁴ In fact, in his *Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* Newman doesn't usually explicitly define his terms, nor does he speak well of definitions in general, but prefers more descriptive accounts which can give a more vivid and real understanding of what he means by a term. Following Newman's use, in this article I take the term 'emotions' to signify, broadly, not only what he describes as affections, passions, desires, and feelings, but also salient facts about one's temperament, pre-dispositional characteristics, needs, and moral feelings. That is, by emotions I do not only mean the classic examples of fear, joy, shame, hope, or sadness, but I will also take into account the wider emotional sphere of one's personal character and personality, one's dispositional likes and dislikes, the interests and desires which the objects of assent elicit, moral feelings such as guilt or gratitude, or the 'special [moral] feeling' which Newman calls conscience.⁵

Emotions, thus broadly construed, are predominantly ordered to things one perceives as good, either directly or indirectly. For example, the emotion of hope is ordered to the good of the object hoped for, while the emotion of fear is indirectly directed to the good of safety through fear of the dangerous object. Further, this order to perceived goods is bound up in less commonplace examples of emotion, such as one's personality traits or dispositional tendencies: for example, one's risk-taking tendencies, amicability (or lack thereof), or conscientiousness, as character traits, seem directed to perceived goods whether or not this is conscious or intentional.

Newman certainly thinks that the emotions are a constituent and necessary part of human nature. As he notes, 'After all, man is not a reasoning animal; he is a seeing, feeling, contemplating, acting animal.'⁶ Despite this dramatic insistence that human beings are not just reasoning animals, Newman would presumably not deny that 'reasoning' (which I am here terming cognition) is an essential element of human nature. His account of cognitive processes is nonetheless quite technical and complex, since he attempts to give an accurate description of human reasoning processes rather than an idealized account. I will here therefore outline only the distinctions most necessary for our analysis of the different ways the emotions can relate to cognition.

By cognition Newman usually means faculties which are ordered to, or whose goal is, the truth, even if they do not achieve this through some fault or imperfection.⁷ The two primary attitudes or states of mind which are ordered to apprehending the truth are assent and inference. The distinction between the two lies in their relation to the premises and evidence that underlie them: assent is distinct or independent from the evidence which gives rise to it, while inference is directly linked to its premises. One of Newman's examples compares the different attitudes of assent and inference in the case of religious

belief: with inference a philosopher considers the tenets of faith as conclusions of reason from prior premises and evidence and would judge the probability of the conclusion in connection with these premises, while a believer assents with unhesitating faith without tying this assent to its likelihood based on the premises alone.⁸ Assent, thus, is unconditional: it is an ‘all in’ affirmation of the thesis as a stand-alone position. Even if the evidence and premises were instrumental in leading one to the position in the first place – for example, in the case of a thoughtfully reasoned religious conversion – in finally assenting, rather than inferring, that the believer fully commits without hedging his assent through reference to premises.

Although initially one might think that reasoning processes necessarily rely on prior evidence in order to be ‘logical’, Newman argues that assent is a distinct mental operation that is in some sense independent of the reasoning process. It is an eminently pervasive and natural form of reasoning. In Newman’s example, when assenting in an ‘all in’ way to the proposition, ‘Great Britain is an island’, a nineteenth-century person would not be inferring this strictly as a conclusion from prior premises, since, in fact, such a person would lack ‘clinching’ evidence to support this. Rather, such a person would be assenting to this fact based on a conglomeration of indistinct and in themselves relatively unimportant facts, memories, and trust systems, not because of distinct premises leading to this as a conclusion. For our analysis of emotion’s relation to cognition in Newman’s thought, the main focus will thus be on assent, rather than inference, since assent is the basis of belief.

Specifically, our focus will be on what Newman calls real assent rather than notional assent. Real assent is the vivid apprehension and affirmation of an object or proposition, while notional assent is an abstract acceptance of a general proposition. For Newman, ‘a line is a breadthless length’ or ‘to err is human’ would be typical instances of notional assents while individual and vivid propositions such as ‘my parents care for me’ or ‘the stove is hot’ would be objects of real assents.

As I will argue more fully later in this article, the fundamental difference between the real and the notional is not primarily due to a difference in objects, but rather to a difference in the type of act taking place. That is to say, Newman takes real assent to be distinct from notional assent not only because the object is understood in its particularity as opposed to its generality, but, more importantly, because real assent is a different kind of act with different constituent characteristics. For example, Newman says that the same proposition – for instance, the explanation of a scientific fact – can be either real or notional depending on the background of the hearer and the characteristics of their assent.⁹ Identifying what exactly differentiates these acts will be key to understanding one type of relationship of the emotions to cognition later in our analysis, namely the Cognitive-Emotion Model. There I argue that emotion’s cognitive role is the main element differentiating real from notional assent. Before this analysis, however, I present five models outlining emotion’s relationships to cognition.

Models of potential relationships between emotion and cognition

Five models

We can distinguish five possible ways of understanding the relationship between cognition and emotion in Newman’s thought:

The Addition Model

The Coloured-Lens Model

The Justifier Model

The Cognitive-Emotion Model
The Orientation Model

The Addition Model is the simplest account and is found in recent work in epistemology such as Elizabeth Jackson's work on faith (which corresponds here to Newman's broader conception of assent or real belief). On this model, belief is simply the combination of positive emotional factors towards p and a high credence in p .¹⁰ Emotions and cognition are taken to be independent but necessary factors which added together make up belief. Second, there is the Coloured-Lens Model, put forward by William Wainwright in his defence of Newman's positive attitude towards the emotions.¹¹ In the Coloured-Lens Model 'passional' factors affect or colour the objective evidence itself; how we view or understand certain evidence is affected by our emotional attitude towards that evidence. Third, is the Justifier Model, which seems present in Gage and Aquino's work on Newman. On this model emotional factors serve either as the justifier of a belief or as a sign that our belief or understanding of something is accurate. Fourth, there is the Cognitive-Emotion Model in which the emotions are actually themselves intellectual or cognitive in some sense. Aquino and Gage also recommend this model, which they draw from Mark Wynn's work. Finally, there is the fifth model, the Orientation Model, in which the emotions orient us or draw our attention to objects of thought which are epistemically useful or valuable.

In considering these different models through which Newman's thought has been schematized, three questions must be addressed: (1) Which of these models accurately characterize Newman's view of the emotions? (2) Which of these models enable the emotions to play an epistemically appropriate role in relation to cognition? (3) Which of these models seems psychologically accurate? The first question limits the scope of my analysis to the role of the emotions in Newman's epistemology so that I can delineate clearly which models from the secondary literature can accurately be attributed to him. This analysis is necessary before any potential applications of Newman's work can be made to epistemology more broadly. The second, in assessing epistemically justified uses of the emotions in Newman's work, is the primary focus of this article. Here I argue that Newman's epistemology contains four distinct models through which the emotions play a cognitive role, which should be carefully distinguished when examining Newman's work, since they each offer an enriching and diverse account of emotions' epistemic role. Finally, the third question is important for evaluating Newman's views, since, according to his own criterion, a theory should not present an idealized picture of rationality but rather should give an accurate account of cognition and emotion as they are. Thus, any view that doesn't live up to Newman's own standard for accuracy will not be considered here. My hope is that in clarifying these models, Newman's importance to contemporary discussions of emotion's role in epistemology will be highlighted.

Addition Model

Of these models, the Addition Model, as the simplest, runs the highest risk of describing an abstraction rather than a reality. Although this model might plausibly capture some examples of belief, especially where the stakes are low and the choices clearly mapped out, it does not seem to capture the complex relationship between cognition and emotion which Newman emphasizes. The Addition Model offers an account of emotion as an 'add-on' to our cognitive evidence which doesn't seem to match the holistic focus of Newman's view of our cognitive and emotional lives. For instance, on the Addition Model, the emotion of hope that the bus will be on time or our fear that we will be late for work adds-on to our cognition or high credence that the bus will be late or

that the traffic on the road will delay us. However, for our analysis of Newman's work here, the models should not only be psychologically plausible, but also fit the emphasis of Newman's work – one important emphasis of Newman's epistemology is the holistic, personal, and complex character of the different aspects of our reasoning. In Newman's characterization of our natural reasoning processes, he heavily emphasizes the mysteriously complex and particular manner of assenting or believing in something, which seems to counter the simplicity and clear-cut account of emotion's add-on role offered by the Addition Model. This account is too simple to accurately characterize Newman's account of the multifaceted and indescribably complex web of emotions, reasons, and probabilities which make us assent. Since the Addition Model does not answer question two above and does not offer a psychologically nuanced account, we will consider this account of the combination of the two independent aspects of emotion and cognition as a foil to Newman's account.

Coloured-Lens Model

Wainwright's Coloured-Lens Model offers a more complex and psychologically plausible account of the relationship between emotion and cognition. According to this model the emotions can shape how we intellectually know objects: our understanding of the object is coloured by our emotions. Wainwright says that our emotions 'sometimes rightly affect our assessment of a body of evidence'.¹² This certainly seems psychologically descriptive: a strong emotion of joy can affect or colour how we receive or understand some news, fear upon hearing noises in the night can shift our perception of the danger of leaving our house, and our desire for something to be true can colour the evidence in its favour. This also seems accurate to Newman's account: in the *Oxford Sermons* he illustrates how the same argument strikes the same person very differently at one time vs another, in response to different mental or emotional states.¹³

This emotional influence on our cognitive assessments, however, can have epistemic drawbacks: for example, extreme dislike of someone can colour one's perception of their actions unfairly. In response, Wainwright argues that these emotional influences don't necessarily play a detrimental role in forming our beliefs and that in many cases our emotions for or against certain claims should be allowed to influence our cognitive commitment to those claims. One of his main arguments in defence of this view in Newman's work is that if rational beliefs are only held to be those which are capable of persuading a hardened sceptic, then this 'sets an impossibly high standard', which Newman rightly rejects.¹⁴

However, Wainwright's Coloured-Lens Model has been critiqued by Aquino and Gage for its limited or overly narrow view of evidence. While acknowledging the merit of Wainwright's objections to an unrealistically high standard of rationality, Aquino and Gage reject this model because they claim that it only offers limited support for the epistemic role of the emotions. Since Wainwright's position amounts to emotion's colouring the evidence, without itself amounting to evidence or pre-evidence (i.e. things that affect what evidence we look to originally), they argue that the emotions would not necessarily yield justification since 'adding a non-justifier to inadequate evidence still equals inadequate evidence'.¹⁵ I will return to this critique of the Coloured-Lens Model, but first I will present Aquino and Gage's model(s).

Although their position represents a multifaceted and complex approach to the emotions and cognition, fitting Newman's own presentation, my critique of their account lies in their tendency to blend together three models of how the emotions can relate to cognition. Specifically, their article presents together the Justifier Model, Orientation Model, and the Cognitive-Emotion Model without acknowledging their relevant differences.¹⁶

Although I heartily acknowledge that Newman's account admits of a variety or combination of models through which emotions affect our cognition at different times and situations, it is still necessary to clearly delineate the different models so that they can be fruitfully analysed, and clearly critiqued or defended. Therefore, for the purposes of analysis I will take these models separately, since, even if in Newman's work and in real-life situations these can be combined in various ways, epistemically they can have distinct roles and distinct justifications.

Cognitive-Emotion Model

In the Cognitive-Emotion Model, Aquino and Gage follow Mark Wynn who, in his third account of Newman's view of the emotions, suggests that the emotions may themselves be cognitive. This is in contrast to a view of emotions and cognition, such as the Addition Model, in which feelings are a 'mere addendum' to the cognitive content of belief.¹⁷ Against this add-on view of the emotions some, such as Peter Goldie, have argued that emotions can be intentional and cognitive in their own right.¹⁸ Using his example, Sarah might have a full intellectual awareness of the dangers of walking on ice, but, after a near-death experience of being trapped under a frozen lake, Sarah will know this danger in a different way, a way which includes emotion as a necessary and formative element. She will know the danger in a cognitive-emotional way.¹⁹ Similarly, Newman's account of emotions suggests that they can themselves be cognitive, offering a distinctively emotional way of knowing objects or apprehending situations. For example, Wynn describes Newman's analysis of love, as the emotion through which we know God, saying:

On this view, we could suppose that the perception of the beauty and loveliness of the Lord is itself affectively toned, so that it is not a matter of the affective state (of loving or hating) following from the understanding or vice versa; rather, the understanding of the Lord's loveliness is realized in the affection.²⁰

That is, one's knowledge of God is not cognitive with an additional bit of emotion or love, or emotional with the addition of some cognitive apprehension, rather the knowledge of God is emotional, and the emotion is cognitively perceptual: the two aspects are integrated into a unique kind of knowledge which is Cognitive-Emotional. I take this account to be quite psychologically plausible, as Goldie's ice example and Newman's emotionally felt knowledge of God highlight.

Justifier Model

In presenting the Justifier Model, Aquino and Gage reference Wainwright, and point to the growing trend in studies on emotion to argue for the legitimacy of a first-person, rather than a third-person or 'courtroom', view of evidence. They claim that these studies on emotions are beginning to indicate that, 'At least some emotions and perhaps related states can, as Newman intimates, serve as appropriate justifiers of belief. On the emerging consensus, emotions have the right sort of content to justify beliefs.'²¹

However, according to Aquino and Gage this would not make sense if emotions were just raw feelings, for 'It would be impossible for emotions to justify any particular belief because they lack propositional content.'²² If Sarah's anger is just a feeling (i.e. a burning sensation or a mood) then it is difficult to see how this could adequately support or justify belief. Therefore, they propose that the emotions can function reliably as a kind of perception or construal of a situation, which the emotion also then justifies as correct or

accurate. If Sarah's anger is a perception that a theft is unjust, then this emotion might serve as a justification or affirmation of her belief that the crime is wrong. They argue:

At any rate, it seems clear that emotions often indicate states of affairs to us (e.g. that a dangerous object is present, that injustice is being committed, or that this person is lovely and valuable) and that we have the ability to perceive evidential support relations without making our reasons explicit. If this is right, and if the first-person understanding of evidence is correct, then emotions appear to have the ability to justify beliefs.²³

This presentation seems to combine several, in principle, distinct aspects of Newman's thought. In particular, it seems to meld together what I have here distinguished as the Cognitive-Emotion Model and the Justifier Model, such that it is not clear how the emotions actually serve to justify cognition, or if they themselves are offering the cognitive perception of what they are (also) supposed to justify. This account does not seem to, properly speaking, offer any justification of cognition through emotion, only a reinforcement of cognition with a different type of evidence, namely cognitive-emotional evidence. For instance, Sarah might think intellectually that theft is unjust, and her emotional response to seeing someone steal from someone in need might amplify and corroborate this thought or provide further evidence of the injustice, but it doesn't seem that her emotion could demonstrate that the intellectual assent to the injustice of theft is correct in itself. Although the Cognitive-Emotion Model provides further evidence for purely cognitive propositions, this corroboration is not a justification of the initial cognition. This lack of connection between the cognitive-emotional element and the justificatory element is made clearer in an example where the initial cognition is inaccurate: a racist person may very well feel hatred or anger at a person of another race's success, but this emotion doesn't justify his cognition that another race is inferior or undeserving.

It seems that, according to Aquino and Gage's interpretation, the positive aspects of the Justifier Model, namely the addition of a type of evidence which is not purely intellectual (thus potentially strengthening the purely cognitive through corroboration) is more accurately just a feature of the Cognitive-Emotional Model, and that there is no need of an epistemic appeal to the Justifier Model in itself. However, in the next section I will return to a different interpretation of the Justifier Model in Newman's thought which is not conflated with the Cognitive-Emotional Model, and which might be epistemically plausible in some cases.

Orientation Model

First, however, it is necessary to distinguish the Cognitive-Emotion Model from the Orientation Model: both are drawn from Wynn's work and are taken in tandem in Aquino and Gage's presentation. On the Orientation Model, the emotions are the indicators of what we turn our attention to in the first place. Wynn argues that 'Before our reason is deployed, we need to decide what to think about; and the emotions have a role in this regard, by picking out matters which are worthy of attention.'²⁴ Wynn argues for the possibility of this model's epistemic plausibility saying, 'And since we need some such initial orientation if our enquiries are to get started, their role in this respect is at least prima facie innocent.'²⁵ This view seems to be psychologically insightful and to align with Newman's views: Newman often emphasizes the natural diversity in people's approaches to questions of belief, and the variation in their first principles based on their antecedent predispositions, desires, and emotional characters.

That said, in Aquino and Gage's presentation this initial orientation is emphasized as a truth-directed function which (again) conflates the orientational role with a cognitive-emotional status. Of course, in some situations the orientation and the cognitive-emotional aspects might easily come together in our experience. And further, in Aquino and Gage's broader project of defending emotions generally (in any of their valid appearances) as acceptable evidence, precision in distinguishing the models might not be preeminent. But for the purposes of analysing the different important epistemic roles Newman might justifiably assign to the emotions, it is necessary to clarify the different models. Having distinguished these epistemic models, I will now show how they can be applied to Newman's work in distinct ways.

The models' roles in Newman's epistemology

Cognitive-emotion and real assent

I hold that the Cognitive-Emotion Model, in which the emotional perception of the object is itself cognitive in some sense, represents the most important role that the emotions play in Newman's epistemology, because this is the means through which real assent is acquired.²⁶ As I mentioned in the first section, real assent differs from notional assent, not primarily through a difference in object, but through a difference in the way the object is perceived or understood. This is made clear by the fact that Newman holds that the same proposition or object can be assented to either notionally or really, illustrating that the primary difference does not lie in the object but in the manner of assent (although the object can often cause a difference as well).²⁷

According to Newman's characterization of real assent, the manner in which we grasp the object is vivid, real, and motivating because the way it is perceived is not purely abstract or intellectual. Newman also emphasizes the individual or personal and incommunicable character of real assent in contrast to notional.²⁸ In Newman's description of real apprehension and assent, his language often clearly indicates its emotional character. He says that real apprehension 'excites and stimulates the affections and passions, by bringing facts home to them as motive causes', later expanding on this to note that the object of concrete belief is not only what is true but also

what is beautiful, useful, admirable, heroic; objects which kindle devotion, rouse the passions, and attach the affections; and thus it leads the way to actions of every kind, to the establishment of principles, and the formation of character, and is thus again intimately connected with what is individual and personal.²⁹

This emphasis on the emotional mode of belief which motivates a personal assent through a passionate mode of apprehension illustrates the importance of emotion in real assent, which, I argue is best understood through the Cognitive-Emotional Model. I submit that emotion, broadly construed, is the necessary element for constituting real apprehension and assent in Newman's epistemology. This can be seen from our previous analysis of Goldie's description of cognitive-emotion. The case of a shift from an intellectual knowledge of danger to an emotionally cognitive, personal, and vivid realization of that same danger directly maps onto Newman's change from notional apprehension and assent to real.

However, there is one aspect of Newman's descriptions of real assent which seems to conflict with the view that emotion is its essential characteristic – namely, Newman's strong emphasis on the imagination. For many scholars, such as Bernard Dive, the imagination is a central feature of Newman's epistemology, and is the crucial component

which marks out real assent.³⁰ This question of the relationship between emotion and imagination in real assent is complicated by the fact that for Newman these terms include a broader range of experiences than we might assume. We have commented on the breadth of experiences captured by the term emotion. Similarly, as many have noted, the imagination for Newman is much broader than the faculty of forming pictorial images, or the feature which is directed towards imaginary things. Thomas Szydlak defines Newman's conception of the imagination as the 'faculty possessed by every human person, which coordinates real life experiences and allows the person to comprehend the real world around him . . . [T]he imagination serves to grasp reality as the human person perceives it.'³¹ This perception of reality is not reducible only to what one sees but encompasses a more holistic and personal range of experiences. As John Coulson highlights, imagination and the related 'image' do not only refer to what is visible or reducible to a 'simple process of "imaging"'.³² Rather, 'the imagination provides for the human person a means to become aware of the state of affairs around himself.'³³ Generally, the imagination is associated with the 'apprehension of the concrete' and is 'the trace of experience' according to Dive.³⁴ Finally, it seems that imagination often includes for Newman our experiences in a more general sense, and even seems to include our memories of experiences as well.³⁵

Newman speaks of the concrete 'images' associated with real assent to specify how it differs from notional assent with respect to its vividness and inclination to action.³⁶ Because of this, and the associated aspects which the imagination seems to explain, such as the personal, emotional, and vivid characteristics of the imaginative mode of knowing, many view the imaginative faculty as the true basis for real assent. For instance, Newman says, 'Now assent to a real proposition is assent to an imagination, and an imagination, as supplying objects to our emotional and moral nature, is adapted to be a principle of action.'³⁷ This seems to indicate that imagination is the root cause of emotion and is the fundamental way in which real assent differs from notional. On such an interpretation, real assent would best be characterized by a broadly construed image-based mode of apprehension rather than an emotional mode.³⁸

However, it seems to me that this interpretation of Newman's emphasis on the imagination is misplaced. Newman does not emphasize the imagination because the strength of real assent stems from vivid images or memories of experiences directly, but rather because it is an indirect cause of real assent. I take the imagination to be the means through which the real indicator of real assent is achieved, namely emotional cognition. Rather than seeing emotion as a derivative effect of the imagination or part of the imaginative faculty itself,³⁹ emotion – which is achieved through means of imagination (which, again, seems to include memories or direct experiences) – should be understood as the primary element of real assent. Although it is important to acknowledge the importance of imagination in the process of real assent as a whole, I argue that the imagination itself is not sufficient for real assent, but there is a necessary further step, namely an emotional cognition of the object. This emotional mode of knowing draws upon the experiences from the imagination and reacts to them in a way that makes the assent vivid, motive, personal, and real. This further aspect of emotion-cognition is necessary and primary for Newman's view of real assent, although it cannot come about without some direct and vivid experience of the object.⁴⁰

Although Newman often characterizes real assent as accompanied and caused by an 'image', in general it seems easy to see how one could have an 'image', imagination, or experience of something without this garnering a real assent. For instance, in the ice example from Goldie, Sarah could imagine herself falling through the ice without really assenting to the danger of thin ice, but it seems that if she had the shudder of vivid, experiential, and *emotional* understanding of that danger, which coming from the truly

vivid imagination or lived experience, the real assent would come about.⁴¹ Thus, although the imagination is the cause of the emotional basis of real assent, it cannot fully explain real assent's distinction from notional assent without the emotional component; the imagination is not a sufficient condition for real assent. Newman affirms this: 'We have no right to consider that we have apprehended a truth, merely because of the strength of our mental impression of it', and again 'Yes it is plain and I shall take for granted here, that when I assent to a proposition, I ought to have some more legitimate reason for doing so, than the brilliancy of the image of which that proposition is the expression.'⁴² Properly speaking, the emotional cognition, which is the root of their personal vivid and motive elements, is the grounds of the real assent, rather than the imagination on its own, even though the imagination or experience was the basis of the emotional cognition itself. It seems clear that a strong imagination or experience of something would not in itself merit real assent. Newman highlights this:

Assent, however strong, and accorded to images however vivid, is not therefore necessarily practical. Strictly speaking, it is not imagination that causes action; but hope and fear, likes and dislikes, appetite, passion, affection, the stirrings of selfishness and self-love. What imagination does for us is to find a means of stimulating those motive powers; and it does so by providing a supply of objects strong enough to stimulate them.⁴³

This clearly indicates that although the imagination (including memory or present experience) is a necessary means through which an emotional cognition is achieved, since it provides the necessary concrete and vivid object, the primary element of real assent which distinguishes it from notional assent is its emotional mode rather than its imaginative element.⁴⁴

The key role of cognitive emotion in Newman's real assent is reinforced by the fact that the majority of the pertinent cases of Newman's use of emotional words (such as feeling, passion, desire, emotion, and affection) are used in the context of (a) his descriptions of real assent and (b) in his descriptions of conscience, which is a specific case of real assent since the feelings associated with our conscience are the means through which we have real apprehension of God and assent to God's existence. Newman in introducing conscience even calls it a 'special feeling'.⁴⁵

Wynn further supports this interpretation in the case of our knowledge of God. He puts this knowledge in terms of a cognitive-emotional mode of knowing, claiming, 'Our understanding of theistic claims in depth cannot be separated from affective-evaluative experience, because it is only by reference to such experience that certain divine qualities can be identified in full.'⁴⁶ That is, according to Newman our knowledge of God is not only intellectual, but rather necessarily includes emotional elements within the mode of knowledge itself. This emotional knowledge of God is how Newman characterizes real assent, even though in the case of God the imagination might play an especially important or necessary role in providing the object of our emotional cognition since in most cases God is not accessible through direct experience or memory. Therefore, the Cognitive-Emotion Model is the primary model in Newman's epistemology, as the model through which we understand emotion's role in real assent.

Justification and certitude

The other models play lesser roles in Newman's epistemology, but they still help explain certain aspects of his thought in terms of a specific relationship between cognition and emotion. The Justifier Model, although it initially seemed to be questionable from an

epistemic point of view since emotions accompany both cognitively good and bad assents, does seem to have a particular role in Newman's thought as the emotion signifying certitude. Although it is true that emotions might accompany either good or bad cognition, in the case of certitude Newman highlights a specific role for emotion which, he argues, is epistemically beneficial. Thus, Newman characterizes certitude as an irreversible 'deliberate assent given expressly after reasoning' accompanied by a 'specific feeling' of 'intellectual satisfaction and repose'.⁴⁷ He describes it further as the keenness in fully believing in something, for example, the inherent goodness of God, reinforced through self-reflective reasoning about this assent, which brings about an emotional feeling of 'repose' in one's certainty and persistence.

That certitude would be accompanied by this emotional element makes sense since certitude is a complex assent, meaning it includes both an element of real assent and a meta-reflective affirmation of that assent. As I showed in the previous section, the element of real assent is characterized by Cognitive-Emotion.⁴⁸ However, the role of the emotions in the case of certitude is distinct from their role in real assent because of the additional element of meta-affirmation; through self-reflective reasoning on one's assent certitude obtains an additional level of security. This combination of reflective reasoning and real assent gives rise to certitude's distinctive emotional element, namely its 'specific feeling'.⁴⁹ This emotion or feeling fits the Justifier Model since it is a sign of the state of certitude and distinguishes it from other mental attitudes from an epistemic point of view. Newman describes the experience of certitude saying:

It is accompanied, as a state of mind, by a specific feeling, proper to it, and discriminating it from other states, intellectual and moral, I do not say, as its practical test or as its differentia, but as its token, and in a certain sense its form. When a man says he is certain, he means he is conscious to himself of having this specific feeling. It is a feeling of satisfaction and self-gratulation, of intellectual security, arising out of a sense of success, attainment, possession, finality, as regards the matter which has been in question.⁵⁰

Certitude's special status in Newman's epistemology makes sense of why it would be accompanied by, and in some way justified via, a specific feeling. Thus, even though emotions cannot play a justifying role for cognition across the board, in the special case of certitude, Newman seems to posit the feeling that partly characterizes certitude as a sign of its positive epistemic status.

Orientation and epistemic steadfastness

The Orientation Model can help explain epistemic steadfastness. Newman highlights steadfastness or persistence in our assent in his discussion of certitude. He says that a necessary aspect of certitude, in contrast with assent more generally, is its persistence. He says:

Assents may and do change; certitudes endure. This is why religion demands more than an assent to its truth; it requires a certitude . . . Without certitude in religious faith there may be much decency of profession and of observance, but there can be no habit of prayer, no directness of devotion, no intercourse with the unseen, no generosity of self-sacrifice. Certitude then is essential to the Christian; and if he is to persevere to the end, his certitude must include in it a principle of persistence.⁵¹

Religious assent, as a type of certitude, is persistent and unchanging, which assumes, to some degree, a positive type of closed-mindedness.⁵² The Orientation Model serves as an explanation of the persistence of religious belief which Newman insists on because emotional affections can orient one to evidence which supports or strengthens our beliefs.

Newman uses the case of the martyrs to illustrate the fact that the emotions play an important role in steadfastness in focusing our attention against defeaters. Upon being tortured, Newman says that the martyrs rely on their love of God or hope in God's reward, rather than purely intellectual arguments concerning God's existence or goodness in order to hold fast to their faith.⁵³ Of course, in this case there are additional emotions such as fear of pain, which would incline the martyrs to apostatize. This clarifies that not just any emotion can play the orienting role for steadfastness. It seems that the emotions which could serve this role on Newman's view must be deep-seated or long-term emotions, such as love, rather than the short-term or mood-based ones which have given the emotions their reputation for fickleness. Given the proper emotion, it seems as if the Orientation Model can help explain and motivate religious perseverance, or epistemic steadfastness.

Of course, Newman recognizes that persistence can possibly be just prejudiced inflexibility or a negative closed-mindedness. But he argues that religious belief, which is a type of certitude, is for the most part protected from this danger by having the reflective argumentative element. Because one has reviewed one's reasoning, the assent of certitude should be epistemically satisfying and persistent. Newman holds that this is necessary so that even in the face of objections, scepticism, personal doubt, bad habits, or even spiritual challenges like the dark night of the soul, one's religious faith does not crumble because one can turn, through practice outlined by the Orientation Model, to focus on the stronger aspects of religious belief rather than its defeaters.⁵⁴

This application of the model adapts it slightly from its original presentation since: as originally presented the emotions oriented us *initially*, that is, prior to any cognitive assessment or religious commitment. This seemed to ensure that the emotions played an initially non-biased role. On this adaptation, however, the emotions orient us after a cognitive commitment, in order to withstand objections and defeaters, which can quickly turn into epistemic inflexibility and prejudice. Although, admittedly, this adaptation might raise concerns about the epistemic trustworthiness of the model in general, Newman's specific application of the Orientation Model to cases of religious belief might gain some support within the framework of his religious epistemology from the epistemic strength of religious certitude. An additional adaptation of the Orientation Model, as we will see in the next section, can also be used to help explain the individuality of our reasoning, alongside the Coloured-Lens Model.

Coloured-lens and individuality

Finally, the Coloured-Lens Model is able to explain one of Newman's main emphases in the *Grammar*, namely how people differ so radically in their assessment and acceptance of principles, premises, evidence, and reasoning. Newman emphasizes the individuality of our rationality saying:

As this man or that will receive his own impression of one and the same person, and judge differently from others about his countenance, its expression, its moral significance, its physical contour and complexion, so an intellectual question may strike two minds very differently, may awaken in them distinct associations, may be invested by them in contrary characteristics, and lead them to opposite conclusions;—and so,

again, a body of proof, or a line of argument, may produce a distinct, nay, a dissimilar effect, as addressed to one or to the other.⁵⁵

This personal judgement, which Newman says is ‘by our own lights, and on our own principles’, is founded not on logical rules but on a more natural and personal inferential chain which stems from one’s individual character, and which is formed and coloured by the emotions, predispositions, and moral views of the person reasoning.⁵⁶ Newman highlights that:

[M]en differ from each other, not so much in the soundness of their reasoning as in the principles which govern its exercise, that those principles are of a personal character, that where there is no common measure of minds, there is no common measure of arguments, and that the validity of proof is determined, not by any scientific test, but by the illative sense.⁵⁷

Thus, the emotional influence on our inferential reasoning is along the lines of the Coloured-Lens Model because the emotions impact what types of evidence and types of reasoning are acceptable or persuasive to the specific individual, which colours the premises and processes of inferential reasoning.⁵⁸ Further, the Orientation Model can work in tandem with the Coloured-Lens Model in explaining this personal character of our reasoning since emotions can orient us to evidence and chains of reasoning which we are personally predisposed to accept. Thus, the Coloured-Lens Model, along with the Orientation Model, can explain the specific way in which the emotions influence cognition in making our inferential reasoning processes individualized.⁵⁹

In addition to the emotions colouring the inferential process of reasoning, Newman also emphasizes the way emotions can colour our assent. In speaking of simple assent, he says that the strength of assent might be coloured by emotions: ‘For instance, as to the emotions, this strength of assent may be nothing more than the strength of love, hatred, interest, desire, or fear, which the object of the assent elicits, and this is especially the case when that object is of a religious nature.’⁶⁰ Here the emotions can directly affect the character or strength of the assent; the emotions are not themselves the reason or object of assent, but their presence colours how our assent is attuned to the object.

Although it is clear that this emotional influence on our reasoning might go awry in some cases, Newman still underscores the influence the emotions have because he is trying to explain the individual nature of our rationality as a real feature of our lives, rather than ignoring it since it might not fit into an ideal theoretical account. However, Newman seems to hold that the emotional role in cognition is safeguarded in a special way in the case of religious belief because of the self-reflective reasoning process necessary for the certitude of religious assent.⁶¹

Conclusion

I have argued that the Cognitive Emotion, Coloured-Lens, Justifier and Orientation Models offer distinct ways of understanding Newman’s epistemology of religious belief in a way that has not to this point been fully or carefully distinguished. Although Newman may not have predicted the cognitive turn in the philosophy of emotions, his work on the relationship between emotion and cognition, and the different ways he portrays them throughout the *Grammar*, which can be understood through these five models, can advance contemporary discussion concerning cognition in the philosophy of emotions. The Orientation Model explains how religious belief can be epistemically steadfast in withstanding doubts and defeaters through emotion’s influence on our cognition.

Emotions on the Coloured-Lens and Orientation Models explain the individuality of reasoning: why people differ so radically in their acceptance of first principles and chains of reasoning. The Justifier Model explains how some feelings can be signs of an epistemically positive state of certitude. And, most importantly, the Cognitive-Emotion Model distinguishes real assent from notional as an emotional way of knowing an object which explains the personal nature, vividness, and motive force of the real assent.

Notes

1. The emerging consensus is that although defining and delineating what constitutes the emotions is difficult, the emotions should no longer be considered as structurally opposed to reason. See for example Brady (2016) and De Sousa (2001). For a general overview of this debate see Scarantino and De Sousa (2021).
2. For example, one objector is Jay Newman, who argues that Newman's account of assent cannot prevent relativism and prejudice. See J Newman (1979).
3. Note that in this article my analysis will be mainly geared to the epistemic condition which Newman calls real assent, and especially focused on real assents concerning religious matters. This broadly aligns with what epistemology today calls belief, religious belief, or faith (henceforth I will follow Newman and designate this collection of terms as either real assent or belief). My goal is not to analyse the role that emotion plays in any and all cognitive conditions of life, but rather, following Newman, will be directed mainly towards explaining emotion's role in religious belief, although broader applications can easily be drawn from this.
4. Aquino and Gage (2020), 52.
5. JH Newman (1979), 98.
6. JH Newman (1979).
7. Note that Newman distinguishes propositions themselves, our apprehension of them, and our attitudes towards them, but for this analysis I broadly treat real assent and real apprehension as similar terms in my argument since I take real assent to require real apprehension.
8. JH Newman (1979), 27.
9. JH Newman (1979), 30–31.
10. Jackson (2021), 35–57; Note that Jackson is not positing this as a model applicable to Newman but is using it to describe the attitudes of faith, hope, and belief more generally. Its use as a foil for Newman's account in my article accordingly holds no weight against her account.
11. Although Wainwright's text does include some variation in the analysis of the relationship between emotion and cognition in Newman's text, the Coloured-Lens Model is the predominant one, and so for the sake of simplicity, we will characterize his view along the lines of this model (Wainwright (1995)).
12. Wainwright (1995), 58.
13. Newman (2006), 186.
14. Wainwright (1995), 75.
15. Aquino and Gage (2020), 44.
16. Further, of these three different representations in their essay, two, the Cognitive-Emotion Model and the Orientation Model, are drawn from Mark Wynn's work in which he explicitly presents them as distinct (Wynn (2005), 435–449, 436–444).
17. Wynn says, 'On this "add-on" conception of emotion, grief, for example, is taken to be constituted of the thought of loss, together with a certain feeling (broadly one of pain rather than pleasure) which is occasioned by this thought' (Wynn (2005), 443).
18. Aquino and Gage also point to an emerging consensus that emotions are in some sense cognitive. Recent scholarship, such as Robert Solomon's, which argues that emotions might be 'intelligent, cultivated, conceptually rich engagements with the world, not mere reactions and instincts' lend credence to Newman's view. Others have argued that the emotions are evaluative and intentional, which is an important development in defence of Newman's emphasis on their epistemic role (Solomon (1993), ix; Nussbaum (2001); Goldie (2000); Goldie (2004), 91–106).
19. Goldie elaborates, saying: 'Coming to think of it in this new way is not to be understood as consisting of thinking of it in the old way, plus some added-on phenomenal ingredient-feeling perhaps; rather, the whole way of experiencing, or being conscious of, the world is new' (Goldie (2004), 59–60).
20. Wynn (2005), 445; Aquino and Gage (2020), 54.
21. Aquino and Gage (2020), 55.
22. Aquino and Gage (2020), 55.

23. Aquino and Gage (2020), 56–57. Note that in addition to blending together the Cognitive-Emotion Model and the Justifier Model, this passage also seems to insert implicit reasoning into the picture of emotion’s role in cognition. One further upshot of this confusion of the different models is that the emotions might appear to be overly intellectual. While I do not take Aquino and Gage to intend to present the emotions themselves as purely intellectual, their critique that ‘It would be impossible for emotions to justify any particular belief because they lack propositional content’ seems to offer an overly intellectual view of emotions which seems to be due to their obfuscation of the different models (Aquino and Gage (2020), 55).

24. Wynn (2005), 439.

25. Wynn (2005), 439.

26. There are three ways in which emotion and cognition could be related in the Cognitive-Emotional Model, which are important to clarify: (1) I experience an emotion which causes me to apprehend the object in a certain way, (2) I apprehend the object in a certain way and that causes an emotional response, (3) or the apprehension itself has an emotional dimension. I posit the third sense and am arguing that emotion is involved in assent in the sense of a simultaneous constitutive element rather than a temporally prior causal element or a posterior effect of the cognition.

27. JH Newman (1979), 30–31.

28. JH Newman (1979), 82–84.

29. JH Newman (1979), 31, 81–82.

30. Dive (2018).

31. Szydlak (2019), 165–182, 166.

32. Coulson (1981), 47.

33. Szydlak (2019), 167; see also Holyer (1986), 405.

34. Dive (2018), 15, 425.

35. For example, Newman says: ‘Memory consists in a present imagination of things that are past; memory retains the impressions and likeness of what they were when before us’ (JH Newman (1979), 39). However, I take it that for Newman the imagination, even thus broadly construed, is a distinct faculty from the emotions, and that neither faculty includes the other.

36. JH Newman (1979), 86.

37. JH Newman (1979), 176.

38. As noted above, the imagination is a hugely inclusive term for Newman, and does not necessarily include the calling to mind of a specific image but often is more akin to a general ‘apprehension of the concrete’ and is ‘the trace of experience’, as Dive has noted. This brings to light an alternative counter-thesis positing that the shift from notional to real apprehension and assent is primary based on direct perceptual contact with the object, rather than an imaginative element or an emotional feature. This would suggest that rather than real assent being grounded in an image-based mode of knowledge or an emotional cognitive engagement with the object, it is the ontological immediacy of the object to the subject that grounds a real assent. This would entail that emotions would be explanatorily downstream of the experiential acquaintance factor. However, I take this counter-proposal to be compatible with my thesis, since I am not in fact concerned to give the ultimately prior account of the cause of the subject’s emotional cognition of the object. It may well be that this emotional-cognition, or affective experience itself, is explained with reference to an immediacy of experience with objects, but I don’t take this to necessarily negate my claim that for Newman, emotion is a necessarily constitutive feature of the shift from notional to real assent, even if this emotion is bound up with or due to some prior cause. Perhaps the immediacy of perceptual contact with the object would explain the close connection between the emotions and real assent, but I do not see how explaining the basis of the relationship would mitigate the force of my thesis which pertains to their connection. Ultimately, I think that the immediacy of experience as the ultimate basis for real apprehension is compatible with my own contention that emotion is the necessary constitutive feature of real assent. I thank the anonymous reviewer of *Religious Studies* for calling attention to this additional counter-thesis.

39. Some characterizations of Newman’s thought on the imagination seem to include personal experiences, personal character traits, and even to go so far as to include the emotions under the imagination. For example Dive (2018), 15. However, this characterization which seems to identify the emotions as a part of the imaginative faculty seems to run contrary to many passages of Newman, which clearly point out or rely on their real distinction. See for example JH Newman (1979), 81–82. Even given a broader view of the imagination the emotions still are a distinct element in our epistemic lives for Newman, and still play a distinct and primary role in real assent, even if the imagination, broadly construed, is a necessary adjacent element which gives rise to these emotions to begin with.

40. I do not take all first-person experience to be emotional or affectively charged, and similarly, not all first-person experience to have this feature of immediacy that might be posited as the alternate or, prior, explanation

of real assent. In this way my account of the necessity of an emotional mode of cognizing the object as the true basis of real assent retains an explanatory role, even though this emotional-cognition may be caused by either an imaginative or direct encounter with the object.

41. It is important to note that just as the liveliness of imagination on its own is not enough to ground a real assent, so the vividness or emotional charge of a story or an experience in the abstract, without a personal, first-person engagement with the imagination or experience is insufficient. In this way, the personal engagement with an imagination or experience is a prior necessary element in anchoring or causing the emotion, while the emotion is a distinct and necessary constitutive feature of the subject's mode of grasping the object in real assent.

42. JH Newman (1979), 80, 82. Newman's example of the saint's 'suffering from imaginations' which tempt their faith also seems to indicate that real assent is not directly linked to the imagination or the vividness of images, and that although it seems to be a necessary element in Newman's thought, it is not a sufficient condition to achieve real assent (JH Newman (1979), 178).

43. JH Newman (1979), 81–82.

44. In some places, however, Newman seems to suggest an alternative criterion for distinguishing between real assent and notional assent, namely the individual, accidental, and the incommunicable character of the conditions which generate real assent. See, for example, JH Newman (1979), 82–84. However, I do not think that these passages mitigate the importance of emotion in distinguishing real from notional assent because the individual, accidental, and incommunicable aspects of real assent seem to arise from and be directly associated with the emotions in Newman's work. For Newman, each individual has a personal way of experiencing the world and a personally emotive way of responding to these experiences. Thus, the personal or individual and hence, incommunicable qualities seem to be derivative effects of the emotional and experiential basis of assent. Newman emphasizes in many places that 'They [real assents] depend on personal experience; and the experience of one man is not the experience of another. Real assent, then, as the experience which it presupposes, is proper to the individual' and that, 'As regards the affections and passions of our nature, they are *sui generis* respectively, and incommensurable (JH Newman (1979), 29, 84).

Further, it seems that emotional element explains the personal and incommunicable facets of real assent better than the imaginative since the emotions are the actual human response to the emotive material provided by an image.

45. JH Newman (1979), 98.

46. Wynn (2005), 444.

47. JH Newman (1979), 184, 168, 207.

48. JH Newman (1979), 172.

49. JH Newman (1979).

50. JH Newman (1979), 168. It seems clear that for Newman certitude's special status and its accompanying emotion need not rely on conclusive evidence, since in the cases of religious assent this is often impossible to come by. Requiring conclusive evidence for certitude would in some sense mitigate the importance of the role of the special feeling which accompanies and justifies certitude, since if it were already completely justificatory through non-probabilistic certainty, then it would not require additional corroboration via the special feeling. However, it does not seem that the special feeling plays an active role in assessing the probability of the evidence.

51. JH Newman (1979), 180.

52. For instance, Newman holds that a Catholic cannot inquire into the validity of his faith if he is to remain a believer: 'It is merely common sense to tell him that, if he is seeking, he has not found. If seeking includes doubting, and doubting excludes believing, then the Catholic who sets about inquiring, thereby declares that he is not a Catholic' (JH Newman (1979), 159).

53. JH Newman (1979), 177.

54. Newman gives the examples of the saints suffering from imaginations and doubts, or believers struggling with the problem of evil, or free will, in arguing that these must be put down 'with a high hand, as irrational or preposterous' (JH Newman (1979), 178). This rebuttal of objections and doubts through persistence or steadfastness of mind can be achieved through our emotions and will orient our cognition to aspects of the faith which can motivate us to withstand defeaters.

55. JH Newman (1979), 240.

56. JH Newman (1979). Newman emphasizes the personal nature of our acceptance of premises and evidence especially concerning religious belief, saying:

In religious inquiry each of us can speak only for himself, and for himself he has a right to speak. His own experiences are enough for himself, but he cannot speak for others: he cannot lay down the law; he can only bring his own experiences to the common stock of psychological facts. (JH Newman (1979), 300)

57. JH Newman (1979), 321. It is important to clarify that I am not asserting that the five proposed models are necessarily comprehensive of all the ways the emotions can relate to cognition in Newman's work. For instance, at this point I do not think that any of the current models speak directly to the role of the emotions in illative reasoning, but perhaps there are additional unexplored applications of the current models, or additional models which might account for the relation between the illative sense and emotion.
58. This characteristic of epistemic individuality might also help in explaining epistemic disagreement, since it helps explain why people choose incompatible first principles.
59. Note that in their original presentation the two models are quite distinct since the Orientation Model explained why two subjects would direct themselves to different evidence initially, while the Coloured-Lens Model showed how, given the same evidence, two subjects might highlight or preference different aspects of it. However, as is clear in their concrete application the two models might sometimes meld together: further work is necessary to decide whether their complete distinction is necessary.
60. JH Newman (1979), 154.
61. From this analysis it appears that not only the Justifier Model, but also the Orientation and Coloured-Lens models, are intimately connected and distinctly rely on Newman's account of certitude for at least part of their epistemic validity. Of course, Newman's account of certitude is a tricky and contested subject. Given that the validity of these three models is tied to Newman's account of certitude, a more complete defence of this account than what could be provided in this article is needed. Further, although each of these models seems epistemically justified in some situations, it seems likely that there would be other situations in which they are not – more work is needed to distinguish the specific conditions when these models are epistemically justified and when they are just psychologically descriptive. This is especially pertinent since Newman's epistemology has special application to religious belief, in which faith in God's providence lends additional credence to the trustworthiness of our emotions. Further analysis might be needed to ascertain to what extent Newman's arguments for the epistemic status of the emotions is justified solely through the religious character of the belief and how much is more broadly applicable.

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