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Newman's Detachment

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JOHN Henry Newman has played a relatively minor role in literary-critical accounts of Victorian objectivity. This essay contends, however, that Newman's experiments in autobiographical detachment render his lectures on *Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching* (1850) and his memoir, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (1864), surprisingly legible in the terms established by recent scholarship, even as the same pair of texts also serves to complicate these terms. Amanda Anderson's and Elaine Hadley's respective accounts of "cultivated detachment" and "abstract embodiment" show that, for the Victorians, *being* objective meant more than simply abstracting oneself from affect, experience, or practice.[1] Objectivity was seen instead as producing new forms of experience and distinctive emotional investments.[2] Drawing on these cultural-historical insights, I argue that Newman's depiction of his past self as a separate person from his writing-self enables him to adopt a stance of detachment from his past life and, in particular, from the beliefs that he held before his conversion to Catholicism. This stance establishes Newman rhetorically as an objective judge of his past life, but far from projecting disengagement or indifference, Newman's particular mode of detachment creates the conditions for an "affectively charged objectivity" with quite specific relational implications.[3] Objectivity is, again, the precondition for experience rather than a route to its effacement.

The autobiographical standpoint that facilitates his engagement with his past does not, however, testify in and of itself to the historicity of Newman's detachment. John Freccero has gone as far as suggesting that a "detachment from the self that *was* from the self that *is*" is a perennial feature of conversion literature.[4] One obvious, albeit relatively proximate, predecessor for Newman's self-detachment might be William Wordsworth (an oft-noted influence), whose "interlocutor" in *The Prelude* is, as Thomas Weiskel puts it, "a part of himself, archaic or prospective but in any case alienated from his present, who beckons to him across a 'vacancy.'"[5] It may be that Newman's disarming rhetoric

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of retrospection positions him more securely within the ambit of Victorian liberal culture than the alleged historical ubiquity of autobiographical detachment might suggest, but his significance within that context is only partly attributable to his counterintuitive affinities with more obviously exemplary (i.e., "Victorian") figures such as John Stuart Mill. Newman's work deserves a place in scholarly narratives of Victorian detachment primarily because his writing destabilizes—and thereby (for us) clarifies—then-current notions of objectivity.[6] As we will see, Newman's autobiographical experiments in *Difficulties Felt by Anglicans* involve a peculiarly stark "detachment from the self that *was* from the self that *is*," but it is in the *Apologia*'s rather subtler maneuvers that Newman makes his most searching contribution to Victorian thinking about objectivity. His positioning of his past self makes space in the latter text for an inversion whereby Newman's objective stance is itself exposed to objectifying judgment. Furthermore, this inversive structure relies upon the interaction of two distinct forms of objectivity: a confident retrospective stance underpinned by a secure Catholic faith and, second, Newman's past self's anguished detachment from his own (Anglican) identity. As I argue in this essay's final pages, the *Apologia*'s uneasy inclusion of these two styles of detachment leaves the fissiparousness of Victorian objectivity more than ordinarily exposed.

1

Some recent work in the field of Victorian studies has—not without reason—foregrounded Newman's reservations about modern ideals of detachment.[7] Although several commentators have drawn attention to how his patterns of thought and belief were inflected by the incipient secular liberalism of his historical moment,[8] Newman has also served, in broader accounts of British intellectual life, as an illustrative deviation from some characteristic tendencies of Victorian modernity. Philip Davis, for example, has adduced Newman's insistence, in *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (1873), on persons' intimacy with their beliefs—on the existence of "a deep level where the belief is rooted in the person, the person inextricable from his or her belief"—to indicate his distance from "the liberal in John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*," for whom "[b]elief is . . . a voluntary extra, personal only as a matter of private choice or opinion."[9] The immediate occasion for Davis's remarks is a passage in *Grammar of Assent* where Newman insists on the vanity of what

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Thomas Nagel, in his philosophical account of objectivity, has called "[t]he ambition to get outside of ourselves."[10] Newman writes:

> It seems to me unphilosophical to speak of trusting ourselves. We are what we are, and we use, not trust our faculties. To debate about trusting in a case like this, is parallel to the confusion implied in wishing I had had a choice if I would be created or no, or speculating what I should be like, if I were born of other parents. . . . We are as little able to accept or reject our mental constitution, as our being. We have not the option; we can but misuse or mar its functions. We do not confront or bargain with ourselves; and therefore I cannot call the trustworthiness of the faculties of memory and reasoning one of our first principles.[11]

This passage would seem to distance Newman from the larger cultural project of Victorian objectivity. If one's "mental constitution" is inescapable, then adopting a distanced perspective on oneself and one's deep-seated commitments must, in principle, be impossible: as Elizabeth Louise Bevis Gallick puts it in her discussion of the *Grammar*, "we have no ability to adopt an external view of our own convictions."[12] Newman's "we" seems very different here from, for example, "the person of character" delineated by Mill, who "though surely full of opinion, is nonetheless quite astonishingly capable of momentary disinterestedness, of in some instances becoming a bystander even in relation to his own most precious convictions and pursuits such that he may even see fit to change his mind or even his actions."[13] My reading of Newman's earlier, autobiographical texts will ultimately insist on their separability from the *Grammar of Assent*. It is notable, however, that even this later text, seemingly inimical to the intellectual priorities of Victorian literary culture, in fact contains an (admittedly circuitous) affirmation of detachment. Newman writes in a subsequent chapter that we tend not to contemplate the possibility of losing our present beliefs: "What belief, as such, does imply is, not an intention never to change, but the utter absence of all thought, or expectation, or fear of changing."[14] His ideas about commitment are nonetheless shadowed, however, by the "thought" of change, a fact that becomes clearer in a subsequent discussion of "certitude": "if I am certain of a thing, I believe it will remain what I now hold it to be, even though my mind should have the bad fortune to let it drop."[15] In the latter of these sentences it seems that we are, after all, capable of the kind of hypothetical reflection that the strength of our commitment had, in the former, appeared to militate against. Furthermore, that very same strength—which, as it turns out, gives us greater confidence in our commitments than it gives us in ourselves[16]—seems wholly compatible

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with the committed subject conceiving of a version of him- or herself who does not hold his or her commitments. The subject is a bystander, then, not to his or her commitments but, by virtue of holding those commitments, to a crucial aspect of his or her identity (i.e., the fact that he or she holds them).[17] This brief comment in Newman's treatise opens a view onto the more significant depictions of self-detachment in *Difficulties* and in the *Apologia*.

The latter text's central argument is buttressed by a suggestion that Newman was a different person at different points in his life. In foregrounding discontinuity of identity, my reading of the *Apologia* seeks to modify a widespread (though not universal) critical emphasis on continuity.[18] Jonathan Loesberg offers an elaborate and theoretically sophisticated variation on this emphasis. Loesberg's reading hinges on Newman's account of self-consciousness as simultaneously "a divorced act of reasoning" and "a primary, unquestionable epistemological act"—that is, as both detached from and embedded within the self of which it is conscious.[19] I take this reading of Newman's philosophy to be concordant with my above discussion of the *Grammar of Assent*. Loesberg goes on to argue, however, that Newman's writings on consciousness form a theoretical framework for what he (Loesberg) takes to be the *Apologia*'s distinctive, if implausible, claims for continuity. Newman does not say, that is, "that while he at one time held certain religious beliefs, he had in all honesty changed them"; rather, we are to believe "that Newman's conversion involved no central change in any of his earlier beliefs, that his Catholicism was simply the working out of what he had always believed as an Anglican."[20] Loesberg is quite right in identifying a sense of continuity in Newman's memoir: even early on in the narrative, the *Apologia* attributes to Newman what Lawrence Poston calls "[a] disposition to accept ['Roman'] Catholicity," and the text shows Newman "uncovering" this disposition "as his consciousness expands."[21] But as John D. Barbour has noted, "There is . . . an interesting tension within the *Apologia* between Newman's suggestion that he does not really undergo a radical transformation but remains true to his original beliefs and his need to show that he *has* changed and was not secretly a Catholic during the Tractarian controversy" (that is, during Newman's years as a prominent Anglican polemicist).[22] Sister Mary Baylon Lenz has likewise identified an insistence on Newman's "Anglican fidelity" in the years preceding his conversion, and, as she seems to imply in distinguishing "Newman the Catholic" from "Newman the Anglican," it is his

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insistence on fidelity that prompts Newman to distance himself from his past self.[23] This distancing effect, I want to suggest, is an important counterpoint to the *Apologia*'s emphasis on continuity. As we will see in *Difficulties Felt by Anglicans*, it also played a more general role in Newman's framing of his lapsed beliefs.

The *Apologia* was written in response to Charles Kingsley's attack on Newman's character, an attack that included what Newman took to be an insinuation that he had been covertly advancing the interests of the Catholic Church while serving as an Anglican clergyman. As Frank M. Turner puts it, "In 1864 a chance occurrence allowed Newman to resurrect and publicly defend that nearly forgotten 'character of history,' his earlier self in the English Church."[24] A particular sticking point in the public controversy that prompted Newman to write his memoir was Kingsley's construal of one of Newman's Anglican sermons. Newman responded to this construal by ventriloquizing Kingsley in a pamphlet now printed as an appendix to the Penguin edition of the *Apologia*:

> [Kingsley] takes it for granted that the Sermon is the writing of a virtual or actual, of a conscious Roman Catholic; and is impatient at the very notion of having to prove it. Father Newman and the [Anglican] Vicar of St. Mary's are one and the same: there has been no change of mind in him; what he believed then he believes now, and what he believes now he believed then. To dispute this is frivolous; to distinguish between his past self and his present is subtlety, and to ask for proof of their identity is seeking opportunity to be sophistical.[25]

In order to defend himself from Kingsley's charges, Newman calls into question the transtemporal identity of Father Newman with the vicar of St. Mary's: as Jan B. Gordon puts it, a "bifurcation of self" serves in the *Apologia* as a legitimating tactic.[26] Vindicating Father Newman's good faith means vindicating the analogous good faith of the vicar of St. Mary's, but that very vindication requires showing that the latter was sincerely advocating the *wrong* faith. The question of confessional affiliation, foregrounded as it is by Newman's pairing of his past and present titles, overlaps with the issue of personal identity. Newman is in effect saying here: I was not being disingenuous when I delivered the sermon, because I was not (quite) the man I am now. We can, I think, legitimately, if imaginatively, extrapolate from this claim a more radical notion if we rephrase it in the third-person terms in which (as we shall see) Newman elsewhere referred to his past self: the man who delivered that sermon was not being disingenuous because he was not (quite)

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me. We can in this sense read Newman's polemic as the fulfillment of an obligation toward a separate person whom he considers to have been perilously wide of the mark on matters pertaining to salvation.[27] As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick said of Henry James's detached (yet also "eroticized") treatment of his younger self in the New York prefaces, "this figuration opens out a rich landscape of relational positionalities."[28]

Newman's defensive posture might be construed as a variation on the self-care ethic that he articulates in the main narrative while describing his refusal to steer other Anglicans through the gate that he himself was tentatively approaching: "Certainly to myself my own duty seemed clear. They that are whole can heal others; but in my case it was, 'Physician, heal thyself'" (*Apologia*, 198–99).[29] Again, Victorian conceptualizations of what Donna Haraway would later call "embodied objectivity" seem relevant here.[30] Michel Foucault wrote that "the principle of care of oneself" in post-Socratic philosophy "took the form of an attitude, a mode of behaviour; it became instilled in ways of living; it evolved into procedures, practices, and formulas that people reflected on, developed, perfected, and taught."[31] Newman's rhetorical positioning of his past self might be seen as just such a practice, an example of what Anderson—who also relates Victorian styles of detachment to "Foucault's practices of the self"—calls "[t]he attempt to embody subjective detachment within narrative or formal practices."[32] But Newman's specific invocation of "identity" and its attendant paradoxes also points to the complex temporality underlying the ethic that I extrapolated above.

The philosopher Derek Parfit argued that if one understands one's future selves to be less than fully continuous with one's present self, then one should regard those future selves as distinct persons to whom one owes moral consideration. We can intelligibly claim, in light of this notion, that certain actions that would otherwise seem only to be imprudent are in fact "morally wrong" because of the harms they will do to a future self who is not (quite) identical with the person performing them.[33] Parfit suggests an analogy with

> our special obligations to those to whom we stand in certain relations, such as our parents, children, pupils, patients, clients, or constituents. A person stands to himself in the future in another special relation, which we could claim to create similar special obligations.[34]

Newman is looking backward rather than forward, but the ethical stakes in his response to Kingsley are comparable to those in Parfit's argument.[35] The fundamental difference between Newman's successive

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affiliations is the basis on which he can imply a degree of discontinuity between his past and present selves, and this discontinuity can in turn be seen as the source of a "special" obligation. That is, the transtemporal difference between Newman's contrasting sets of beliefs is what enables him to frame his past self as (almost) a different person, and it is the space that subsists between different persons that might be said to produce an obligation of the kind Parfit describes.[36]

This engagement with the question of identity is what connects the *Apologia* to the broader conceptual projects that infused its historical moment: the ethical and affective dynamics discussed above ultimately derive from a particular kind of detachment. Newman's defensive attitude with regard to his past self's good name is aligned, that is, with an apparent detachment from that self. This is not to deny the text's evident ambivalence about detachment. As Davis notes, there are certainly passages where Newman seems intent on depicting "a self which is very much aware of being a creature, living inside a thing called human life, without being able to see it, like God, from above."[37] Such moments warrant Davis's aligning the *Apologia* with the *Grammar of Assent* and the latter text's insistence on embeddedness. As we have already seen, however, the later text is also marked by Newman's peculiar style of abstraction, even if this counterstrain is more apparent in the *Apologia*. There are, furthermore, suggestive rhetorical tensions and correspondences between the two texts. Immediately before the long passage from the *Grammar* quoted above, Newman allows talk of trusting certain of our faculties when such talk takes the form of "a figure of speech." As it happens, we see one such loose usage in the *Apologia*, in the form of a negative counterpart to Newman's assertion in the *Grammar* that "[i]t seems to me unphilosophical to speak of trusting ourselves" or "[t]o debate" our own trustworthiness: "from distrust of myself, I shrank from the thought, whenever it was brought home to me that I was influencing others" (*Apologia*, 199).[38]

On a related note, whereas the *Grammar* asserts that "[w]e do not confront or bargain with ourselves," Newman depicts the emergence of his memoir from a kind of bargain he made with himself: "I had long had a tacit understanding with myself, that, in the improbable event of a challenge being formally made to me, by a person of name, it would be my duty to meet it" (*Apologia*, 4). Such commonplace locutions might seem, in themselves, to imply a kind of objective stance, just as, in John Casey's account of objectivity and ethics, "[t]o be angry with oneself is to adopt something like an impersonal point of view."[39] In any case,

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these lines from the *Apologia* take on a heightened significance not only when we compare them with their counterparts in the *Grammar of Assent*, but also when we consider them alongside Newman's more radical exercises in life-writing. An obvious place to go here would be the texts published long after his death as his *Autobiographical Writings*. Of particular note is the "Autobiographical Memoir" (1874), which is written in the third person and which prompted its editor, Henry Tristram, to ask: "Does the history of literature furnish another example of a man, who has written, not his own autobiography, which has become common enough, but his own biography, as though the writer and his subject were distinct individuals?"[40] But I want instead to focus on the *Difficulties* lectures, which, while not primarily autobiographical, exhibit an extreme version of the self-detachment that the *Apologia* would later attempt more tentatively.

2

At various points in the *Difficulties Felt by Anglicans* lectures, Newman the convert makes his case against the Church of England by quoting and analyzing his earlier Anglican writings. Sometimes he refers to the author of those works in the third person, and he once argues against a self-quoted argument ("it has been urged") whose provenance is specified only in a footnote.[41] The published text of *Difficulties Felt by Anglicans*, which is framed as the written version of a series of orations, thereby teases its reader (regardless of what Newman really said to his audience) with the possibility that, in the case of the footnote, the original lecture was delivered without the quotation being attributed to its author by name. Such maneuvers serve once again to detach Newman from his past self and commitments, and they underline his affinity with a liberal culture whose emblematic figures were, by Hadley's account, depicted "sit[ting] in their private chambers writing measured accounts of other thinkers' ideas, indeed writing about their own ideas *as if* they were others' ideas."[42] In one lecture he ventriloquizes the claim that Anglican clergymen (or, more specifically, those belonging to the Anglo-Catholic party within the Church of England at whom his arguments are primarily directed) will have received subjective confirmations of the truth of their theological positions and of the rightness of their institutional position. Whichever "external facts" Newman adduces, whichever deft feats of argumentation he attempts to pull off, will (allegedly) be trumped by the Anglicans' "internal facts"—that is, their subjective

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experiences of sanctity within the Church of England (71). The stakes seem particularly high here, since this ventriloquized argument bears a close resemblance to Newman's own claim—ventured both before and after his conversion—that, as Ian Ker has put it, the foundations of belief "lay outside the range of logical argument and belonged to the inner life of the individual."[43] As his argument progresses, however, Newman refuses to concede on the point of religious subjectivity:

> I have no intention at all of evading their position,—I mean to attack it. I feel intimately what is strong in it, and I feel where it halts; so, to state their argument fairly, I will not extemporize words of my own, but I will express it in the language of a writer, who, when he so spoke, belonged to the Established Church. (74)

He goes on to quote from and then critique one of his Anglican sermons, which advances an experiential argument for the Church of England's viability. In seeking thereby "to attack" the experiential argument, the Catholic Newman seems to rely upon insights that are necessarily idiosyncratic: he appears to fall back, that is, on what Stephen Thomas calls the ostensibly "common-sense[] view that individuals have private access to their own experiences, which they, and they alone, can remember."[44] Newman has had all of the experiences that the Anglican Newman had and can therefore meet arguments from subjectivity on their own grounds. In tapping this vein of private subjectivity, the text seems to moderate the dramatic differentiation of Newman's Anglican words from "words of my own."[45] Yet this is not quite how the argument works itself out once the lengthy quotations are concluded. After offering his qualified assent to a "preference of internal evidences to those which are simply outward" (78–79), Newman implicitly plays the card of his own present-day subjective religiosity by claiming that "one inward evidence at least Catholics have, which this writer [the younger Newman] had not,—certainty" (79). The basis for this claim seems to be the fact that Newman has now been both an Anglican and a Catholic and is therefore in a position to compare the states of Anglican uncertainty and Catholic certainty.[46] His Anglican opponents may brandish their subjective experience at him, but his own subjective experience affords him an argumentative advantage in both quantitative and qualitative terms. He has had *more* experience than his Anglican self can be said to have had, because Newman ceased to be an Anglican and yet is still alive, and he has also had more *kinds* of experience—two rather than one—than an Anglican who has yet to cross the threshold can claim. But the

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experiential claim then suddenly recedes, albeit only (in the argument's larger context) temporarily:

> No one can read the series of arguments from which I have quoted, without being struck by the author's clear avowal of *doubt*, in spite of his own reasonings, on the serious subject which is engaging his attention. He longed to have faith in the National Church, and he could not. "What *want we*," he exclaims, "*but* faith in our Church? With faith we can do everything; without faith we can do nothing." So all these inward notes which he enumerates, whatever their *primâ facie* force, did not reach so far as to implant conviction even in his own breast; they did not, after all, prove to him that connection between the National Church and the spiritual gifts which he recognised in his party, which he fain would have established, and which they would fain establish to whom I am now addressing myself. (79–80)

This passage indicates one reason why self-quotation is so important to Newman's textual construction of objectivity: it enables a specific mode of public positioning. Michael Warner has influentially delineated a "set of assumptions" operative in the American "republican" public sphere that were

> developed in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, on the basis of which print could be taken as normally impersonal. By "normally impersonal," I mean that the reader does not simply imagine him- or herself receiving a direct communication or hearing the voice of the author. He or she now also incorporates *into the meaning of the printed object* an awareness of the potentially limitless others who may also be reading.[47]

Newman cannot be straightforwardly aligned with this impersonal conception, but the passage from *Difficulties Felt by Anglicans* quoted immediately above is nonetheless perversely reliant upon the logic of an impersonal public sphere in its implied account of reader response. In the republican model described by Warner, when members of the public make rational judgments about the printed materials they read, they are engaging in an activity to which either a direct acquaintance with the authors of those materials or an awareness of those authors' personal characteristics would be, at best, superfluous.[48] Newman's hermeneutic practice ascribes evidentiary decisiveness to authorial intention—an ascription that, according to Warner, was precluded by the impersonal understanding of print that produced, for example, the United States Constitution.[49] But Newman's claim that his past self's intentions are directly apprehensible from the published text nonetheless attests to his affinity with the republican model. In claiming that "[n]o one can

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read the series of arguments from which I have quoted . . . without being struck by" their import, he appeals specifically to an ideal of public perspicuity and generalizable reader response.[50]

In making this move, Newman temporarily surrenders the argumentative advantage derived from his personal knowledge of the vicar of St. Mary's. Even when he offers such claims as "[h]e longed to have faith in the National Church, and he could not," Newman sounds as though he is simultaneously offering a personal reminiscence *and* a literary critic's speculative deduction.[51] The evidence supporting his attribution of "*doubt*" is the text written by his past self, and this evidence, because of its public availability, affords Newman no epistemic advantage over his present audience.[52] Printed words are in this respect quite unlike the psychological data exclusively available to personal recollection: the impersonality peculiar to print enables Newman to engage his past self as though, to return to Tristram's formulation, "the [present] writer and his subject were distinct individuals."[53] His argument may be reliant upon his subjective state in the present—that is, his state of Catholic certainty—but for all the difference it makes, the vicar of St. Mary's could just as well be an imprint on a page as an epoch of Newman's personal history.

3

Newman's figurations of discontinuity in the lectures produce an unnervingly stark version of the kind of "distanced relation toward one's self" privileged by the Victorian project of detachment (Anderson, *Powers of Distance*, 4). One might object, however, that these moments all concern Newman's relation to opinions that he has, at the time of writing, abandoned. They do nothing to challenge fundamentally his later emphasis, in the *Grammar of Assent*, on what Steven Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels have called "the inescapability of belief": one's present commitments and perspectives surely remain a ubiquitous frame of reference.[54] The *Apologia* seems to mark this as an important distinction, albeit somewhat idiosyncratically. The famous opening of the final chapter emphasizes the stability and durability of Newman's Catholic faith (214). Newman here "contrasts"—as Barbour puts it—"the agonized perplexity and vacillation of his long deconversion [from Anglicanism] with his peaceful mind and conscience since becoming a Roman Catholic."[55] (Indeed, another critic has taken the "difference between" these psychological states as the basis for Newman's "aware[ness] that 'his past self

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and his present' have distinguishable identities.")[56] Newman's commitment to Anglicanism seems, that is, to have been strangely reflexive, as he implies in a number of striking formulations. During an early period of disquiet he wondered—notwithstanding his "confidence . . . in the grievousness of what I called the 'dominant errors' of Rome"—"how was I any more to have absolute confidence in myself? . . . how was I to be sure that I should always think as I thought now?" (93–94). In later describing his "growing dislike . . . to speak against the Roman Church herself or her formal doctrines," Newman claims that "I was very averse to speaking against doctrines, which might possibly turn out to be true, though at the time I had no reason for thinking they were" (119). In a similar spirit, he writes in the penultimate chapter that, as his commitment to his nominal membership in the Church of England waned, he had "[a] strong presentiment that my existing opinions would ultimately give way, and that the grounds of them were unsound" (195). These lines may fall short of attributing to Newman the impossible "position from which we can see our beliefs without really believing them" dismissed by Knapp and Michaels,[57] but they nonetheless suggest that the Anglican Newman's growing doctrinal misgivings afforded him a detached relationship with his own Anglican identity. This style of detachment marks a clear contrast with the opening of the *Apologia*'s final chapter, where Newman seems wholly disinclined to adopt a detached view of his adopted commitments. It seems that, for the Catholic Newman writing the *Apologia*, a perspective on his present commitments analogous to the one he adopts on his past—and to the one he adopted toward his Anglican identity *during* that past—is, likewise, both inaccessible and, happily, unnecessary.[58] The difference between Newman's Anglican reflexivity and Catholic security is underlined by the epistemological claim advanced toward the end of the "strong presentiment" paragraph: "Certitude of course is a point, but doubt is a progress; I was not near certitude yet. Certitude is a reflex action; it is to know that one knows. Of that I believe I was not possessed, till close upon my reception into the Catholic Church" (196). Newman's still point of certainty seems, then, to coincide with—even if it is not necessarily the cause of—a semi-detached view of the "progress" of his past beliefs.[59] Again, however, this detached view has little in common with the liberal strain of self-detachment by means of which modern subjects detach themselves from their present commitments. Newman's seemingly illiberal objectivity does not completely dominate the *Apologia*'s autobiographical discourse, however. William Myers has described Newman's editorial

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recontextualizations of his work in the *Apologia* as exhibiting a career-long "habit of self-quotation and retelling in an apparently unending pursuit of self-definition and self-explanation." Because "comment itself is a text, and calls implicitly for further comment . . . , the possibility of definitive explanation vanishes."[60] This account suggests that the text jeopardizes its ostensibly objective perspective because of its implicitly prospective structure. I would like to suggest, though, that a more interesting tension within the text derives from the retrospective character of Newman's narration. By opening a view onto his past self's detached style of commitment, Newman admits a competing form of objectivity to that embodied in his secure narratorial stance.[61]

In a much-discussed passage, Newman recalls a moment in 1839 when his confidence in the Anglican Church was shaken:

> After a while, I got calm, and at length the vivid impression upon my imagination faded away. What I thought about it on reflection, I will attempt to describe presently. I had to determine its logical value, and its bearing upon my duty. Meanwhile, so far as this was certain,—I had seen the shadow of a hand upon the wall. It was clear that I had a good deal to learn on the question of the Churches, and that perhaps some new light was coming upon me. He who has seen a ghost, cannot be as if he had never seen it. The heavens had opened and closed again. The thought for the moment had been, "The Church of Rome will be found right after all"; and then it had vanished. My old convictions remained as before. (116)

Jerome H. Buckley argues that this is at best a qualified "epiphany," and that it is therefore consistent with a sense that "Newman . . . is intent on presenting an orderly development, a consistent evolution with no sudden or 'fickle' reversals."[62] A consistent evolution would seem to militate against my emphasis on discontinuity of identity.[63] Yet something strange happens during Newman's epiphany, precisely because of the vacancy—to recall the Wordsworthian term cited by Weiskel—it creates between Newman the less-than-wholly-secure Anglican and Newman the (truly) secure Catholic. This gap enables a reframing of Newman's narratorial perspective.[64] If we take as authoritative the textualized "thought" that Newman here attributes to his past self, Newman did not temporarily become a Catholic at this (epiphanic) moment. Rather, he became temporarily convinced that he would at some point become a Catholic or, at least, that the Church would at some point be "found right" by some person or by some group of people (the latter presumably including Newman).[65] The uncertainty here derives from an impersonal passive construction ("will be found right") that, to borrow a phrase from

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Sharon Cameron, seems to "represent[] experience and affect as independent of any person or entity to whom experience and affect could be referred."[66] Anticipating the logic of detachment we have seen play out in Newman's postconversion texts, the Anglican Newman whose thought this is seems to anticipate his future "religious opinions" without fully identifying with them as opinions that he will hold himself.[67] Just as "Father Newman" will elsewhere write about his past self as if he were a different person—and we perhaps see a hint of that rhetorical move in the analogously impersonal construction "The thought for the moment had been"—here the Anglican Newman, in receiving an intimation of his future beliefs, seems, notwithstanding the emotional freight of this moment, to regard those beliefs from a slight distance. One might say—adapting Thomas Pfau's remark from a rather different context—that Newman's autobiographical "specularity. . . yields to a potentially interminable reflexivity as the seeing subject abruptly becomes conscious of itself as the objectified and alienated focal point of a disembodied gaze."[68]

This inversion is consistent with what I earlier identified as the perversity of Newman's project of vindication. He is justifying his past self by showing that he was wrong—that he was in a state of error, indeed, that imperiled his personal salvation. The text's governing tension is nicely encapsulated by Thomas Vargish's ambivalently "tragic" reading and by Martin J. Svaglic's claim that "the *Apologia* is the drama of a[n Anglican] soldier who, through defeat and submission, at last finds peace."[69] These interpretations remind us that, while Newman's conversion is the happy ending of his narrative, the project of vindicating his past self means he has to emphasize that this happy ending would once have seemed to him a fall into error. The logic of the text's overall argument dictates that the Anglican Newman must once have regarded conversion as undesirable.[70] Newman sometimes tries, as we have seen, to separate his past and present selves, but in the *Apologia* he also effectively incorporates the former's perspective on the latter as well as *vice versa*.[71] Newman's life-writing thereby reframes his present beliefs by exposing the objective autobiographer's standpoint to reciprocal scrutiny.

4

It would be wrong, however, to treat this putting-under-strain as a reason to dissociate Newman from the broader cultural projects with which I have sought here to align him. The text in effect allows us to witness

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what Pierre Bourdieu described as the kind of "reflection . . . that consists in objectifying the subject of objectification."[72] Bourdieu claims that it is multiple subjects' "mutual objectification," rather than the "turning of subjectivities upon themselves," that stimulates "progress towards greater reflexivity": "No one can forge weapons to be used against his opponents without having those weapons immediately used against him by them or by others."[73] Newman's framing of his past self seems to me to circumvent Bourdieu's obstacles to the "turning of subjectivities upon themselves." Not only is it true that, as Stephen Thomas puts it, Newman in his Catholic writings "turns his guns upon his former self,"[74] but, as we saw in the passage quoted above (and in a qualified departure from Bourdieu's principle), the Catholic Newman's weapons are also effectively used against him by the spectre of his Anglican self.[75] This dynamic anticipates the logic underpinning the *Grammar*'s account of an "utter absence of all thought, or expectation, or fear of changing." Newman's confidence in his present beliefs, a confidence that enables him to detach himself from his past self, gives rise to a retrospective structure whereby those present beliefs are themselves viewed from a detached perspective. In this admittedly counterintuitive respect, the *Apologia* corresponds, presumably in spite of Newman's intentions, very closely to the paradigms of Victorian objectivity: detachment here emerges from seemingly unpropitious conditions.[76]

The "mutual objectification" staged in the *Apologia* should also alert us, however, to the complexity of Victorian detachment more generally. As I implied above, what we see in the autobiography is a confrontation between Newman's Anglican detachment, which enabled him to observe the tendencies of his unstable commitments, and the Catholic Newman's detachment, which is compatible with an emphatically stable faith. This confrontation is, again, evocative of broader tendencies in Victorian literary culture. Anderson's highly influential account of Victorian detachment contends that "both Victorian and contemporary thinkers generate false oppositions and exclusions in their consideration of differing modes and practices of detachment" (24). Anderson's proposed solution to such false oppositions is "a more capacious understanding of critique" (178), but for my purposes her most resonant insight, which is repeatedly confirmed in readings of Charlotte Brontë, Matthew Arnold, and others, is that "the Victorians played various forms of detachment against one another, casting some as progressive and ennobling, and others as dangerous and corrupting" (23). Subsequent work in Victorian studies, some of it avowedly inspired by Anderson's research,

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has (even) further expanded our understanding of Victorian detachment by reading it into seemingly incongruous practices such as immersive or erotically charged novel reading.[77] The conceptual fissiparousness of objectivity has likewise been underlined by important work on the history of science (work that has itself informed the study of Victorian literature in recent years). Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison have shown not only that scientific objectivity is a "recent and [historically] contingent" phenomenon,[78] but also that objectivity has itself demonstrably meant different things at different times: it "is a multifarious, mutable thing, capable of new meanings and new symbols."[79] This multifariousness can, moreover, give rise to conflicts between different modes: "the highest expressions of objectivity in one mode may seem worthless when judged by the standards of another mode."[80]

Newman's case illustrates these dynamics particularly clearly because we see him in the *Apologia* shifting, through his conversion, from one such "mode" to another.[81] Such shifts complicate the kind of schematic view of objectivity offered at one point by Nagel: "An advance in objectivity requires that already existing forms of understanding should themselves become the object of a new form of understanding, which also takes in the objects of the original forms."[82] For Nagel, "the distinction between more subjective and more objective views is . . . a matter of degree," and he matches this claim with an analogy that makes his emphasis on quantitative difference particularly clear: "We may think of reality as a set of concentric spheres, progressively revealed as we detach gradually from the contingencies of the self."[83] The difference between Newman's Anglican reflexivity and his Catholic detachment would seem, by contrast, to be qualitative. Although the *Apologia*'s structure foregrounds the former's supersession by the latter, it is less clear that, in moving from one kind of objectivity to another, Newman's perspective has become *more* (or, indeed, less) objective. Nagel's broader analysis of objectivity is, I should note, more nuanced than the "concentric spheres" model might seem in isolation to suggest, but a closer gloss on Newman's conversion can nonetheless be found in Stanley Fish's essay "Critical Self-Consciousness," a text that has sometimes been cited antagonistically by defenders of nineteenth-century objectivity.[84] Fish writes that "any gain in awareness is simultaneously a loss. . . . [T]he passing from one point of view to another deprives you of whatever insights and certainties flow from the point of view you have 'transcended' (in quotations because it is transcendent only in relation to a new set of constraints)."[85] Although the shift we see in Newman—the title of

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whose 1847 conversion novel *Loss and Gain* is felicitously recalled by Fish's rhetorical balancing of "loss" and "gain" here—might better be described as a shift from detached uncertainty to detached certainty, Fish helps us to see that the anguished consciousness of Newman's Anglican self (at least as it is depicted in the *Apologia*) is different in kind, as well as in degree, from the narratorial perspective from which that consciousness is made available to us as readers.

It is this dynamic that, in turn, makes Newman's autobiographical texts potentially valuable to scholarly understandings of Victorian objectivity. As the *Difficulties* lectures attest, Newman's treatment of his past self renders him surprisingly legible in the terms of his broader cultural context. But the *Apologia*, though its rhetorical pyrotechnics are more restrained than those of the earlier work, ends up taking us further. The logic of the *Apologia*'s argument requires a degree of differentiation between Newman's past and present selves. As we have seen, however, Newman's past self also practices his own distinct style of detachment, a style to which Newman's present self is implicitly exposed. By staging an encounter between these two stances—both putatively objective, but very differently constituted—Newman provides a surprisingly compelling figure for the tensions attendant upon Victorian detachment.

Notes

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express my appreciation for the financial support I received from a Clare Mellon Fellowship and from Yale University while conducting my research.

1. See Anderson, *Powers of Distance;* and Hadley, *Living Liberalism.*
2. See also George Levine's observation, in his study of scientific objectivity in Victorian literary culture, that "scientific ideals of impersonality are entwined with the ethical; objectivity and dispassion are saturated with feeling" (*Dying to Know*, 132). For Levine, "saturated with feeling" means both that there were affective reasons for adopting objective stances and that objective stances produced distinctive affects of their own. Similar issues are considered in Janis McLarren Caldwell's "Thick Narrative," which seeks "to complicate the all too frequent portrayal of an emotionless, impersonal nineteenth-century objectivity with [a] substantive, affective, even 'thick' dimension" (1), and in Pearl Brilmyer's essay "Impassioned Objectivity," which notes the relevance to Victorian studies of the Nietzschean idea of "objective description" as something that "aggregates, multiplies, and differentiates affects." Also relevant here is Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison's argument that objectivity can be seen primarily as expressing itself in specific practices. These practices in turn called for or presupposed types of persons capable of sustaining them. "[S]cientific objectivity never undertook to erase the self, even the self of [modern] subjectivity, completely. Rather, its practices, like all techniques of the self, cultivated certain aspects of the self at the expense of others" (*Objectivity*, 381). For an account of Newman's views on objectivity that partially overlaps with these discussions, see Mary Katherine Tillman's sketch of his thought ("Newman's Quasi-Romantic Self," 77–79).
3. I borrow this term from Caldwell, "Thick Narrative," 45. Caldwell's interest in Victorian autobiography as exploring "both a technique and an experience of objectivity—or rather a search for experience *as* technique" (49–50) is similar to mine here. My thanks to the anonymous reader who suggested the invocation of the relevant passage in *The Prelude* in this context. My formulation "the historicity of Newman's detachment" is adapted from the same reader's comments, which also informed this paragraph as a whole.
4. Freccero, "Introduction," 5–6 (cited in Loesberg, *Fictions of Consciousness*, 12–13).

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5. Weiskel, *Romantic Sublime*, 170; see also 143–44 (Weiskel cited in Pfau, *Wordsworth's Profession*, 332). The logic of Weiskel's reading of *The Prelude*, which points to opposing "poles of the Romantic sublime" that "remain dialectically confronted, side by side in the center of Wordsworth's greatest poem" (204) bears some resemblance, as will become evident, to my account of mutually confrontational modes of objectivity in Newman.
6. Cf. Gauri Viswanathan's positioning of Newman within a broader account of the politics of conversion in the nineteenth century. Viswanathan contends that "[t]he culture in which conversion occurs lends its own structural features to the content of religious experience. In turn, the heightened religious subjectivity makes visible the range of meanings embedded in cultural forms." She interprets "the figure of the convert as dramatically making visible" the "disparate, heterogeneous formations" of secular culture (*Outside the Fold*, 39, 43). Laurence Poston has made a more recent case for "what is *Victorian* about Newman" (17) in his book *The Antagonist Principle*.
7. For examples of contrasting views closer to my own, see Teresa Huffman Traver's "Losing a Family," which associates Newman with Anderson's theorization of detachment (139, 140–41 n.5), and W. David Shaw's literary-critical account of "Newman's understanding of faith," which situates that understanding within a general Victorian concern with objectivity (*Victorians and Mystery*, 221).
8. See, for example, Pattison, *Great Dissent*, 5–6; Viswanathan, *Outside the Fold*, 44–72; and Turner, *John Henry Newman*, 641. Pattison writes suggestively that, "looked at one way, Newman was the creature of the liberalism he despised" (5; partially cited in Pfau, *Minding the Modern*, 62), and, significantly for my purposes, he also later attributes to Newman a specifically illiberal form of detachment (210–11) and labels the *Apologia* "an anti-liberal autobiography" (204). For an earlier and systematically argued case for Newman's "modernity," see Weatherby, *Cardinal Newman in His Age*.
9. Davis, *The Victorians*, 434. In an earlier essay, Davis refers his own understanding of the *Apologia* to the *Grammar of Assent*, whose "very ancient and rooted sense of self" he contrasts with "Mill's modern progressivism." According to Davis, "Mill incorporated in himself what Newman would not allow spectators of his life to adopt for him: the view from outside his own life, the external survey" ("Why Do We Remember?" 97, 96). George Levine, while discussing a selection of Victorian autobiographies (including Mill's) that he sees as

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embodying "a scientific perspective," invokes the *Apologia* as an outlier that helps to clarify the other texts' mutual resemblances (87–89). Notably (and although Newman is not an explicit point of comparison at this point), Levine contends that each of the other authors he discusses writes as "a distanced narrator of his own life" (*Dying to Know*, 94; for related discussions see Olney, *Metaphors of Self*, 182–202; and Peterson, *Victorian Autobiography*, 159–91 [both cited in *Dying to Know*]). As will become apparent, my reading of the last chapter of the *Apologia* overlaps with Levine's claim that the religiously inflected "narrative of scientific epistemology" tries finally to "carve out stability and authority from . . . flux" (*Dying to Know*, 86). I should also note that, in an earlier study, Levine characterizes Newman's work as "characteristically Victorian" (albeit counterintuitively so): "it is possible to see in [his] very opposition to most of what was happening religiously, politically, and socially certain attitudes and dispositions he shared not only with the great objectors but with the very people and things he opposed" (*Boundaries*, 165, 166). Levine goes on to comment on the "ways in which Newman and John Stuart Mill—and, for that matter, the whole secular development of Victorian thought—can be seen as related" (*Boundaries*, 173–74; paraphrasing Stephen, "Newman's Theory of Belief").

10. Nagel, *View from Nowhere*, 6.
11. Newman, *Grammar*, 66–67 (Davis does not quote the last three sentences excerpted here).
12. Bevis Gallick, *(Anti)Social Life*, 187; I am grateful to Dr. Gallick for her permission to cite her work here. Characterizing what Paul H. Schmidt has called Newman's "perspectivism"—an attitude that, importantly, "retains a sense that despite the limitations of perspective people are still able to attain knowledge" (Schmidt, "Gadamer's Hermeneutics," 7, 8)—as unmodern in the way that I do here, and as Davis does implicitly (see n.9), is, of course, not uncontentious. For Christopher Herbert, the modernity of the *Grammar of Assent* consists precisely in its place within a relativistic current of nineteenth-century thought (*Victorian Relativity*, 121–22, 125; see also Weatherby, *Cardinal Newman*, 135–231). Without wishing to deny the textual evidence on which such readings rest, I want to stress here the ways in which Newman's modernity is exemplified instead by a counterstrain in his thinking, one that is at odds with his claims for embeddedness and that is more congruent with what Hadley calls "liberal detachment."

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13. Hadley, *Living Liberalism*, 71 (Hadley's reading of John Stuart Mill's *Autobiography* in fact overlaps in some respects with my reading of the *Apologia*; see 102–3). My use of the term "liberal" in what follows refers to the ethos of critical self-detachment—of "ardent detachment from one's own opinions" (314)—described by Hadley; it is not my intention here to add to the body of commentary concerning the extent to which Newman's substantive views can be described as liberal (cf. David Wayne Thomas's "distinction between regulative and substantive liberalism" in *Cultivating Victorians,* 15).
14. Newman, *Grammar*, 160. Davis, who notes that "uncertainty and change" are not thereby precluded (*The Victorians*, 434), and Ferreira (*Doubt and Religious Commitment,* 102) also cite this sentence, with Ferreira making a related point to mine about Newman's subsequent elaborations. See also *Doubt and Religious Commitment* (62–70) for Ferreira's valuable discussion of objectivity as a philosophical topic in Newman's writing.
15. Newman, *Grammar*, 164. Ferreira also cites this sentence (*Doubt and Religious Commitment*, 103).
16. Cf. Hadley on the "liberal ambition of disinterest": "one must be oneself and also believe in something other than oneself" (*Living Liberalism*, 301; see also 169 for a related discussion to mine).
17. Cf. Andrew H. Miller's discussion of "vicarious" self-relations and the "generalized perspective" in the thought of the Victorian philosopher Henry Sidgwick: "One effect of this [generalized] perspective is a peculiar weakening of the bond between myself and my convictions: holding my opinions at arm's length, able to see how they appear to others, I can conceive of myself without them" (Miller, *Burdens of Perfection*, 59). Miller is adapting terms of Sidgwick's here (see 57). George Levine's discussion of Newman and doubt is also relevant in this context (*Boundaries,* 210–11).
18. For an extended discussion of the *Apologia* in terms of discontinuity, see Paul H. Schmidt's "The Struggle for Continuity," which draws upon Philippe Lejeune's theorization of third-person autobiography (see n.40, n.71 to this essay). Whereas Schmidt sees discontinuity as a threat that the *Apologia* seeks to circumscribe, I see it as a figurative aid to Newman's overall argument. Other readings that anticipate my engagement with discontinuity include Ryan, "Grammatology of Assent"; and Olney, *Metaphors of Self* (see 40, 226–27). Ryan writes regarding the *Apologia* that "[i]n order to know itself at all, to constitute itself as an object for itself, the self must be absent from itself

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'outside itself, in itself'" (153). For a more general discussion of continuity of identity in relation to "conversion narratives," see Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 166–67.

19. Loesberg, *Fictions of Consciousness*, 120.
20. Loesberg, *Fictions of Consciousness*, 132.
21. Poston, *Antagonist Principle*, 186.
22. Barbour, *Versions of Deconversion*, 31.
23. Lenz, "Rhetoric," 96 (see also 82–83), 101.
24. Turner, *John Henry Newman*, 4. Turner is quoting a letter of Newman's here.
25. Newman, *Apologia*, 431–32. All subsequent references to this edition are noted parenthetically in the text.
26. Gordon, "Wilde and Newman," 184. Heather Henderson likewise comments (shortly before citing part of the passage quoted above) that Newman "was concerned precisely to prove that he had indeed changed" (*Victorian Self*, 20).
27. See also Deen's description of the *Apologia* as "a confession of error" in light of a genuine change of heart. Deen's reference to a "wrestling between the new will and the old" in Newman's and Augustine's conversion narratives has some bearing on my argument later in this essay, although I do not frame matters in terms of will (Deen, "Rhetoric," 227). Linda H. Peterson, I think, implies something close to my reading in attributing "tact" to Newman's account of "his Anglican past"—a past that included beliefs he sees "in retrospect as heresy, as a source of spiritual death" (*Victorian Autobiography*, 113). On Newman's collapsing of his identity into successive ecclesiastical titles in his *Autobiographical Writings*, see Poston, *Antagonist Principle*, 189.
28. Sedgwick, "Queer Performativity," 8.
29. Cf. Bevis Gallick's reading of this passage (194), which follows her observation that, elsewhere in the text, Newman's style figures him as "both the acting subject (the 'I' who deliberates) and the object of his own concern and attention" (*(Anti)Social Life*, 190).
30. Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," 581.
31. Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, iii, 44–45. Foucault argues elsewhere that the long tradition of "the so-called literature of the self" should be contextualized among "practices of the self" more generally ("On the Genealogy of Ethics," 369).
32. Anderson, *Powers of Distance*, 179. All subsequent references to this edition are noted parenthetically in the text. See also Clinton

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Machann on the *Apologia*: "Because of the delicate balance between change and continuity [. . .] the relationship between narrator and protagonist in this autobiography is precarious" (23).

33. Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, 319.
34. Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, 319.
35. I should note that Parfit's argument here builds on his sense that one can "subdivide a person's life into that of successive selves." He writes that "my earlier self may seem alien to me now. If I fail to identify with that earlier self, I am in some ways thinking of that self as like a different person" (Reasons and Persons, 319). See also A. Miller, *Burdens of Perfection*, 231 n.7 on the relevance of Parfit's work to the role played by "past selves" in the nineteenth-century British novel.
36. See also Ricoeur's discussion of "the work of otherness at the heart of selfhood" (*Oneself as Another*, 318; see 297–356), of the role of "the other" in moral obligation (266–68), and of a "retrospective dimension of responsibility" (295; see also 353–54). For a related application of Ricoeur's work, see Caldwell, "Thick Narrative," esp. 23–29, 126.
37. Davis, "Why Do We Remember?" 96.
38. Cf. Ferreira's commentary on the *Grammar*'s discussion of trusting one's faculties. Ferreira contextualizes this discussion among contrasting uses of "the language of 'trust'" in some of Newman's other writings (*Scepticism and Reasonable Doubt,* 212; see 212–23).
39. J. Casey, *Pagan Virtue*, 164.
40. Newman, *Autobiographical Writings*, 26. Tristram goes on to note the document's related aspiration "to be objective and impartial," though he does not seem to think that this aspiration is consistently realized (26). See also Olney on the disconcerting effect of "the identicalness and the separateness of writer and subject in the 'Memoir'" and Philippe Lejeune's essay "Autobiography in the Third Person" for a stimulating theoretical account of the eponymous genre. Lejeune engages several issues that I consider in this essay, including distance, impartiality, and the function of proper names.
41. Newman, *Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans*, 313–14. All subsequent references to this edition are noted parenthetically in the text. I owe my notice of the interest of *Difficulties* and its use of the third person to Ker, *John Henry Newman*, 356.
42. Hadley, *Living Liberalism*, 171.
43. Ker, *John Henry Newman*, 290.
44. Thomas, *Newman and Heresy*, 218.

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45. Cf. Deen, "Rhetoric," 229. See also Bevis Gallick for a reading of Newman, and the *Apologia* in particular, in the context of a Victorian "tension between religious belief and public life" (11). Bevis Gallick's nuanced account ultimately places greater weight on Newman's valuation of privacy than mine does, and implicitly attributes to Newman a more fraught relation to the kind of liberalism described by Hadley, whom Bevis Gallick also cites (23–25).
46. Cf. Olney, *Metaphors of Self*, 76.
47. Warner, *Letters*, xiii. Cf. Hadley's discussion of "alienated" opinion in Victorian periodical-culture, which also draws on Warner's work (*Living Liberalism*, 155). Ryan offers a similarly "alienated" reading of the *Apologia* itself, as when he writes: "Time's differentiating movement gives writing its authority as 'independent testimony,' but it also betrays a certain expropriation of subjectivity in writing" ("Grammatology of Assent," 138; see also 153–55).
48. See esp. the account of third-person self-reference in Warner, *Letters*, 42–43.
49. Warner, *Letters*, 109, 115.
50. See Anger, *Victorian Interpretation*, 30–35 for a somewhat different account of authorial intention in Newman's hermeneutics.
51. Cf. Loesberg, *Fictions of Consciousness*, 169.
52. Again, it is worth noting a contrast here with aspects of Newman's theological outlook. See William J. Wainwright on what Newman understood to be Christianity's evidential basis: "Newman is *not* an evidentialist if evidentialism requires stateable and publicly accessible evidence that compels assent regardless of a person's moral temper" (81; cited in Aquino, "Philosophical Receptions," 65).
53. Cf. Schmidt (adapting terms of Charles Frederick Harrold), who identifies other texts in which Newman treats his past writings in this way: "another mark of his feeling of discontinuity [of identity] lies in the fact that in [these texts] he refers to himself in the third person, as if 'the Author,' now nameless, who once wrote, is someone other than himself" ("The Struggle for Continuity," 129; see Harrold, *John Henry Newman*, 217).
54. Knapp and Michaels, "Against Theory," 738. For a useful account of such issues in Newman's epistemology, see chapter 4 of G. Casey, *Natural Reason*.
55. Barbour, *Versions of Deconversion*, 27.
56. Buckler, "The *Apologia* as Human Experience," 72. Barbour, in a reading that attends to several of the same passages as mine does,

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meanwhile suggests that the emphasis on certainty in the *Apologia*'s final chapter shields Newman's "present convictions" from such skeptical readerly inquiries as: "[h]aving lost faith once, how can an autobiographer be sure he will not undergo a reversal or revolution of fundamental beliefs?" (27).

57. Knapp and Michaels, "Against Theory," 739; cited in D. Thomas, *Cultivating Victorians*, 192 n.55.
58. Cf. Olney, *Metaphors of Self*, 97.
59. Cf. Henderson on the generic "conversion autobiography": "the autobiographer has found a fixed resting place of certainty and authority from which to look back, judge, and write about his former self" (73).
60. Myers, "Autobiography," 107.
61. My argument here runs along similar lines to Donald Capps's claim that, while the *Apologia*'s final chapter implies a level of stable "detachment" derived from Newman's "distinction . . . between his identities as narrator and as protagonist," this position creates the conditions for its own subversion: Newman "is not altogether confident that his present convictions could not [like his past convictions] be ironically undermined by subsequent situations which he cannot foresee" ("Newman's Truth," 9–10). My emphasis is somewhat different, however: it seems to me that it is, perversely, the very stability of Newman's final detachment that enables the *Apologia* to admit a competing perspective (namely his past self's detached style of commitment) without thereby jeopardizing Newman's Catholic commitments—rather as, in the *Grammar*'s discussion of certainty, one can both hold firmly to a commitment *and* imagine a future version of oneself that has, through fault or error, drifted from that commitment. The qualitative difference between the two styles of detachment at work in the *Apologia* is that one is associated with certainty, the other with uncertainty. As Shaw puts it, "His very assurance of closure makes him open, admitting into his prose anything disquieting that happened in the past" (*Victorians and Mystery*, 250).
62. Buckley, "Newman's Autobiography," 105.
63. Cf. A. O. J. Cockshut, *Art of Autobiography*, 210–11.
64. My reading in this paragraph of Newman's transitional vacancy and the reframing it enables is analogous to Olney's reading of an equivalent moment in Mill's *Autobiography* (*Metaphors of Self*, 234); see also Peterson, *Victorian Autobiography*, 112–13 on "moment[s] of transition"

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and suspended commitment in Newman's and St. Augustine's autobiographies.

65. Cf. Loesberg's discussion of the same episode, which was prompted by Newman's sense of an affinity between his Anglican commitments and the Monophysite heresy: "For Newman, Monophysiste is a synecdoche for the larger term *heretic*, a label no heretic, of course, applies to himself. . . . [T]he act of recognizing his heresy, of seeing that he *was* a Monophysite, contains within it the desire to change, to be other than a Monophysite" (*Fictions of Consciousness*, 159).
66. Cameron, *Impersonality*, 145; see also 6, 52, 88–89. Cameron's book has a strong general bearing on some of the issues addressed in this essay, including subjects' discontinuity of (and with) experience and their adoption of externalized perspectives on themselves. See, in particular, her "temporally discontinuous" reading of Emerson (62).
67. For a related reading of an "impersonal passive" in Wordsworth, see Logan, "Moral Implications," 188–89. My thanks to Dr. Logan for permission to cite his work here.
68. Pfau, *Wordsworth's Profession*, 125. Pfau is here glossing Joseph Leo Koerner's account of "autoscopy (the hallucination of seeing oneself)" (Koerner, *Caspar David Friedrich*, 160–62). Bernadette Guthrie has advanced a rather different argument from mine about how Newman's thought "suggests an objective distancing from the present moment, one which allows for its *reading*," and of how Newman "assigns agency to the past: the dead come to read the living" ("Literary Re-Production"). My thanks to Professor Guthrie for her permission to cite her work here. For an analogous argument to mine here, see J. Hillis Miller's discussion of Ruskin's autobiography, *Praeterita*. Miller identifies a slip in what he takes to be that text's project: a "scrupulous depersonalizing of the past self for the sake of affirming the living presence of the speaking self and its mastery over the past as an objective source of amusement and instruction." Ruskin's aspiration to write an "impersonal" account is complicated, Miller writes, by his reliance upon the trope of prosopopoeia: "One must"—as an autobiographer—"summon up the past 'I' in order to reach the scenes that past 'I' witnessed, the thoughts he thought" ("Prosopopoeia," 133–34). See also Caldwell, who seeks to re-assess "the [*Praeterita*] narrator's supposed detachment from the young Ruskin" by way of Ricoeur's account of identity in *Oneself as Another* ("Thick Narrative," 147). Caldwell engages closely with Miller's argument in her discussion.

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69. Vargish, *Newman*, 181; cf. Deen, "Rhetoric," 235; Svaglic, "Structure," 144 (cited in Connolly, "The *Apologia*," 119; see also Connolly, 120). Connolly's reading of the *Apologia* also gives us a Newman whose handling of temporality expresses a kind of "spiritual detachment" (120).
70. Cf. Parfit's discussion of some comparable psychological dynamics (*Reasons and Persons*, 301). See also Cockshut on Newman's early aversion to Catholicism and on conversion more generally—"the former attraction or repulsion comes to seem to the mind infinitely remote, like an experience in a former life" (*Art of Autobiography*, 181)—and Vargish, *Newman*, 177–78.
71. Paul Michael Privateer likewise reads into Descartes's philosophical writings an "autobiographical" process whereby different components of authorial subjectivity objectify one another (*Romantic Voices*, 15–16). Nicholas Dames meanwhile discerns a scene of past and present selves "meeting in a seemingly spontaneous act of memory" in Dickens's *David Copperfield* (*Amnesiac Selves*, 147), and Lynda Haverty Rugg offers a similar reading of an incident in August Strindberg's *Alone*. Thanks to "the self-reflexive nature of the narrator's gaze" in the latter text, "the narrator," according to Rugg, "feels the cold impact of his own eyes" (*Picturing Ourselves*, 128). Michael Warner meanwhile evokes a dynamic closely related to Newman's in a recent autobiographical essay: "From the religious vantage of my childhood and adolescence, I am one of Satan's agents. From my current vantage, that former self was exotically superstitious" ("Tongues Untied," 216). See also Lejeune's argument that the life-writers can never really incorporate independent perspectives on themselves: "One cannot really get outside oneself, i.e., represent on equal terms with one's own point of view an attitude different from one's own" ("Autobiography in the Third Person," 41). Lejeune offers as qualified exceptions collaborative texts and partially novelized autobiographies featuring fictitious narrators, but he sees the nature of collaboration as a limiting factor: "The presence of completely antagonistic points of view excludes a priori the possibility of a shared plan for writing overlapping autobiographies" (42). My point about the *Apologia* is that the exigencies of Newman's conversion narrative—his need to downplay continuity of belief on certain points of doctrine—provides for precisely this kind of antagonistic interchange within a solo-authored text. Olney makes more allowance than Lejeune for the autobiographer's capacity to go "outside and beyond" his or her "point of view" by way of critical

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reflection, but it is unclear how highly he rates Newman in this regard (*Metaphors of Self*, 42–43). Olney also addresses interactions between differentiated past, present, and future selves in some of his other readings (55–57, 233, 304).

72. Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, 10 (cited in Anderson, *Powers of Distance*, 30). See also Anderson's reading of *Little Dorrit*, in which one character's "stance of objective assessment" becomes, in "an implicit *mis-en-abîme*," "objectively readable" by the narrator (*Powers of Distance*, 83). Dickens's novel is one of a number of Victorian texts that Anderson sees as staging conflicts, on the level either of plot or form, between different "forms of detachment."
73. Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, 119; cf. C. Levine, *Serious Pleasures*, 199.
74. Thomas, *Newman and Heresy*, 4.
75. Thomas argues that Newman's retrospective narratives of his conversion are explicitly reliant upon an irony analogous to (albeit ultimately less complex than) the one I describe here. In texts such as *Difficulties of Anglicans* and the *Apologia*, Newman "presented the analogical and critical structure of his own [High Church] rhetoric as *turning back upon himself*, as he found his own [Anglican] position the subject of an inner inquest, in the same style of interrogation to which he had subjected his opponents." That is, Newman presents his conversion as (in part) the result of apprehending his earlier inadvertent hypocrisy (*Newman and Heresy*, 203).
76. Cf. Walter E. Conn's claim about Newman's Anglican thought: "Greater subjectivity results in greater objectivity" (*Conscience and Conversion*, 45). See also G. Levine, *Dying to Know* (esp. 3, 40, 258, 263); and John Plotz, "Semi-Detached Provincial Novel."
77. David Kurnick's insightful essay on Eliot's *Middlemarch* is very much in this vein. His argument draws upon Anderson's *The Powers of Distance*, but he acknowledges that "[t]he behavior of an illusion-obsessed novel-reader or the wanderings of an erotically confused teenager [i.e., Dorothea Brooke in *Middlemarch*] on holiday in Rome might seem a far cry from the practices of the self Anderson recommends" ("Erotics of Detachment," 602). For other accounts of detachment and objectivity in relation to reading experience and literary form, see C. Levine, *Serious Pleasures;* and Plotz, *Semi-Detached*.
78. Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*, 371.
79. Daston and Galison, "Image of Objectivity," 123; see also *Objectivity*, 44–46, 51–52; and G. Levine, *Dying to Know*, 13–14, 276–79.

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80. Daston and Galison, "Image of Objectivity," 123. For a more extended account of how the history of scientific objectivity has been marked by "competing epistemic ideals" (120), see Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*. Daston and Galison trace this dynamic through the history of "the images of scientific atlases": "Adherents to old and new schools of image making confronted one another in mutual indignation, both sides sure that the other had violated fundamental tenets of scientific competence and integrity" (*Objectivity*, 35). Cf. Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, 103.
81. I am not trying to suggest that Newman is necessarily unique in this regard. Anderson's discussion of George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*—which is of course another conversion narrative—in chapter 4 of *The Powers of Distance* might be read as tracing the movement of Eliot's protagonist from one "form of detachment" to another, although Anderson does not explicitly couch her argument in quite this way. See also Daston and Galison's characterization of one of their case studies as exemplifying a "conversion" from one "epistemic virtue" to another (*Objectivity*, 11–16).
82. Nagel, *View from Nowhere*, 75.
83. Nagel, *View from Nowhere*, 5.
84. See Jones, "Recuperating Arnold," 94; and Anderson, *Powers of Distance*, 33.
85. Fish, *Doing What Comes Naturally*, 462. In his introduction to the same volume (also invoked by David Goslee in his reading of Newman [*Romanticism and the Anglican Newman*, 293–94 n.8]), Fish explicitly engages the possibility of "exchang[ing] one form of objectivity for another" (21), although his contention that one can only move "from one state of not-at-the-moment-seen-around belief to another," as opposed to moving "from a state of undoubted belief to a state in which the grip of belief has been relaxed" (18), would seem to exclude the real-life possibility of the contrast set up by Newman's rhetoric. I should also make clear here that is not my intention to position Nagel's understanding of objectivity as a naïvely rationalistic foil to antifoundationalist arguments such as Fish's; see, for example, Nagel's observation that "not all reality is better understood the more objectively it is viewed" (4) and his analysis throughout *The View from Nowhere* of the qualitative tensions between objectivity and subjectivity. More relevant to my argument here, and aside from the schematic statements quoted above, Nagel's more granular analysis

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does entail discriminations between different "conceptions of objectivity" (see, for example, 26–27).

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