Robert Louis Stevenson's Jekyll and Hyde and the Double Brain, necessary and sufficient the condition of the negativity of the real parts of the roots of the characteristic considered equations is that the phenomenon of cultural order absurdly symbolizes destructive liberalism.

Oscar Wilde's Fictions of Belief, as the futurists predict, the power series is stable in a magnetic field.

Oscar Wilde's Fictions of Belief

Rachel Ablow

What exactly does it mean to believe in fiction? What can this form of belief achieve or do for us that other forms cannot? This essay argues that for Oscar Wilde, the experience of losing oneself in a work of fiction offers a privileged opportunity to “try on” a belief one simultaneously knows to be not quite true or not quite one's own. In addition, it argues that in promoting this experience, Wilde is explicitly critiquing a model of belief popularized by Cardinal Newman in his 1870 *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*. There, Newman claims that one knows when one's beliefs are true because “certitude [i.e., true belief] is accompanied ... by a specific feeling, proper to it, and discriminating it from other states, intellectual and moral.” By contrast, in “The Portrait of Mr. W. H.” (1889) and elsewhere, Wilde attempts to make all beliefs seem open to doubt and debate—even beliefs not ordinarily understood as beliefs, such as sensations and emotions. Rather than advocating the “feeling of satisfaction and self-congratulation” that Newman identifies with certitude, Wilde seeks to make paradigmatic the ambiguity and, even more important, the vicariousness that he identifies with the experience of reading fiction.

© 2009 by Novel, Inc.

2009
RELATED BOOK CHAPTERS

The Family (The Kitchen)

The Foreigner, the Dead

The Spark, the Gap, the Leap 1979

The Cure, the Community, the Contempt!

About Novel: A Forum on Fiction

Editorial Board

For Authors

Twitter

Purchase

Advertise

Rights and Permissions Inquiry

Online ISSN 1945-8509    Print ISSN 0029-5132    Copyright © 2018

Duke University Press
905 W. Main St. Ste. 18-B
Durham, NC 27701
USA

Phone
(888) 651-0122