

Notes to: "Lawrence of virtuous father virtuous son:"

The delay of poem's "substance" in favour of establishing a genealogy and relationship between past and present

"waste"? Cyclical shift of seasons.

The relationship to Mathew 6: 28, which says do not worry about the necessities of life, but focus on Christian righteousness, for the necessities will follow. Here, the delights seem beyond mere necessities: they seem pleasures (wine, music, companionship, art). Is pleasure necessary?

Implications of "neat" [elegant, well-proportioned, exhibiting skill and precision, free from impurity] and "choice" [implies judgement as well as tastiness]

Notes to "Avenge O Lord they slaughtered Saints"

Unusual in being a sonnet whose occasion is a very specific, contemporary event (the slaughter of the Anabaptists, a strongly Protestant group).

Creates shift in modification: "Even them...stones" functions first as an adjectival modifier for "saints" of line 1, but then turns into the direct object of "Forget not" of line 5, a shift that seems to be marked formally as well in the scope of the rhyme [bones/stones implies closure of unit, but stones/groans opens up to a different closure].

Oddness of "even": precisely those or especially those (the slaughtered saints, or perhaps a subset of them) and including those (but not restricted to them, and indeed, the stocks and stones implies a relation of idolatry that seems anterior to the poem's events).

They were echoed to the heavens. But did the heavens hear?

Two types of vengeance: first, direct action (suggested by the physical, temporal markers in poem) versus a different kind of justice that has to do with the "recording" of their "groans," that is, the divine judgement that is everlasting and outside human time.

"Thy way", ambiguity not just of the syntactic break and where early is to be situated syntactically, but the question of what this way is (temporal versus divine). Thy way: can it only refer as F argues to the way that God has dealt with the Waldensians? (and which way is that: the manner of their death or the recording of their groans)? Or does it refer to the larger "way," pointing beyond the events on earth to their echo up to heaven?

Notes to "When I consider how my light is spent"

Spatial: main clause is When I consider how my light is spent...I fondly ask doth god exact day labour, light denied. Indeed, the main sentence is only lines 8-9, line one

specifies the situation prompting lines 8-9 and lines 2-7 provide circumstantial detail regarding that situation.

Temporal, will pick up the 4 "experiential" moves that Fish locates: making line 7 first the chiding, then a questioning of the assumption that God will chide, then changing the speaker, and finally, marking the speaker's own realisation that his question is "fond".

Question of when Patience's reply stops.

Re: Fish.

Rhetorical slippage: "is a sense that it is embedded or encoded in the text, and that it can be taken in at a single glance" (158). Sets up a straw man by reducing new critical/formalist position to one that hardly seems adequate to the careful complexities of their readings. But still, one can indeed claim that the temporal dimension of experience is being minimised in new critical readings.

Who is this reader? Crucial question, already raised earlier, regarding "things indifferent"---Milton is read as Fish reads him because in a sense he intuitively places him in relationship to a seventeenth century debate concerning whether value depends upon the nature of the object or action (belongs to its essence) or of intention and use (belongs to the user who acts or uses). [cf. Problem reflected in currency or gold as well]

Reader must "realise" [in the sense of make real, bring into being within himself] authorial intention. Intention, then, resides not outside the poem (as in external purpose) but in the "succession of acts readers perform in the continuing assumption that they are dealing with intentional beings" (161). So, "intention" and "experience" are essentially two sides of the same coin, they cannot be separated: description of experience is to describe the "realisation" (understanding and making real) of authorial intention, but by the same token reconstructing authorial intention is describe reader's experience. "What is being specified from either perspective are the [contemporary] conditions of utterance, of what could have been understood to have been meant" [given, on the basis of] "what was said" (161). Does it make a difference, though, from which direction we start?

Isn't all this "in" the text? (but if formal patterns are the other side of readerly experience, Fish argues, they are not independent of the reader, the two are not separable, and they imply and correlate with one another).

Crucially, then, he will argue that "interpretation creates intention and its formal realisation by creating the conditions in which it becomes possible to pick them out" so that one "sees" what ones interpretive principles permitted me to see, and then I attribute what I saw to the text and to authorial intention. Reiterated on p. 165, leading then to the question that if the form of the reader's experience and the structure of intention are one, what produces them? If formal analyses and analysis of reader's response are simply ways of describing the same interpretive act, what is that act an interpretation of? Answer: not a clue, but then nobody has a clue! But what I do know is at least that I don't

know: "the choice is never between objectivity and interpretation, but between an interpretation that is unacknowledged as such and an interpretation that is at least aware of itself" (167).

Interpretive Communities: If interpretive acts are the sources of forms (and the shapers of what is attributed to authorial intent) then why aren't all readers always doing the same thing or simply all doing different things. (1) why does a single reader read "different" texts differently, and (2) why do different readers read the same text similarly? [How do variation and non-variation in interpretive acts come about?] Fish's claim will be that these aren't results of texts but of interpretive strategies. Interpretive strategies shape or constitute reading and therefore shape or construct the text at hand. In other words, "same" and "different" are fictions.

The more 'moderate' version of Fish's programme might be of the kind proffered by Iser and Ingarden: conceiving the text as a skeleton or schemata that is 'filled out' or completed by the reader, waiting to be concretised in various ways by readers. This leads, however, to an epistemological problem: How can one know or discuss these schemata without already having concretised them? That is, can one speak of the 'text itself' (even as a web of constraints) without the (posterior) interpretation that allows us to identify (create?) this text itself? For Iser, then, the text is a determinate structure that allows certain indeterminacies, but it is hard to identify this determinate structure which is logically prior to the act of interpretation through which alone we reconstruct the structure. And what if everything about a text were indeterminate? In what sense would different critics claim to be interpreting the 'same' work?

Fish isn't bothered by this: he doesn't have an answer, but then, he says, nobody does. The reader takes up full power as the author of the text, the one who writes the text in the act of interpretation, producing that which as it were stands in as the 'what' which we interpret. Nothing in the text is factually given: grammatical units, lines, meanings, formal units.

The control on this comes through the idea of interpretive communities, which act (pragmatically) to limit the kinds of possible readings and the kinds of things in a text that count as bearing signification or meaning. But there is nothing 'in' the work, nothing inherent in the text that is already meaningful, waiting to be released by the reader. Part of the problem, however, has to do with what one means by the already 'given': for Fish, everything is 'not-given' in the same way (be they grammatical units, formal units or semantic units). Every text is indeterminate in precisely the same way. But presumably there are distinctions between the way 'data' arrive already interpreted and the way scientific hypotheses arrive already interpreted. Indeed one way of defining a fact might be an interpretation around which there is consensus---and "wrongness" is a deviation from that consensus. Whereas for a scientific hypothesis or an interpretation of a Keats poem, the case is different because of the "under determination of theory"---more than one explanation can account for the ostensible facts. In so far as the practical social uses of a word are the words meaning, they come to us when we encounter the text (that is, in certain sense, they lie 'in' the text) and cannot simply be dismissed as a freely chosen

interpretive strategy. In other words, one does not simply (1) choose to be in an interpretive community, as Fish seems to suggest, and it is a fantasy to think that we can make anything mean anything, since texts belong to language as a whole and indeed have intricate relationships to other texts, and these constrain interpretation (though in a rather non-deterministic way) (2) and indeed the crucial question becomes the nature of these interpretive communities, the ways in which they constrain our reading process and control our sense of what a text is. (3) There is a struggle of interpretations within an interpretive community (no homogeneity, as Fish seems to assume).

Fixing of meaning through (1) authorial intention (New Criticism) (2) through 'reader,' or more broadly, through the reader's interpretive strategy (the kind of competence that readers are expected to have)