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# Evaluation and Reader Response Criticism: Values Implicit in Affective Stylistics

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EVALUATION AND  
READER RESPONSE CRITICISM:  
VALUES IMPLICIT IN AFFECTIVE STYLISTICS

**T**HE READER IS A LIMITED GOD: constrained yet creative. In reader-centered criticism the emphasis is carefully placed upon the interaction of this creative god with a delimiting text. This emphasis is at one and the same time a critical strategy, a leap of faith, an ultimate concern, and a moral imperative.

Hyperbolic as it may seem, the theological metaphor provides an initial insight into "reader response" criticism, especially Stanley Fish's "Affective Stylistics."<sup>1</sup> In examining Fish's "Literature-in-the-Reader Approach," I will underscore the naïve humility of its critic-priest and prove the misleading nature of the following statement: Fish's "method . . . is oriented *away* from evaluation and toward description."<sup>2</sup> Evaluation (on several levels) is inherent in the assumptions and methods of Affective Stylistics (which purports to be merely a *descriptive* procedure).

As a critical strategy, Affective Stylistics is that approach "in which the focus of attention is shifted from the spatial context of a page and its observable regularities to the temporal context of a mind and its experiences."<sup>3</sup> In order to accomplish this shift of focus, in order to make the new focus acceptable to skeptical critics, Fish redefines an evaluative term: a literary work "is no longer an object, a thing-in-itself, but an *event*, something that *happens* to, and with the participation of, the reader. And it is this event, this happening—all of it and not anything that could be said about it or any information one might take away from it—that is,

I would argue, the *meaning*” (“Lit. in the Reader,” p. 125). Fish redefines *meaning* as an event (instead of information content) in order to place a greater importance on that event, to give it a new significance by bestowing on it a higher priority of interest (a value). That is, Fish takes an evaluative term with the highest positive connotations and places it approvingly on the experience of the reader in interacting with the text: meaning is significant; the reading experience is meaning; therefore, the reading experience is significant. An evaluative process is implicit at the very inception of the method. Does it stop here? I think not, but I will return to this question after a brief treatment of Affective Stylistics as description.

Fish describes his method as “an analysis of the developing responses of the reader in relation to the words as they succeed one another in time” (“Lit. in the Reader,” pp. 126-27). Thus, Fish dedicates himself to a description of the interaction of reader and text during the temporal reading process. He relies on empirical evidence (from psycholinguistics and perceptual psychology) and on intuitive insights into his own responses and those of other critics.<sup>4</sup> Fish’s use of psycholinguistic research is especially indicative of his descriptive goals. He mentions the work of T. G. Bever and claims that the psycholinguist’s “analyses of perceptual strategy can help” a practitioner of Affective Stylistics (“What Is Stylistics?” p. 151). Fish’s attraction to psycholinguistics is understandable: it provides empirical support for his method’s descriptive power; support that claims to be objectively verifiable (an attractive assertion to Fish in his defense against charges of impressionism). Psycholinguistics presents evidence that what Fish terms “the structure of the reader’s experience” is a psychological reality; i.e., the process of interaction between reader and text does occur as Fish describes it.

Fish has always been willing to face questions about the validity of his concept of the structure of the reader’s response. For example, he has said, “Many of the suggestions that have been made to me both in print and in private are that there’s no such thing as the ‘reader’s experience’ or anything that you can ever talk about. That at the very least I would have to abandon the claim that I’m

getting back to something primary and, if I wanted to claim anything, just claim this as another metaphor . . . that the reader's experience that I describe is simply not the experience any reader has ever had, but that it's an after-the-fact result of my having worked through some problems . . . and, having reached a solution to those problems, translated that solution into the terms of what I call a reader experience methodology."<sup>5</sup> These are not new issues; compare past statements such as "experience is immediately compromised the moment you say anything about it" and "the least (and probably the most) we can do is proceed in such a way as to permit as little distortion as possible" ("Lit. in the Reader," p. 160). These earlier qualifications have at times been raised to the level of critical cracks in the model. However, these objections are not as forceful as they first appear. (Or better: they *are* extremely forceful, yet they do not destroy the operative validity of the model.) The fact is that Fish will never be able to prove conclusively that his description of the general structure of the reader's response is completely accurate. Nevertheless, his insights will be persuasive if he continues to cite (and test the approach against) intuitive, empirical, and critical evidence and continues to admit that his model can only be an approximation of the reader's response.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, Fish's "structure of the reader's experience" *is* a metaphor as are all human descriptions, but in its rigor and focus it is the best metaphor, the closest approximation of reader response now available. Most other critical approaches are merely abstractions of abstractions by comparison.

One final note on psycholinguistics and Affective Stylistics as description: Fish has commented that psycholinguists "have determined that . . . reading proceeds by a series of decisions. They call these decisions 'computations' or 'calculations.' That is, for them the decision that a reader makes is simply to be regarded as something preliminary to the settling, to the arriving at meaning. Very simply, what *I* do is make the focus of my analysis those decisions that readers make. And I give those decisions first content and then *value*."<sup>7</sup>

I return now to the subject with which this essay began: values within the Literature-in-the-Reader Approach. Value is

“any object of any interest,” writes R. B. Perry.<sup>8</sup> Victor Hamm points out another sense of the word: “*value* . . . which we employ so readily and ingenuously, denotes to the metaphysician a good he recognizes as a property of being.”<sup>9</sup> These two complementary senses of the term will be stressed in the discussion that follows.<sup>10</sup>

As seen in his attraction to the empirical description of psycholinguistics, Fish embraces the notion of a purely descriptive capacity for Affective Stylistics. He regards “evaluation not as a theoretical issue but as a subject in the history of taste.”<sup>11</sup> In fact, Fish carefully avoids the term *evaluation* in any reference to his approach, except to describe what it is not: “My method allows for . . . no such fixings of value. In fact it is oriented *away* from evaluation and toward description” (“Lit. in the Reader,” p. 146). This extreme hesitancy to use the term results at times in his confusing interpretation (explanation) with what is actually evaluation. For example, in describing the reader’s experience at the end of *Heart of Darkness*, Fish calls the reader’s moral evaluation of Marlow’s lie “the final interpretive decision.” Fish states that “what this novel has done is disabled you as an interpreter in the sense that the final pages call for an interpretation . . . one that you are not able to deliver.”<sup>12</sup> Rather, the novel has not made an interpretation impossible (Fish’s own interpretation is evidence of that), but instead it has made *evaluation* (judgment of value—in this case ethical value) impossible for the reader.

Fish’s meticulous care to avoid evaluative terms seems a result of his desire to guard against a mistake similar to that of the stylisticians he criticizes: “the absence . . . of any connection between their descriptive and interpretive acts” (“What Is Stylistics?” p. 148). Fish’s approach validly bridges the gap between description and interpretation (making them one and the same), but he zealously avoids making what *he* considers an unjustified jump from interpretation to evaluation. He implies that there is no connection between his interpretive and evaluative acts. I would like to discuss the inevitability of making just such a connection within his Literature-in-the-Reader Approach.

The answers to the following questions illustrate the importance of implicit values in Affective Stylistics:

- (1) Where should a literary critic focus his attention? (Definitional Value)
- (2) What is the "proper response" to literature? (Normative or Prescriptive Value)
- (3) How is "good" literature distinguished from "bad" literature? (Comparative Value)
- (4) What ethical concerns are present? (Ethical Value)

Concerning Definitional Value: Where should a literary critic focus his attention? Affective Stylistics is explicit in its answer: the interaction of reader and text, the structure of the reader's response, the reader's experience. I don't think it is trivializing Kierkegaard's phrase to call this answer a "leap of faith." As Earl Miner observes, a reader response critic begins with "the *pre-sumption* that attention to the reader is a critical necessity" (my italics).<sup>13</sup> That is, an Affective Stylistician believes that the reader's experience is most important in literary criticism, and he requires no self-justifying proof for this belief. The reader's response becomes an "ultimate concern" in this critic's literary microcosm; everything else in his interpretation becomes significant only in terms of its relation to this ultimate concern. He *establishes a value*.

The recognition of the ultimate value of the reader's response results in "a procedure which is from the very beginning organizing itself in terms of what is significant" ("What Is Stylistics?" p. 149). In other words, as Fish writes earlier (pp. 148-49), "an interpreting entity, endowed with purposes and concerns, is, by virtue of its very operation, determining what counts as the facts to be observed; and, moreover, that since this determining is not a neutral marking out of a valueless area, but the extension of an already existing field of interests, it *is* an interpretation." Or more precisely an *evaluation*.

This initial positing of value, then, determines what else is seen as significant. Thus, Fish values the activities of the reader: "the making and revising of assumptions, the rendering and regretting of judgments, the coming to and abandoning of conclusions, the giving and withdrawing of approval, the specifying of causes, the asking of questions, the supplying of answers, the solving of puzzles." Finding "value in temporal phenomena,"

Fish especially emphasizes the commitment and choice of the reader in his progressing interaction with the text.<sup>14</sup>

Evaluation, then, is implicit at the very inception of the Literature-in-the-Reader Approach: first, the reader's response is seen as significant and good—reading involves “what it is to be human”. (“What Is Stylistics?” p. 148); and then the activities within that response (decisions, commitments, etc.) are valued as part of the reader's experience. Whether a comparative or ethical value is also given to all of these activities remains to be seen.

Concerning Normative or Prescriptive Value: What is the “proper response” to literature?

“What is being specified from either perspective [authorial intention or reader response] are the conditions of utterance, of what could have been understood to have been meant by what was said” (“Int. the *Variorum*,” p. 476). Reading requires certain things of the reader: he *must* do them in order to read. In this way, Affective Stylistics joins Speech Act Theory and moves from description to evaluation, from *is* to *ought*—from “the reader is reading” to “he ought to respond to the conditions of utterance.” (As Searle points out, this commitment to reading conventions has “no necessary connection with morality.”<sup>15</sup>)

A second prescriptive value is posited by Fish when he describes his “Informed Reader.” After specifying some of the characteristics of the Informed Reader, Fish comments: “I would want to say that his experience of the sentence will be not only different from, but better than, his less-informed fellows” (“What Is Stylistics?” p. 146, n. 36). A conditional imperative is implicit here: If a reader wants to get the *best* experience (a more forceful phrase than “proper response”) in reading, then he must possess the characteristics of the Informed Reader, i.e., he *should* be or become an informed reader. Prescriptive statements become more explicit in Fishian sentences beginning, “What he [the reader] does (or should do) . . .” (“Lit. in the Reader,” p. 136). Description and evaluative prescription seem closely intertwined in such analysis.

Fish has raised a question about his method that involves another type of prescription: “Is this method a method of reading or an analysis of what's happening in the reading process? Am I

training people so that they will read differently than they ever have before or am I training people to be able to bring to analytical light what they've been doing when they've been reading? . . . Strong claim: progressively make conscious what's been happening sub-consciously; *or* is it: work in this method forms what you're going to be doing?"<sup>16</sup>

Is the method analysis or training, description or prescription? This question can be answered in two ways: First, if the method leads to an accurate analysis of the structure of a reader's response, the teaching of the method will reinforce (by making more self-conscious) this reading process. So, though the question is "either/or" the answer is "both": Affective Stylistics is both analysis and training. Second, if the method does not produce an accurate analysis of a reader's response, then another question arises: could the teaching of the method train the reader to read in a manner radically different from the way he naturally does? If yes, then at the very least the training must actualize some potentiality already present. Then the question becomes: *should* this potentiality be actualized?

In sum, if the model is valid, then Affective Stylistics first describes the commitment of the reader to certain conventions and hypothesizes an Informed Reader who has "better" reading experiences; then it *prescribes* that a reader must commit himself to the reading conventions in order to read and that a less-informed reader should become an informed reader. If the model is not valid, then the teacher/critic must decide whether to actualize the potentialities affected by the Literature-in-the-Reader method. In other words, with the model valid, Affective Stylistics involves prescriptive values; with the model invalid, the question becomes one of comparative and ethical values. I will proceed as if the model were valid (the former assertion), but in so proceeding I will directly deal with the issues raised in the latter question: comparative and ethical values.

Concerning Comparative Value: What is "good literature"? Or what response should good literature provoke? Here Fish meets the evaluative question head-on: "My method . . . is oriented *away* from evaluation and toward description. It is difficult to say on the basis of its results that one work is better than another or even

that a single work is good or bad."<sup>17</sup> Is Fish's disclaimer misleading? Are there any "literary values" (necessarily comparative) that can be inferred from the Literature-in-the-Reader Approach?<sup>18</sup> (Of course, for the reader response critic any literary values must be defined in terms of reader experiences.)

Fish's work implies a view of art explicit in the writings of several critics: Art is valued disorder. Morse Peckham and Wolfgang Iser, among others, view art in this way. Peckham writes, "Art is rehearsal for those real situations in which it is vital for our survival to endure cognitive tension, to refuse the comforts of validation by affective congruence when such validation is inappropriate because too vital interests are at stake; art is the reinforcement of the capacity to endure disorientation so that a real and significant problem may emerge." Likewise, Iser comments, "If reading were to consist of nothing but an uninterrupted building up of illusions, it would be a suspect, if not downright dangerous, process: instead of bringing us into contact with reality, it would wean us away from realities. . . . There are some texts which offer nothing but a harmonious world, purified of all contradiction and deliberately excluding anything that might disturb the illusion once established, and these are the texts that we generally do not like to classify as literary."<sup>19</sup>

In these passages Peckham and Iser seem to embrace the evaluative criterion of disorientation. Compare Fish who writes, "In general I am drawn to works which do not allow a reader the security of his normal patterns of thought and belief. It would be possible I suppose to erect a standard of value on the basis of this preference—a scale on which the most unsettling of literary experiences would be the best (perhaps literature is what disturbs our sense of self-sufficiency, personal and linguistic)—but the result would probably be more a reflection of a personal psychological need than of a universally true aesthetic" ("Lit. in the Reader," p. 147). That is, disorientation for Fish is a personal preference, unconnected (he feels) with his method which only describes/interprets and doesn't evaluate; according to Fish, the Literature-in-the-Reader Approach erects no standard of value on the basis of the disorienting effects it seems to find so often within the reader's experience (its ultimate concern).

It is easy to see, however, that Affective Stylistics lends itself to being “linked up” with such evaluative standards: critics (Fish, Iser, Peckham, and others) with an evaluative bias toward “literature as disorientation” could easily use a methodology that values (makes significant) commitments, choices, judgments, and other reader confrontations with text. Indeed, Affective Stylistics, as an approach to the reader’s experience, seems to put *pressure* on the critic using it to value certain literary criteria, e.g., disorientation. This tendency refers us backward to the evaluative assumption upon which the Literature-in-the-Reader Approach was based and forward to a concern with the ethical values also implicit in the method. The ultimate concern for the reader’s experience and the disorienting content of many of those experiences leads us from literary value to ethical value (the valued effects of that disorientation).

Concerning Ethical Value: What ethical concerns are implicit in the approach?

Walter Fisher, a rhetorician discussing value-laden discourse, argues that “Human communication implies, if it does not explicitly present, contentions *and* conceptions of the good.”<sup>20</sup> A set of ethical values can be observed in any type of discourse, be it public address, literature, or literary criticism. Affective Stylistics is especially susceptible to such analysis. The Literature-in-the-Reader method, especially as applied by Fish, is a morally-based approach to literature. It is concerned with ethical values in at least three ways: it describes ethical attitudes actualized in the reader by the text; it begins with ethical assumptions about reading and being human; and it pressures the critic to accept certain ethical values, i.e., the use of the method “is productive of” ethical values.

An important part of the subject matter of Affective Stylistics involves ethical attitudes formed by the reader in his interaction with the text. The reader is pressured to judge, to take stands, to become committed (in an ethical sense), to evaluate, that is, to concern himself with moral issues (goodness, right action) while reading literature. Numerous examples can be cited from experiential criticism: “This, then, is the structure of the reader’s experience—the transferring of a moral label from a thing to those

who appropriate it" (discussing *Comus* in "Int. the *Variorum*," p. 475) and "You are invited to take contradictory moral attitudes toward the various personages who turn up in the novel" (Taped lecture: "On Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*"). Of course, this interest in moral questions is a descriptive concern of the method and not an ethically evaluative one. But this interest does indicate the inevitable involvement with morality in the method's treatment of literature.

My second point is less a descriptive aspect of the approach and more an evaluative one. Affective Stylistics has as its ultimate concern the experience of the reader. This concern is arrived at through an evaluative leap of faith by the reader response critic. He places the highest possible value (literary and ethical) on the reading experience: "notions of what it is to read . . . are finally . . . notions of what it is to be human" ("What Is Stylistics?" p. 148). Fish writes elsewhere: "my set is toward the message for the sake of the human and moral content all messages necessarily display."<sup>21</sup> Continually, Fish makes morally evaluative judgments: "my larger objection [to the goal of the stylisticians] is that it is unworthy, for it would deny to man the most remarkable of his abilities, the ability to give the world meaning rather than to extract a meaning that is already there" ("What Is Stylistics?" p. 134). And this moral objection is not accidental nor is it an idiosyncrasy of Fish; rather it is a direct consequence of his method's ultimate concern, the reader.

I would contend, then, that at the very center of Affective Stylistics is a pressure to hold and promote certain ethical values. There is at the very least a directing force within the method—initiated by its ultimate concern (with the reader) and focused by its subject matter (confrontation with text)—to see literary disorientation as an ethical value. That is, since the reader is the central concern of Affective Stylistics, and since disorientation in his interaction with the text helps him to grow, literary disorientation is morally valuable (it is good). The reader's enrichment through temporary disorder in literary experience is central to the approaches of critics like Iser and Peckham. And to quote Fish again: "perhaps literature is what disturbs our sense of self-sufficiency, personal and linguistic."<sup>22</sup> This evaluative insight does

not merely illustrate a “psychological need” (as Fish suggests), but rather it evidences a pressure that exists within the method itself.

In “The Bad Physician: The Case of Sir Thomas Browne,”<sup>23</sup> Fish carefully distinguishes between part one in which he uses his method on Browne’s prose and the second part which he claims is his personal evaluation unconnected with his Literature-in-the-Reader Approach. Fish notes that in Browne’s work “the moment of insight reflects backward to his skill rather than inward to our edification.” Fish sums up his evaluation: “In brief, what sets Browne apart from those with whom he shares so much is the absence in his work of their intentions, which are rhetorical in a very special sense. They seek to *change* the minds of their readers . . . . In all of these works, an uncomfortable and unsettling experience is offered as the way to self-knowledge, in the hope that self-knowledge will be preliminary to the emergence of a better self, with a better (or at least more self-aware) mind.” Fish concludes these comments with a revealing remark: “And by offering that experience rather than another, these works shift the focus of attention from themselves and from what is happening in their formal confines to the reader and what is happening in the confines of his mind and heart” (p. 371). Thus, edifying disorientation within these valued devotional writings (excluding Browne’s) *leads us back* to the ultimate concern, the reader.

There is a circularity here not of argument but of effect: The reader and his response are valued; disorientation is valued because it helps the reader grow, i.e., he becomes a better reader and person; and thus his reading experience becomes more valuable. Fish argues, “I can simultaneously say that the use of this approach will not only allow you to see what you’ve been doing while reading but will make you a better performer in reading which is what Milton wants you to do, but that’s not what everybody wants . . . the Miltonic aesthetic is unique . . . not one that can be applied to everyone” (Taped lecture: “On Doubts about Affective Stylistics”). As a matter of fact, the experiential critic *does* apply it to everyone (not descriptively, but evaluatively): authors, readers, and critics should (and usually do) want the reader to perform better. This imperative is, again, a direct result

of the ultimate concern with the reader's experience. The reader response critic values that text which, for example, disorients the reader and helps him to grow—to become a better reader and person. This is a good, a positive ethical value for the experiential critic. Affective Stylistics, then, is not only generally evaluative but also specifically moral.

Fish's Literature-in-the Reader Approach to criticism is the most convincing method available that claims to approximate the reader's experience. Within the approach other literary theories are "redefined in terms of potential and probable response" ("Lit. in the Reader," p. 145). Therefore, *if* the structure of the reader's response is considered of utmost importance, then other literary approaches describing response to response should take their starting point from such experiential criticism.

Though outwardly embracing only the descriptive capabilities of his method, Fish appears to be restraining a desire to bring in evaluative criteria. He admits a "hierarchy" in his own tastes, and points out that he only works (in print) with texts of indisputable literary value. Though he admits his own evaluation and recognizes the evaluative function of criticism, he makes no attempt (and in fact denies the possibility) of linking his methodology with evaluative criteria by virtue of any intrinsic logic of the method. René Wellek, among others, stresses that "the final task of the critic is evaluation."<sup>24</sup> If Affective Stylistics is to help redirect the attention of critics away from an objective, spatialized text and toward the temporal reading experience, then some attempt must be made to show either that it is possible to link up the method with evaluation or that the method's assumptions require certain evaluative criteria (evaluative criteria derived directly from its basic assumptions).

Since Affective Stylistics is a method of analysis that examines the moment-by-moment experience of the reader as he is being pressured by the text, the results of this analysis can be used by many schools of criticism as raw material (just as Affective Stylistics uses the formalist insights of New Criticism and Linguistics). A Marxist critic will see if the reader is being manipulated in an orthodox manner, the Myth critic will ask what archetypal re-

sponses to the reading experience occur, etc. These critics will discuss the "response to a response" ("Lit. in the Reader," pp. 147, 162 n. 31), and they will go off in as many different directions as there are critics.

I have contended, however, that Affective Stylistics, when its assumptions are properly understood, holds forth the possibility either that a certain approach to evaluating literature arises out of the assumptions of the method or that the ethical assumptions point to restraints upon the directions that critics can go with the analysis. These are restraints on the description of the response to a response, and these restrictions call for a consistency between the method and the evaluative theory to which the method is linked, i.e., the ethical assumptions of Affective Stylistics demand that the method be used by certain value-related schools of criticism.

"Criticism, insofar as it is rational inquiry, cannot escape from the limitations placed upon it by its basic assumptions. As with theologians, each school of critics naturally believes in its own premises."<sup>25</sup> As I have shown in this essay, the assumptions and methodology of Affective Stylistics are value-laden. Furthermore, the ethical values arising out of its premises make the Literature-in-the-Reader method more appropriate to humanistic approaches to literature, those which value the growth of the reader. My most important claim is what I have been emphasizing in the last part of this essay: Affective Stylistics is a moral approach to literature in and of itself.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>For a concise introduction to reader response criticism, see Earl Miner, rev. of *Self-Consuming Artifacts*, by Stanley Fish, *JEGP*, 72(October 1973), 536-43.

<sup>2</sup>Stanley Fish, "Literature in the Reader: Affective Stylistics," *New Literary History*, 2(Autumn 1970), 146; subsequent references to this article will be cited in the text.

<sup>3</sup>Stanley E. Fish, "What Is Stylistics and Why Are They Saying Such Terrible Things About It?" in *Approaches to Poetics*, ed. by Seymour Chatman (N. Y.: Columbia Univ. Press, 1973), p. 144; subsequent references to this article will be cited in the text.

<sup>4</sup>For examples of his use of other critics' reading responses, see Stanley E. Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost* (London: Macmillan, and N. Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1967), passim, and Stanley E. Fish, "Interpreting the *Variorum*," *Critical Inquiry*, 2(Spring 1976), 465-85.

<sup>5</sup>Taped lecture: "On Doubts about Affective Stylistics," Univ. of Southern California, May 24, 1974.

<sup>6</sup>Fish states the case more exactly when he writes: "I am aware that my model is an interpretation of reality rather than an approximation of it" ("Facts and Fictions: A Reply to Ralph Rader," *Critical Inquiry*, 1 [June 1975], 891); see also his discussion of "interpretive strategies" in "Int. the *Variorum*," pp. 477-85.

<sup>7</sup>Taped lecture: "On Affective Stylistics," Univ. of Southern California, May 21, 1974.

<sup>8</sup>Quoted in Vernon J. Burke, *History of Ethics* (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1968), II, p. 105.

<sup>9</sup>"From Ontology to Axiology: A Critical Problem," *College English* (November 1970), 147.

<sup>10</sup>In his chapter "Values in American Society," Robin Williams, Jr., defines "values" in a way that comes close to combining these two senses (significant and good); he writes that values are "those *conceptions of desirable states of affairs* that are utilized in selective conduct as *criteria* for preference or choice or as *justifications* for proposed or actual behavior" (*American Society: A Sociological Interpretation*, 3rd ed. [N.Y., 1970], quoted in Walter R. Fisher, "A Normative Theory of Rhetoric: Its Rationale and Its Logic," unpublished manuscript, p. 47).

<sup>11</sup>"Facts and Fictions," p. 891, n. 7.

<sup>12</sup>Taped lecture: "On Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*," Univ. of Southern California, May 21, 1974.

<sup>13</sup>Rev. of *Self-Consuming Artifacts*, p. 536.

<sup>14</sup>"Int. the *Variorum*," pp. 474, 470; subsequent references to this article will be cited in the text. In "Facts and Fictions" Fish writes that "as we read we hypothesize comprehensive intentions, get through tangles of references, eliminate ambiguities, exclude or rule out partial and incomplete meanings; but where [Ralph Rader] believes either that we do these things only once or that only one of the times we do them counts, I believe that we do them again and again (as many times as we are moved to perceptual closure) and that each instance of our doing of them (not merely the last) has value" (p. 891).

<sup>15</sup>John Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1969), p. 188.

<sup>16</sup>Taped lecture: "On Doubts about Affective Stylistics," Univ. of Southern California, May 24, 1974.

<sup>17</sup>"Lit. in the Reader," p. 146; earlier Fish writes: "The question is not how good is it, but how does it work; and both question and answer are framed in terms of local conditions, which include local notions of literary value" (p. 146).

<sup>18</sup>For a flawed but helpful analysis of "comparative value," see Elder Olson, "Value Judgments in the Arts," *Critical Inquiry*, 1(September 1974), 71-90; Olson defines *value* as "a relative attribute of something in virtue of certain discernible properties as these relate to something else" (p. 73).

<sup>19</sup>Morse Peckham, *Man's Rage for Chaos* (N. Y.: Schocken Books, 1967), p. 314; Wolfgang Iser, "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach," *New Literary History*, 3(Winter 1972), 289.

<sup>20</sup>"A Normative Theory of Rhetoric," p. 29; Fisher writes further: "Human communication is a phenomenological, social, perceptual experience . . . and its investigation, teaching, criticism, and conduct is productive of ethical standards which directly affect the human condition" (p. 39).

<sup>21</sup>"How Ordinary Is Ordinary Language?" *New Literary History*, 5 (Autumn 1973), 52.

<sup>22</sup>The literature of Humanistic Psychology is full of references to the need for disorientation and reorganization during one's personal growth: e.g., Carl Rogers writes, "So while I still hate to readjust my thinking, still hate to give up old ways of perceiving and conceptualizing, yet at some deeper level I have, to a considerable degree, come to realize that these painful reorganizations are what is known as *learning*, and that though painful they always lead to a more satisfying because somewhat more accurate way of seeing life" (*On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy* [Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961], p. 25); cf. Fish's *Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of Seventeenth-Century Literature* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1972), pp. 1-4, and *Surprised by Sin*, pp. xiii, 1-4.

<sup>23</sup>In *Self-Consuming Artifacts*, pp. 353-73.

<sup>24</sup>Paraphrase of Wellek by Hamm, "From Ontology to Axiology," p. 146.

<sup>25</sup>O. G. Brockett, "Poetry as Instrument," *Papers in Rhetoric and Poetic*, ed. by Donald C. Bryant (Iowa City: Univ. of Iowa, 1965), p. 16.