

attacking both the tyrannical English and the upper class Irish concerning their treatment of the

" " c g ." "c"fg U c U' h' g' cUëg" h' g'c " eg'cUf" g gUëg" U"c"

text. In fact, this text contains two commentators, two voices battling for the pen and for control over the piece. The first and more apparent voice is that of the Proposer. It is the Proposer, whose economic tone and pragmatic proposal introduce the idea of eating the babes of impoverished families, who largely narrates the piece. The second voice is that of Swift himself, who offers biting cynicism and attacks against the wealthy that are often hidden within the

e c g " h' g'R g "Uë c U' g' gU U'dg ggU' g g' " sing forces drives A

Modest Proposal forward and makes it a piece that cannot get lost among the numerous works of

U h "e Ug c " c g gg ØC "" "f e " c g."U h "e gc U' h'c" ge Uf" eg"

alerts the reader that the proposal is a satire that is not meant to be taken at face value. For this reason, in the case of *A Modest Proposal* reader- g Ug'e e " U' g' cf U' h'Dc g s

The Death of the Author requires that the interpreter silence the intentions of not only one voice, b " Ø "cU'g c Uë U' h'L Uë cU'U h *A Modest Proposal*, it becomes clear that while the likes of Roland Barthes would advocate an analysis based solely on the impressions of the reader, it is the persistent voice and living presence of the author that makes the pamphlet a successful and lasting piece of rhetoric; the author therefore cannot be ignored.

At a certain point in reading the first two pages or so of *A Modest Proposal*, the reader is struck with the realization that the proposal outlined is not entirely serious. The manner in which the reader comes to understand the meaning of *A Modest Proposal* is outlined in Robert

R ff cU "g c ." J c g' " c gU' g A' g'Tgcf g " U'A *Modest Proposal*. "R ff cU' c g."

Y g' ge U g' c " g g' "c" c "dg ggU' g'Uë c " gcUU" cUf" g' g ."cUf" c "c"

moral- ec "c gU" "dg U"ec gf" "d " gcU" h' c f " R ff cU'82: Ø U' fg" "

Ufg cUf"R ff cU "cUc . " " cU" "f U "dg ggU" g"Uc c "cUf" g'g 0

The narrator is the speaking voice, the one dictating, word for word, exactly what the text says. In *A Modest Proposal*, the narrator is not Swift, but the Proposer, a fictional persona created by Swift specifically to fill this role. While the narrator is responsible for what the words say on the page, the author, and from a deeper reading of the text one recognizes *A Modest Proposal* as the satire that it is. Barthes would argue that the narration and the text are one and the same as far as the reader is concerned. However, this is not the case. Although the narrator describes a proposal to sell the children of the poor as food for the rich, the reader recognizes the author's intention to use the contrast between two voices to provide the reader with signals as to how the piece is meant to be read, and it is these intentions that signal the reader that the entire piece is a parody.

What drives this phenomenon? How does the reader come to the realization that there is an argument within the text that lies below the surface subject of cannibalism? This is where the dueling voices come in. A master of rhetoric, Swift has created an alter ego, the Proposer, with whom the narrator's voice is in conflict. The narrator's voice is perceived by the reader. Take, for example, the beginning of the sentence "I have calculated that the food will be somewhat dear, and therefore very proper for landlords, who, as they have already a great number of poor tenants, and those who are not tenants are the children of the poor (Swift 3). The beginning of the sentence is dominated by the Proposer, and his economic voice rings through. The Proposer is rational and calculating, and his strict application of logos is fit for a discussion

of economics of commodities and their value on the market but it does not account for the capacity to act in a compassionate and humane manner. He begins by backing up his suggestion

of the proposal as a rational economic plan. The proposer is perceived as such by those investing their money in the product. The Proposer also discloses the appropriate market for the babies the wealthy landlords. By the end of the sentence, Swift regains control. The rational and economic tone of the earlier statements are contradicted by a biting, emotionally-driven attack against the landlords. By describing the greed of the rich and their inhumane mistreatment of the poor. It is crucial to consider that at the time *A Modest Proposal* was written, the gap between the wealthy and the poor was so large that the poor masses were hardly treated like people and were completely at the mercy of the wealthy. This knowledge is crucial for their mistreatment of the poor. Because the historical background is crucial to understanding the text, a mode of reading solely through the perspective of the reader would create a faulty reading of the text that neglects its overall value.

By identifying an underlying conflict the conflict of two opposing voices within *A Modest Proposal*, the reader knows there is more to the text than meets the eye. But how exactly does the reader go about recognizing, and then distinguishing, these voices? Matt Mortensen, a literary critic who has studied *A Modest Proposal*, suggests that the text is a satire. He argues that the text is a satire because of the irony and sarcasm used throughout. He also notes that the text is a satire because of the exaggerated and unrealistic nature of the proposal. He concludes that the text is a satire because of the author's use of irony and sarcasm to criticize the wealthy and their mistreatment of the poor.

opposed to the idea the words are actually suggesting, cues the reader that the piece is intended to be interpreted as a satire. The success of this satire depends entirely on its intention to be read

c " e ." e " "Dc g s dismay cannot oee " Ug " g'c " g gUeg" " cf g'c c gU" "

the reader.

Barthes, however, still argues the contrary, that U" " g'fg e U' h'g g " eg" h'g g " U" h' U" Dc g "364 0Y " " c g gU."Dc g "e UgUf " c" U' g" eess of writing, the author and his voice are lost, and only the words remain to be given meaning by g' gcf g 0' g'c " eg" cU g ."c U" " " .dg gh."g g gUeg ." g" g f." ec U"cf"g g U"g g" c" " g g'c "c" U" h' U" h " g' geg0D " h' the voices of Swift and his Proposer are neglected in *A Modest Proposal*, what is left? Without the cues provided by the voices, the reader does not read the text as a satire, cU"U h " gU " pamphlet is relegated to nothing more than a bizarre and cold endorsement for cannibalism. The presence of the author proves critical in *A Modest Proposal*, cU"e U c " "Dc g s postulations, the careful reader senses his presence in every word.

Stanley Fish, a colleague of Barthes, subscribes to the idea that it is the reader, not the writer, whose understanding is important in the interpretation of a text. However, Fish concedes, to a much larger extent than does Barthes, that the writer e f Ue g " g' gcf g " gce ons. In *Surprised by Sin*, Fish authored an analysis h'L U'O U "g e" g *Paradise Lost*. Early on U' "cUe ."H " g " g'h U"cd " " g' gcf g " g Ug' "*Paradise Lost* is controlled by Milton:

Control is the important concept here, for my claim is not merely that this pattern is in the poem (it would be difficult to find one that is not), but that Milton (a) consciously put it there and (b) expected his reader to notice it. (Fish 15; emphasis in original)

Over the course of the ever-present battle for the pen in *A Modest Proposal*, the dialogue between Swift and his fictional Proposer both secures the success of the text as a timeless satire and saves Swift from the fate prescribed by the likes of Barthes – the death of the author. It is clear that in *A Modest Proposal*, the author is very much alive. And thus a companionship is born between the reader and the author, a companionship that Fish touches upon in his analysis of *Paradise Lost*. The author deliberately guides the reader through the text by providing clues as

" " g" g " " UgUf gf" "dg" gcf." g" g" gcf g " c g " g" g " cU" cU" " f gf" through the text, carrying with him his own experiences and notions to be used in interpretation. The author need not die for the reader to live; rather, the two live in harmony to maximize the meaning and effectiveness of the written word. So, as we readers examine a text, whether it be a

c ec" g U" c" g' g " "gc U" " "e f gU" "cU" g" U" h' U." g " set down g" c e g 0Ng " g" f U" g' c e g .f " " e h ."cU" gU" e g "h " g' author has a story to tell.

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