

***SHAKSPER ROUNDTABLE "Shakespeare's Intentions" (2008)***  
*(Complete Roundtable Discussion in Single PDF File)*

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0199.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.02035 Thursday, 3 April 2008

From: Cary DiPietro <cary.dipietro@utoronto.ca>  
Date: Friday, 14 Mar 2008 17:42:45 -0400  
Subject: SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Dear SHAKSPEReans,

Let me introduce Cary DiPietro, who has agreed to be the guest moderator for the second SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions, and provide some background. This Roundtable originated from regular discussions on the list. John V. Knapp, Professor of English at Northern Illinois University and Editor of *\_Style\_*, suggested to me the possibility of a STYLE/SHAKSPER collaboration. We then made a call for guest moderators and chose Cary DiPietro.

To review the Roundtable procedures, the Guest Moderator is responsible for initiating, moderating, directing, and concluding Roundtable discussions. To begin, the Guest Moderator announces a Reading List at least two weeks before discussion begins. Anyone participating in the Roundtable discussions is expected to be thoroughly familiar with these readings; the reading list is a means of distinguishing Roundtable discussions from the ordinary traffic on the list. Roundtable discussions concentrate on significant topics in the discipline. The discourse is intended to be the elevated exchanges of academia and not the impressionistic responses of enthusiasts. The Guest Moderator starts the discussion with a question or a statement. Members who wish to participate send responses that are clearly identified as belonging to the Roundtable thread to me, and I forward them to the Guest Moderator, who organizes and comments on the entire week's submissions before suggesting directions that discussions might take the following week. After calling an end to the Roundtable, the Guest Moderator provides a summary statement, and then the entire course of the Roundtable discussions is given its own page on the SHAKSPER website for public review.

With this said, let us begin the second SHAKSPER Roundtable.

Best wishes,  
Hardy M. Cook

SHAKSPER Roundtable: Initial Message, Reading List -- Shakespeare's Intentions

Cary DiPietro currently lectures at the University of Toronto at Mississauga. He received both his M.A. (1997) and Ph.D. (2002) in Shakespeare Studies from The Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham. He is the author of *Shakespeare and Modernism* (Cambridge UP, 2006) and of related articles on Shakespeare in such venues as *New Theatre Quarterly*, *Shakespeare Survey*, and *Shakespeare*. He is also editor of Volume 9 in the forthcoming series *Great Shakespeareans* (Continuum) and contributor to the forthcoming *Shakespeare Encyclopedia* (Greenwood Press). He is currently working on a visual history of scenography and design in English production of Shakespeare from 1660 to 1960. His research interests occur at the intersection of theatre history and performance theory with literary critical history and practice.

Convention dictates that I write my own bio-blurb in the third person, a narrative device meant to conceal by way of a seemingly objective voice the construction and insertion of my professional self into a disciplinary practice. While that "self" is governed by the norms and expectations of a professional discourse in the broader sense, it's also written into a specific category or genre of writing that is itself governed by the norms and expectations of a community of readers. That "self" is necessarily contained and delimited by the form and content of the narrative (it may not be relevant that I'm a Calvin Klein underwear model, but the fact that I bought my degrees on the internet is certainly an important omission). So, too, is the "community of readers" I can only imagine as I write this blurb on my laptop, and whose diversity and heterogeneity are inevitably flattened out and contained by the singular act of "sending" by way of my email client to an audience called "Hardy M. Cook." So, too, for that matter, is the narratorial identity I adopt in a moment of schizophrenic disconnect to tell the story of my career in the third-person professional. And while it might be nice to believe that the voice you're "hearing" now in the first person is somehow more confessional or true to my real self, the not-so-subtle irony and attempted wit give further evidence to that impossibly complex relationship between my authorial identity, the practices that govern both writing and reading in this particular way

and at this particular moment in time, and whatever it is you think I'm trying to say.

My intention (if you're willing to believe such a thing now) is to offer an analogy between my own authorship and Shakespeare's authorship as a point of entry into our discussion of "Shakespeare's Intentions" in this second SHAKSPER Roundtable. The analogy is in many ways untenable, and for rather obvious reasons, not the least of which include the widely differing genres of writing, the historical distance that separates us from Shakespeare, and the historicity of such concepts as "authorship" and "self", as well as the various practices and economies of writing, textual production, different kinds of reading, and performance. These are the issues, framed in various ways, that have dominated critical and pedagogical approaches to Shakespeare for the last twenty or so years. While it might seem that the theoretical interventions instigated by continental theory have permanently decentred "Shakespeare" as a single and originating source of meaning for the "body" of writing the name metonymically represents, fantasies of his authorship persist, and they do so tenaciously. Despite the death of the author, Shakespeare lives on in the edited texts that bear his name, corrected by editors from the "corrupted" early printed texts that have descended to us. He lives in the theatre, where his presence not only is felt in the living medium of performance, but remains a marketing marker of high culture. He persists even more discreetly in a critical paradigm dominated by the historicist's obsession with material traces of an initial or originating context. And he lives, no less, on SHAKSPER, as a unitary object of discussion.

Indeed, the earlier thread on "Authorial Intention" that occasioned this Roundtable demonstrates that, far from having been exhausted or answered by contemporary critical practice, questions about Shakespeare's dramatic authorship and his intended meanings, though unfashionable, remain important cruxes in the various forms of interpretation in which we engage. My opening exegesis gestures incompletely towards some of the issues that continue to animate debate in the contemporary study of narrative, and which received some treatment in our earlier discussion (implied author, reading communities, etc.); my hope is for us to consider, over the next few weeks, how these terminological, epistemological, and, ultimately, ontological issues in the field of narrative about authors and how they mean for their audiences, might usefully inform our discussion of Shakespeare's drama, and vice versa.

To that end, I've compiled a preliminary reading list. Given that it's a rather long list, I'm going to provide some context here so that

participants might pick and choose (skim and browse) those readings they feel are of particular interest or are particularly relevant to the discussion. The first two of these are intended as general terminological guides. Annabel Patterson's "Intention", after twenty years, remains an excellent and non-prescriptive overview of the questions and concerns surrounding intention, particularly where issues in literary interpretation intersect with legal interpretation. Donald E. Pease's "Author" offers a more conventional historical narrative of authorship, one that has perhaps been too readily taken up in Shakespeare criticism. The historicity of authorship may serve as an initial framework for our discussion, especially as it was played out in a running debate between Edward Pechter, Margreta de Grazia, Peter Stallybrass, Graham Holderness, Bryan Loughrey, and Andrew Murphy in the mid to late 1990s. The article that instigated this debate was de Grazia and Stallybrass's "The materiality of the Shakespearean text" published in *Shakespeare Quarterly* in 1993. I include here with it the series of responses and counter-responses that appeared in *Textual Practice* in 1997.

Where Patterson writing about intention in 1987 is poised on the cusp of an impending turn towards theory in literary and cultural studies, the *Textual Practice* debate marks the starting-point of a critical counterturn that is being more keenly felt now. I've included here two more recent and very wonderful examples that explore the relationship between authorship and intention in Shakespeare. Luke Wilson's *Theatres of Intention* uses Patterson's article as a point of departure in his study of English theatre and law as "institutions which, despite deep and abiding dissimilarities, show a common preoccupation with representations of human action, representations shaped by evolving articulations of intention" (4). In the introduction, Wilson notes in particular that the "unmooring" of intention by structuralist and poststructuralist-influenced critical history has evolved into a kind of agnosticism about intention as a critical object of study. Amy Greenstadt's more recent article on "Lucrece" is a wonderful exemplification of the issues we're raising here, albeit in the case of a narrative poem rather than a drama.

The study of narrative is a huge field, and putting together a short reading list that pays heed to the long critical heritage of this study is by no means an easy task. John Knapp provided me with a much longer list of possible readings from which I've drawn a few that might be particularly relevant to the drama. These include excerpts from longer works by James Phelan and Peter Rabinowitz, both well-known scholars in the field. The section from Rabinowitz's introduction, "Who is reading?" (20-29), and particularly his notion of the "authorial audience",

provide a useful way not only of thinking outside of the intention impasse, but also in terms of how the discussion of narrative intention might be extended to the drama. This is the nature of the argument in two important articles. In "Voice and Narration in Post-Modern Drama", Brian Richardson attempts to destabilize the long-held Aristotelian distinction between mimesis and diegesis to speak of narration in drama. In a similar vein, Manfred Jahn attempts to "prepare the ground for a narratology of drama" (660). Quite wonderfully, Jahn uses Gower's opening speech in *Pericles* (the reconstructed Oxford text) to make the case that plays contain various kinds of narrative voice. This example only amplifies the problematic relationship between authorship, intention and meaning in the drama that we're proposing to tackle here.

I'm really looking forward to our discussion; as Hardy suggests, we're pioneering exciting new terrain. Happy reading!

## References

De Grazia, Margreta and Peter Stallybrass. "The materiality of the Shakespearean text." *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 44.3 (1993): 255-83.

De Grazia, Margreta and Peter Stallybrass. "Love among the ruins: response to Pechter." *Textual Practice* 11.1 (1997): 69-79.

Greenstadt, Amy. "'Read it in me': the author's will in 'Lucrece'". *Shakespeare Quarterly* 57.1 (2006): 45-70.

Holderness, Graham, Bryan Loughrey and Andrew Murphy. "Busy doing nothing: a response to Edward Pechter." *Textual Practice* 11.1 (1997): 81-7.

Jahn, Manfred. "Narrative Voice and Agency in Drama: Aspects of a Narratology in Drama." *New Literary History* 32 (2001): 659-679.

Patterson, Annabel. "Intention." In *Critical Terms for Literary Study*. Eds. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin. Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1987. 135-146.

Pease, Donald E. "Author." In *Critical Terms for Literary Study*. Eds. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin. Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1987. 105-120.

Pechter, Edward. "Making love to our employment; or, the immateriality

of arguments about the materiality of the Shakespearean text." *Textual Practice* 11.1 (1997): 51-67.

Phelan, James. *Living to Tell About It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2005: 1-23 (excerpt from Introduction).

Rabinowitz, Peter. *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1987: 15-29.

Richardson, Brian. "Voice and Narration in Post-Modern Drama." *New Literary History* 32 (2001): 681-694.

Wilson, Luke. *Theatres of Intention: Drama and the Law in Early Modern England*. California: Stanford UP, 2000. See esp. Introduction.

[Editor's Note: Should you have difficulty locating any of these titles, contact either me or Prof. DiPietro and we will send you a pdf file of the title as an attachment. -Hardy]

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0235.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0233 Tuesday, 22 April 2008

From: Cary DiPietro <cary.dipietro@utoronto.ca>  
Date: Monday, 21 Apr 2008 22:20:27 -0400  
Subject: SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Welcome, everyone, to this second SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's intentions. I'm delighted by this opportunity to guest-moderate what I believe is going to be a productive and lively discussion. Before we begin, I would like to outline briefly the way the discussion is going to be organized and directed over the next few weeks.

The first Roundtable guest-moderated by Hugh Grady last year was a great success. Not only was the quality of the discussion exemplary, the issues that were raised there spawned numerous subsequent threads, and continue to be referenced on SHAKSPER well after the fact. Combined with its afterlife, the Roundtable clearly achieved Hardy's goal of providing an electronic forum for enabling productive academic discourse in an alternative platform. This is certainly my hope for our discussion here: that we'll revisit an old argument about intention and, by way of

productive dialogue, reignite debate, explore different, even unconventional, ideas, and achieve a kind of discourse that more traditional professional outlets do not necessarily allow.

Having said that, I know that Hugh would have preferred to have seen more contributions during the actual Roundtable itself. In an effort to stimulate as much discussion as possible over the next few weeks, I've solicited a number of leading contributions from the SHAKSPER community to headline the discussion for each installment. These are going to be organized topically; with each installment, I'll announce the following installment's topic and leading contributor, inviting SHAKSPEReans to contribute on the topic, to respond to earlier topics or contributions, or to open up new avenues for discussion in other directions. Any given week's contributions will be organized into, firstly, those that address the topic (grouped with the leading contribution), secondly, those that navigate their own course through the broader issue of intention, and, finally, those that primarily respond to earlier contributions, prioritized from substantive responses to passing reflections and minor corrections. What I want to emphasize by way of this explicit hierarchy is that there will be a place and space for a wide array of contributions and responses within the scope of Hardy's vision of the Roundtable as a more formal and reflective form of discussion than regular list discussions.

This qualification needs to be made because this particular Roundtable must negotiate the terrain between an earlier, popular, and occasionally heated, thread on "Authorial Intention" begun last year, and a collaboration with the journal *\_Style\_*, edited by John V. Knapp. The question of how or whether the Roundtable discussion will be reproduced in the journal remains to be decided, but, in any case, my goal for the moment is to see that we make the most of the Roundtable format as first envisioned by Hardy; the tone of contributions should be one of professional and informed dialogue, rather than prepared article. However, I'm going to introduce the convention that we adhere to MLA format in the Roundtable, as per *\_Style\_*. Contributors should not feel obliged to introduce secondary sources into the discussion, but should they choose to do so, then we will follow MLA. Many in the SHAKSPER community will not be familiar with MLA conventions, so I'm offering to edit contributions accordingly, but please be sure to include as much citational information as possible when quoting or referring to secondary sources. I'll provide a list of works cited at the end of each digest. All general references to Shakespeare's works will be made to the Oxford Complete Works, second edition (2005), unless the argument warrants quotation of or reference to a different edition, and should

you happen to have a copy handy, you can help me immensely by making your citations there rather than elsewhere. Again, I will edit accordingly when necessary.

With the preliminaries out of the way, let's begin. What follows this week is my own introductory contribution to the discussion on the topic of "Shakespeare's Intentions." I invite participants to respond to the questions I pose at the end, to challenge my assumptions and definitions, or to offer their own way into the topic. Next week's discussion will be led by a contribution from John Drakakis on the topic of "Intention and Textual Authority."

---

### "Shakespeare's Intentions"

Writing in 1928, in lectures that would eventually be published in the polemical volume *A Room of One's Own* (1929), Virginia Woolf offered her own position on Shakespeare as an intending author: "For though we say that we know nothing about Shakespeare's state of mind," she wrote at the very midpoint of her essay, an essay that otherwise addresses the topic of women and fiction, "even as we say that, we are saying something about Shakespeare's state of mind. The reason perhaps why we know so little of Shakespeare-compared with Donne or Ben Jonson or Milton-is that his grudges and spites and antipathies are hidden from us. We are not held up by some 'revelation' which reminds us of the writer. All desire to protest, to preach, to proclaim an injury, to pay off a score, to make the world the witness of some hardship or grievance was fired out of him and consumed. Therefore his poetry flows from him free and unimpeded" (Chapter 3).

Though characteristically mellifluous, Woolf's writing in *A Room* is marked by numerous contradictions, many of them deliberate, and not the least of which is her Shakespeare, held up as a model for female authorship because he represents, in Coleridgean terms, an androgynous ideal. In a subsequent chapter, she invites female writers to "think back" through their mothers, the first of whom, by way of sequential metaphors revolving around such concepts as anonymity and androgyny, turns out to be Shakespeare. Shakespeare was, for Woolf, a model of the "incandescent mind," a metaphor she used to describe that imaginative essence or core implied by the name "Shakespeare" which she understood to be the single, originating source for the "poetry" that bears his name, "poetry" here to mean not a conventional genre of writing, but the creative product of Shakespeare's imagination.

This is an admittedly complex formulation for the idea of "intention" at play in Woolf's writing, but it's made necessary by the fact that *A Room* predates by several years the rise to hegemony of the vocabulary of "intention" heralded by Wimsatt and Beardsley's 1946 essay, "The Intentional Fallacy." Nevertheless, "intention"-as an elision or, for Wimsatt and Beardsley, a "confusion" of a work with its origin-is clearly a point of speculation for Woolf. Shakespeare occupies an important place in her writing, not only as the brother of the imaginary Judith Shakespeare in *A Room*, but, ultimately, as a model of literary genius, the writer who transmits emotion without impediment, who "is naturally creative, incandescent and undivided" (Chapter 6). The relationship between an intending genius and the body of writing that has descended to us is one of unproblematic metonymy.

Despite this romanticist investment in such concepts as literary genius, however, Shakespeare remains central to her material demands, explicit in the title of the volume, that women need a room of their own and five hundred pounds a year to write fiction. Thus, she writes: "fiction is like a spider's web, attached ever so lightly perhaps, but still attached to life at all four corners. Often the attachment is scarcely perceptible; Shakespeare's plays, for instance, seem to hang there complete by themselves. But when the web is pulled askew, hooked up at the edge, torn in the middle, one remembers that these webs are not spun in mid-air by incorporeal creatures, but are the work of suffering human beings, and are attached to grossly material things, like health and money and the houses we live in" (Chapter 3).

I've chosen to begin our discussion of intention by, rather than pronouncing on the topic, putting forth for our consideration a concrete example, in this case, of a well-known writer speculating on the nature of Shakespeare's authorship. Woolf's is actually a fascinating, and illuminating, case study of intention, and I raise it here at considerable length because, I argue, it bears immediately upon what we do when we discuss Shakespeare now.

On the one hand, her version of Shakespeare seems quaintly antiquated. There are, to begin, fallacious assumptions about Shakespeare's authorship and biography that descend, unchallenged, from familiar nineteenth-century lore: in a synoptic biography in Chapter 3, Shakespeare rises from deer poacher and immodest youth to horse attendant and, later, dramatic genius who "never blotted a line." There is also an uneasy equivalence of genre in Woolf's writing, as if the writing of plays, poems and fiction all required the same imaginative

investment, despite the differing material circumstances that enabled their production. While she praises Shakespeare for, in some sense, "concealing" himself in his plays, she fails to account for rather obvious differences between dramatic and non-dramatic writing; not without reason, debate about authorial intention has tended to revolve around third-person narration and, to a lesser extent, first-person speakers in poetry, where the temptation to "hear" the voice of the writer speaking through the text is inevitably greater.

On the other hand, Woolf is highly conscious of her own narratorial voice. She writes the essay as a narrative structure of plot and character, and she explicitly calls attention to the constructed nature of the identity who "speaks" (the essay derives from a series of lectures Woolf delivered to the women's colleges at Cambridge in 1928): "'I' is only a convenient term for somebody who has no real being" (Chapter 1), she states, before going on to assume the names Mary Beton, Mary Seton and Mary Carmichael at different points later in the essay. Part of the reason for this self-conscious play on narrative identity is the genre in which she writes, the familiar essay, a form popular in the nineteenth century, but often traced back to Montaigne in the sixteenth century, who is commonly said to have invented the "I." For Woolf, this "I" represents a male strategy of writing, a gendered textual position from which patriarchal writers, historically, have pronounced on women. Her attempt to evade the "I" in her own writing is, therefore, demonstrative of her desire to transcend the gendered history of writing; the impersonal "One" of *A Room of One's Own* is, indeed, a carefully chosen pronoun, neither "my" nor "her." But Woolf's evasion also explains her elevation of Shakespeare as a relatively "anonymous" and androgynous ideal.

Shakespeare thus becomes a paradoxical figure in *A Room* because he represents an archetypal genius in a way that seems consistent with what George Bernard Shaw, heaping derision on the nineteenth-century familiar essayist, called "bardolatry," while, at the same time, he's also held up as a prescriptive model for a radical rethinking and de-gendering of authorship. The paradox, and this is my point, should be familiar to us because Shakespeare continues to occupy such apparently inconsistent, perhaps even dialectically opposite, places in Shakespeare criticism: on the one hand, as a canonical writer whose centrality and importance in professionalized literary studies has continued unabated since their inception in the late nineteenth century, even while, on the other hand, as a focal point for debate about early modern authorship, subjectivity, and gendered identity in more radicalized modes of criticism, especially those associated with post-1960s continental theory.

A clarification of terms is perhaps necessary at this point: I use the term "intention" to mean a principle of formal unity in a literary work of art; that is, the work of literature conceived, in a formalist sense, as a unified structure of meaning, but one whose completeness and wholeness presumes, whether acknowledged or not, an intentional consciousness seen to have produced the work. This is necessarily an inadequate definition, and one that I hope invites debate, even though many of the questions this definition raises are well-rehearsed: how is it that writers intend? Are they always conscious of their intentions? How capable are they of realizing their own intentions in any given medium? Are these intentions always fixed in a static text, or can they be seen to be changing from one moment to the next in the process of writing? Can such intentions ever be known? These are questions unaddressed by Woolf. Shakespeare is, rather than an "intentional consciousness," a "genius," to mean both an artist with extraordinary capacity for imaginative creation and invention, but, also, by way of an older etymology, an attendant spirit residing still in the work.

Nevertheless, we can readily situate *A Room* within and against a genealogy of intention in professional literary criticism. Woolf's emphasis on genius evidences a romanticist inheritance that would be adopted into aspects of modernism, both the literary high modernism of her contemporaries such as James Joyce and T. S. Eliot, but also the modernist criticism of professional scholars writing in the same generation, from Caroline Spurgeon (whose *Shakespeare's Imagery* begins with an epigraph from Woolf's *Orlando*) to G. Wilson Knight, *Scrutiny* critics such as L. C. Knights and Muriel Bradbrook, and the American New Critics. The problem of intention, surfacing as it did in the 1940s, was arguably inevitable: modernist criticism is generally formalist in the sense that it gives emphasis to the formal or structural construction of the literary work, and, therefore, it proceeds from the assumption of the wholeness of intention behind the work; but as literary critics increasingly sought to professionalize their activities by developing sophisticated schools of critical analysis, from hermeneutics to historical formalism, they turned, ever more, from esoteric questions in aesthetics-genius, beauty, the sublime-to more empirical forms of structural analysis, eventually denouncing any romanticist attachment to the idea of the author.

In 1929, women, however, did not hold English or literature appointments in universities; indeed, the University of Cambridge, where Woolf delivered her lectures in 1928, did not even grant full degrees to female graduates (Spurgeon and Bradbrook were later among them). Woolf

was herself not university educated, but she moved in elite Cambridge-educated circles in Bloomsbury, and she wrote literary and social criticism in published volumes which she styled "Common Readers." If her Shakespeare seems old-fashioned, quaintly nineteenth-century in 1928, this may have been her deliberate strategy, flouting what were to her male-gendered modes of professional discourse in favor of a more familiar, more colloquial "common" style. In any case, Woolf's is very evidently a politicized reading of authorship. She provides a genealogy of literary authorship that gives emphasis to the material conditions that enable writers to write and that determine the way that they write, with a particular emphasis, obviously enough, on historical gender bias. In this manner, and despite seemingly antiquated platitudes about genius and art, *A Room* anticipates more contemporary materialist and feminist criticisms.

I've already referred SHAKSPEREans to the 1997 *Textual Practice* debate about the materiality of the Shakespeare text. The debate followed the publication of an article by Margreta De Grazia and Peter Sallibrass in *Shakespeare Quarterly* in 1993, in which they made the argument that the idea of dramatic authorship is, more or less, the result of material printing house practices: "Our post-Enlightenment critical tradition," they argue, "has imagined the author standing above or beyond the categories thus far considered, generating words, constructing characters, and creating texts that form his collected works. But all the above illustrations lend support to the simple but profound insight that 'whatever they may do, authors do not write books'" (273). In his response to the article, "Making love to our employment; or, the immateriality of arguments about the materiality of the Shakespearean text," Edward Pechter begins with two epigraphs, one from Northrop Frye, and another from the semiotic critic, Jonathan D. Culler, both of which are worth quoting here:

"Understanding a poem.. begins in a complete surrender... to the impact of the work as a whole, and proceeds through the effort to unite the symbols toward a simultaneous perception of the unity of the structure. (This is a \*logical\* sequence... I have no idea what the psychological sequence is, or whether there is a sequence). [Northrop Frye]

the interpretation of individual works is only tangentially related to the understanding of literature. To engage in the study of literature is not to produce yet another interpretation of King Lear but to advance one's understanding of the conventions and operations of an institution, a mode of discourse... one thing we do not need is more interpretations of literary works." [Jonathan Culler] (in Pechter 51)

Note the way that Pechter positions his response implicitly within a debate about authorial intention by way of the two epigraphs (Frye simply dismisses a question he's not prepared to answer, Culler dismisses "literary interpretation" altogether), and in a way that suggests a tension between a more traditional or formalist kind of criticism (Frye) and a more recent poststructuralist criticism (Culler). More importantly, Pechter emphasizes the fact that this tension is not just an issue of critical perspective, but a disciplinary issue about what we do, our employment, as literary critics: "For us, surrendering completely to the impact of [a Shakespeare play]," he argues, "and at the same time exerting ourselves strenuously to take possession of what possesses us-this is something we have to do. We do make love to our employment" (65).

I'm not exactly sure what Pechter is advocating here, whether it's a return to some aspect of modernist formalism, or merely the hint of a romanticist fetishism. There is, it must be said, a subtle and subversive irony in Pechter's writing that his critics miss, and this is surely an irony in itself-perhaps this is his intention-because irony is precisely the kind of literary structure (the what-isn't-written) an exclusive materialism (the only-what-is-there-in-the-material-of-the-text) is incapable of reading.

This is the question: can a textual practice that has no interest in analyzing formal literary structures and techniques be classed as a kind of literary interpretation, and, if not, what does it do for, or what is it doing to, the study of literature? And while Pechter seems to follow the path of Frye in his evasion of the intention question, we could rightly ask as well: can such literary structures and techniques, irony among them, be understood or conceived without some recourse to the idea of a writer who intended them? In this manner, Pechter's critique of contemporary materialism raises the point that questions of authorial intention remain at the very core of a disciplinary practice, or perhaps that they should, or, in a more qualified manner, that they should form part of our metacritical awareness and positioning, our textual practice, as literary critics.

We can certainly see on SHAKSPER how running discussions about authorial intention inevitably culminate in debates about critical methodology; witness not only the more recent "Authorial Intention" thread (2007), but, more pointedly, the 2001 "Authorial Intention" thread, which quickly descended into a debate about the merit of "theory." This splitting into polar critical camps happens all too commonly on SHAKSPER; a clear dividing line separates "traditionalists", holding up

the canon as a body of self-evident and timeless "truths" about the human condition, from "theorists", evidently determined to demystify such truth claims. This is a gross simplification, one that fails to do justice to the diversity of critical methodologies in professional criticism that inevitably inform debate on SHAKSPER, but it does echo the kind of antipathy commonly expressed on the list.

This is what I find truly remarkable about Woolf's writing, the way that she's able to mobilize a version of Shakespeare to serve her political ends, even while she remains invested in literature as a unique mode of writing, a product of genius that, when it works well, appears to transcend the material conditions of circumstance. The immaterial and material aspects of literary writing are not mutually exclusive interests, but codependent preconditions for the production of great literature-and, one assumes by extension, the understanding or appreciation of it. Of course, such positioning produces contradictions for Woolf, but she embraces these contradictions as part of her non-doctrinal critical philistinism.

I'm not at all advocating a "return" to a modernist or any other kind of critical perspective, but I do want to use the example of Woolf to raise questions for our discussion here: have we abandoned the idea that literary expression requires a special kind of talent or insight, call it genius if you wish, that is finally reducible to a single originating source in the author? Is there more fluidity between genres of writing than we generally allow, and is it, therefore, possible to speak, in some qualified way, of dramatists as authors of fictions with intentions? Is it imperative for us as literary scholars and students, if not to speculate on the nature of Shakespeare's intentions as Woolf does in *\_A Room\_*, then, perhaps, to question the value or necessity, as Pechter does, of aesthetic pleasure or some equivalent principle of literary art as a precondition for the study of literary texts? Is it possible or desirable to recuperate such value-laden and inescapably political assumptions about genius and literary expression upon which the professional criticism of literature was founded, and which remain (some would say insidiously) embedded in contemporary critical paradigms?

#### Works Cited

Cook, Hardy M. (ed.). "Authorial Intention." Online posting. 5 Mar. 2001 to 2 Apr. 2001. *\_SHAKSPER: The Global Electronic Shakespeare Conference\_*. 21 April 2008.  
<<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2001/0525.html>>

--- "Authorial Intention." Online posting. 7 Sept. 2007 to 17 Oct. 2007.  
\_SHAKSPER: The Global Electronic Shakespeare Conference\_. 21 April 2008.  
<<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2007/0576.html>>

De Grazia, Margreta and Peter Stallybrass. "The materiality of the Shakespearean text." *\_Shakespeare Quarterly\_* 44.3 (1993): 255-83.

Pechter, Edward. "Making love to our employment; or, the immateriality of arguments about the materiality of the Shakespearean text." *\_Textual Practice\_* 11.1 (1997): 51-67.

Wimsatt, William K. and Monroe C. Beardsley. "The Intentional Fallacy." *\_Sewanee Review\_* 54 (1946): 468-488. Revised and republished in *\_The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry\_*. U of Kentucky P, 1954. 3-18.

Woolf, Virginia. *\_A Room of One's Own, a Project Gutenberg of Australia eBook\_*. Oct. 2002. Project Gutenberg Australia. 21 April 2008.  
<<http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200791.txt>>

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0243.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0241 Monday, 28 April 2008

From: Hardy M. Cook <editor@shaksper.net>  
Date: Monday, April 28, 2008  
Subject: SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions Redux

I received no responses to the first digest in the newest SHAKSPER Roundtable - Shakespeare's Intentions - guest moderated by Cary DiPietro. I am sure that there are many reasons for this lack of response. Nevertheless, I have decided to repost the initial digest before we proceed with the second one, which will include a paper that Cary invited a SHAKSPER member to contribute.

Should you have missed it, Cary provided us with a substantial reading list to stimulate discussion on the topic of Shakespeare's Intentions:

#### References

De Grazia, Margreta and Peter Stallybrass. "The materiality of the Shakespearean text." *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 44.3 (1993): 255-83.

De Grazia, Margreta and Peter Stallybrass. "Love among the ruins: response to Pechter." *Textual Practice* 11.1 (1997): 69-79.

Greenstadt, Amy. "'Read it in me': the author's will in 'Lucrece'". *Shakespeare Quarterly* 57.1 (2006): 45-70.

Holderness, Graham, Bryan Loughrey and Andrew Murphy. "Busy doing nothing: a response to Edward Pechter." *Textual Practice* 11.1 (1997): 81-7.

Jahn, Manfred. "Narrative Voice and Agency in Drama: Aspects of a Narratology in Drama." *New Literary History* 32 (2001): 659-679.

Patterson, Annabel. "Intention." In *Critical Terms for Literary Study*. Eds. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin. Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1987. 135-146.

Pease, Donald E. "Author." In *Critical Terms for Literary Study*. Eds. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin. Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1987. 105-120.

Pechter, Edward. "Making love to our employment; or, the immateriality of arguments about the materiality of the Shakespearean text." *Textual Practice* 11.1 (1997): 51-67.

Phelan, James. *Living to Tell About It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2005: 1-23 (excerpt from Introduction).

Rabinowitz, Peter. *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1987: 15-29.

Richardson, Brian. "Voice and Narration in Post-Modern Drama." *New Literary History* 32 (2001): 681-694.

Wilson, Luke. *Theatres of Intention: Drama and the Law in Early Modern England*. California: Stanford UP, 2000. See esp. Introduction.

I just received my copy of *Shakespeare Survey* 59 (I purchase it as part of my membership to the Shakespeare Association of America). This volume contains yet another essay by the anti-theory curmudgeon Ed Pechter that I believe belongs in our reading list: "Crisis in Editing?" *\_Shakespeare Survey\_* 59 (2006): 20-38.

Should anyone have difficulty obtaining any of these essays please send

me an e-mail at editor@shaksper.net.

As promised here is the initial digest in the SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions.

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0233 Tuesday, 22 April 2008

From: Cary DiPietro <cary.dipietro@utoronto.ca>  
Date: Monday, 21 Apr 2008 22:20:27 -0400  
Subject: SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Welcome, everyone, to this second SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's intentions. I'm delighted by this opportunity to guest-moderate what I believe is going to be a productive and lively discussion. Before we begin, I would like to outline briefly the way the discussion is going to be organized and directed over the next few weeks.

The first Roundtable guest-moderated by Hugh Grady last year was a great success. Not only was the quality of the discussion exemplary, the issues that were raised there spawned numerous subsequent threads, and continue to be referenced on SHAKSPER well after the fact. Combined with its afterlife, the Roundtable clearly achieved Hardy's goal of providing an electronic forum for enabling productive academic discourse in an alternative platform. This is certainly my hope for our discussion here: that we'll revisit an old argument about intention and, by way of productive dialogue, reignite debate, explore different, even unconventional, ideas, and achieve a kind of discourse that more traditional professional outlets do not necessarily allow.

Having said that, I know that Hugh would have preferred to have seen more contributions during the actual Roundtable itself. In an effort to stimulate as much discussion as possible over the next few weeks, I've solicited a number of leading contributions from the SHAKSPER community to headline the discussion for each installment. These are going to be organized topically; with each installment, I'll announce the following installment's topic and leading contributor, inviting SHAKSPEReans to contribute on the topic, to respond to earlier topics or contributions, or to open up new avenues for discussion in other directions. Any given week's contributions will be organized into, firstly, those that address the topic (grouped with the leading contribution), secondly, those that navigate their own course through the broader issue of intention, and, finally, those that primarily respond to earlier contributions, prioritized from substantive responses to passing reflections and minor

corrections. What I want to emphasize by way of this explicit hierarchy is that there will be a place and space for a wide array of contributions and responses within the scope of Hardy's vision of the Roundtable as a more formal and reflective form of discussion than regular list discussions.

This qualification needs to be made because this particular Roundtable must negotiate the terrain between an earlier, popular, and occasionally heated, thread on "Authorial Intention" begun last year, and a collaboration with the journal *\_Style\_*, edited by John V. Knapp. The question of how or whether the Roundtable discussion will be reproduced in the journal remains to be decided, but, in any case, my goal for the moment is to see that we make the most of the Roundtable format as first envisioned by Hardy; the tone of contributions should be one of professional and informed dialogue, rather than prepared article. However, I'm going to introduce the convention that we adhere to MLA format in the Roundtable, as per *\_Style\_*. Contributors should not feel obliged to introduce secondary sources into the discussion, but should they choose to do so, then we will follow MLA. Many in the SHAKSPER community will not be familiar with MLA conventions, so I'm offering to edit contributions accordingly, but please be sure to include as much citational information as possible when quoting or referring to secondary sources. I'll provide a list of works cited at the end of each digest. All general references to Shakespeare's works will be made to the Oxford Complete Works, second edition (2005), unless the argument warrants quotation of or reference to a different edition, and should you happen to have a copy handy, you can help me immensely by making your citations there rather than elsewhere. Again, I will edit accordingly when necessary.

With the preliminaries out of the way, let's begin. What follows this week is my own introductory contribution to the discussion on the topic of "Shakespeare's Intentions." I invite participants to respond to the questions I pose at the end, to challenge my assumptions and definitions, or to offer their own way into the topic. Next week's discussion will be led by a contribution from John Drakakis on the topic of "Intention and Textual Authority."

"Shakespeare's Intentions"

Writing in 1928, in lectures that would eventually be published in the polemical volume *\_A Room of One's Own\_* (1929), Virginia Woolf offered her own position on Shakespeare as an intending author: "For though we say that we know nothing about Shakespeare's state of mind," she wrote

at the very midpoint of her essay, an essay that otherwise addresses the topic of women and fiction, "even as we say that, we are saying something about Shakespeare's state of mind. The reason perhaps why we know so little of Shakespeare-compared with Donne or Ben Jonson or Milton-is that his grudges and spites and antipathies are hidden from us. We are not held up by some 'revelation' which reminds us of the writer. All desire to protest, to preach, to proclaim an injury, to pay off a score, to make the world the witness of some hardship or grievance was fired out of him and consumed. Therefore his poetry flows from him free and unimpeded" (Chapter 3).

Though characteristically mellifluous, Woolf's writing in *\_A Room\_* is marked by numerous contradictions, many of them deliberate, and not the least of which is her Shakespeare, held up as a model for female authorship because he represents, in Coleridgean terms, an androgynous ideal. In a subsequent chapter, she invites female writers to "think back" through their mothers, the first of whom, by way of sequential metaphors revolving around such concepts as anonymity and androgyny, turns out to be Shakespeare. Shakespeare was, for Woolf, a model of the "incandescent mind," a metaphor she used to describe that imaginative essence or core implied by the name "Shakespeare" which she understood to be the single, originating source for the "poetry" that bears his name, "poetry" here to mean not a conventional genre of writing, but the creative product of Shakespeare's imagination.

This is an admittedly complex formulation for the idea of "intention" at play in Woolf's writing, but it's made necessary by the fact that *\_A Room\_* predates by several years the rise to hegemony of the vocabulary of "intention" heralded by Wimsatt and Beardsley's 1946 essay, "The Intentional Fallacy." Nevertheless, "intention"-as an elision or, for Wimsatt and Beardsley, a "confusion" of a work with its origin-is clearly a point of speculation for Woolf. Shakespeare occupies an important place in her writing, not only as the brother of the imaginary Judith Shakespeare in *\_A Room\_*, but, ultimately, as a model of literary genius, the writer who transmits emotion without impediment, who "is naturally creative, incandescent and undivided" (Chapter 6). The relationship between an intending genius and the body of writing that has descended to us is one of unproblematic metonymy.

Despite this romanticist investment in such concepts as literary genius, however, Shakespeare remains central to her material demands, explicit in the title of the volume, that women need a room of their own and five hundred pounds a year to write fiction. Thus, she writes: "fiction is like a spider's web, attached ever so lightly perhaps, but still

attached to life at all four corners. Often the attachment is scarcely perceptible; Shakespeare's plays, for instance, seem to hang there complete by themselves. But when the web is pulled askew, hooked up at the edge, torn in the middle, one remembers that these webs are not spun in mid-air by incorporeal creatures, but are the work of suffering human beings, and are attached to grossly material things, like health and money and the houses we live in" (Chapter 3).

I've chosen to begin our discussion of intention by, rather than pronouncing on the topic, putting forth for our consideration a concrete example, in this case, of a well-known writer speculating on the nature of Shakespeare's authorship. Woolf's is actually a fascinating, and illuminating, case study of intention, and I raise it here at considerable length because, I argue, it bears immediately upon what we do when we discuss Shakespeare now.

On the one hand, her version of Shakespeare seems quaintly antiquated. There are, to begin, fallacious assumptions about Shakespeare's authorship and biography that descend, unchallenged, from familiar nineteenth-century lore: in a synoptic biography in Chapter 3, Shakespeare rises from deer poacher and immodest youth to horse attendant and, later, dramatic genius who "never blotted a line." There is also an uneasy equivalence of genre in Woolf's writing, as if the writing of plays, poems and fiction all required the same imaginative investment, despite the differing material circumstances that enabled their production. While she praises Shakespeare for, in some sense, "concealing" himself in his plays, she fails to account for rather obvious differences between dramatic and non-dramatic writing; not without reason, debate about authorial intention has tended to revolve around third-person narration and, to a lesser extent, first-person speakers in poetry, where the temptation to "hear" the voice of the writer speaking through the text is inevitably greater.

On the other hand, Woolf is highly conscious of her own narratorial voice. She writes the essay as a narrative structure of plot and character, and she explicitly calls attention to the constructed nature of the identity who "speaks" (the essay derives from a series of lectures Woolf delivered to the women's colleges at Cambridge in 1928): "'I' is only a convenient term for somebody who has no real being" (Chapter 1), she states, before going on to assume the names Mary Beton, Mary Seton and Mary Carmichael at different points later in the essay. Part of the reason for this self-conscious play on narrative identity is the genre in which she writes, the familiar essay, a form popular in the nineteenth century, but often traced back to Montaigne in the sixteenth

century, who is commonly said to have invented the "I." For Woolf, this "I" represents a male strategy of writing, a gendered textual position from which patriarchal writers, historically, have pronounced on women.

Her attempt to evade the "I" in her own writing is, therefore, demonstrative of her desire to transcend the gendered history of writing; the impersonal "One" of *\_A Room of One's Own\_* is, indeed, a carefully chosen pronoun, neither "my" nor "her." But Woolf's evasion also explains her elevation of Shakespeare as a relatively "anonymous" and androgynous ideal.

Shakespeare thus becomes a paradoxical figure in *\_A Room\_* because he represents an archetypal genius in a way that seems consistent with what George Bernard Shaw, heaping derision on the nineteenth-century familiar essayist, called "bardolatry," while, at the same time, he's also held up as a prescriptive model for a radical rethinking and de-gendering of authorship. The paradox, and this is my point, should be familiar to us because Shakespeare continues to occupy such apparently inconsistent, perhaps even dialectically opposite, places in Shakespeare criticism: on the one hand, as a canonical writer whose centrality and importance in professionalized literary studies has continued unabated since their inception in the late nineteenth century, even while, on the other hand, as a focal point for debate about early modern authorship, subjectivity, and gendered identity in more radicalized modes of criticism, especially those associated with post-1960s continental theory.

A clarification of terms is perhaps necessary at this point: I use the term "intention" to mean a principle of formal unity in a literary work of art; that is, the work of literature conceived, in a formalist sense, as a unified structure of meaning, but one whose completeness and wholeness presumes, whether acknowledged or not, an intentional consciousness seen to have produced the work. This is necessarily an inadequate definition, and one that I hope invites debate, even though many of the questions this definition raises are well-rehearsed: how is it that writers intend? Are they always conscious of their intentions? How capable are they of realizing their own intentions in any given medium? Are these intentions always fixed in a static text, or can they be seen to be changing from one moment to the next in the process of writing? Can such intentions ever be known? These are questions unaddressed by Woolf. Shakespeare is, rather than an "intentional consciousness," a "genius," to mean both an artist with extraordinary capacity for imaginative creation and invention, but, also, by way of an older etymology, an attendant spirit residing still in the work.

Nevertheless, we can readily situate *\_A Room\_* within and against a

genealogy of intention in professional literary criticism. Woolf's emphasis on genius evidences a romanticist inheritance that would be adopted into aspects of modernism, both the literary high modernism of her contemporaries such as James Joyce and T. S. Eliot, but also the modernist criticism of professional scholars writing in the same generation, from Caroline Spurgeon (whose *Shakespeare's Imagery* begins with an epigraph from Woolf's *Orlando*) to G. Wilson Knight, *Scrutiny* critics such as L. C. Knights and Muriel Bradbrook, and the American New Critics. The problem of intention, surfacing as it did in the 1940s, was arguably inevitable: modernist criticism is generally formalist in the sense that it gives emphasis to the formal or structural construction of the literary work, and, therefore, it proceeds from the assumption of the wholeness of intention behind the work; but as literary critics increasingly sought to professionalize their activities by developing sophisticated schools of critical analysis, from hermeneutics to historical formalism, they turned, ever more, from esoteric questions in aesthetics-genius, beauty, the sublime-to more empirical forms of structural analysis, eventually denouncing any romanticist attachment to the idea of the author.

In 1929, women, however, did not hold English or literature appointments in universities; indeed, the University of Cambridge, where Woolf delivered her lectures in 1928, did not even grant full degrees to female graduates (Spurgeon and Bradbrook were later among them). Woolf was herself not university educated, but she moved in elite Cambridge-educated circles in Bloomsbury, and she wrote literary and social criticism in published volumes which she styled "Common Readers." If her Shakespeare seems old-fashioned, quaintly nineteenth-century in 1928, this may have been her deliberate strategy, flouting what were to her male-gendered modes of professional discourse in favor of a more familiar, more colloquial "common" style. In any case, Woolf's is very evidently a politicized reading of authorship. She provides a genealogy of literary authorship that gives emphasis to the material conditions that enable writers to write and that determine the way that they write, with a particular emphasis, obviously enough, on historical gender bias.

In this manner, and despite seemingly antiquated platitudes about genius and art, *A Room* anticipates more contemporary materialist and feminist criticisms.

I've already referred SHAKSPEReans to the 1997 *Textual Practice* debate about the materiality of the Shakespeare text. The debate followed the publication of an article by Margreta De Grazia and Peter Sallibrass in *Shakespeare Quarterly* in 1993, in which they made the argument that the idea of dramatic authorship is, more or less, the result of material

printing house practices: "Our post-Enlightenment critical tradition," they argue, "has imagined the author standing above or beyond the categories thus far considered, generating words, constructing characters, and creating texts that form his collected works. But all the above illustrations lend support to the simple but profound insight that 'whatever they may do, authors do not write books'" (273). In his response to the article, "Making love to our employment; or, the immateriality of arguments about the materiality of the Shakespearean text," Edward Pechter begins with two epigraphs, one from Northrop Frye, and another from the semiotic critic, Jonathan D. Culler, both of which are worth quoting here: "Understanding a poem.. begins in a complete surrender... to the impact of the work as a whole, and proceeds through the effort to unite the symbols toward a simultaneous perception of the unity of the structure. (This is a \*logical\* sequence... I have no idea what the psychological sequence is, or whether there is a sequence). [Northrop Frye] the interpretation of individual works is only tangentially related to the understanding of literature. To engage in the study of literature is not to produce yet another interpretation of King Lear but to advance one's understanding of the conventions and operations of an institution, a mode of discourse... one thing we do not need is more interpretations of literary works." [Jonathan Culler] (in Pechter 51).

Note the way that Pechter positions his response implicitly within a debate about authorial intention by way of the two epigraphs (Frye simply dismisses a question he's not prepared to answer, Culler dismisses "literary interpretation" altogether), and in a way that suggests a tension between a more traditional or formalist kind of criticism (Frye) and a more recent poststructuralist criticism (Culler).

More importantly, Pechter emphasizes the fact that this tension is not just an issue of critical perspective, but a disciplinary issue about what we do, our employment, as literary critics: "For us, surrendering completely to the impact of [a Shakespeare play]," he argues, "and at the same time exerting ourselves strenuously to take possession of what possesses us-this is something we have to do. We do make love to our employment" (65).

I'm not exactly sure what Pechter is advocating here, whether it's a return to some aspect of modernist formalism, or merely the hint of a romanticist fetishism. There is, it must be said, a subtle and subversive irony in Pechter's writing that his critics miss, and this is surely an irony in itself-perhaps this is his intention-because irony is precisely the kind of literary structure (the what-isn't-written) an exclusive materialism (the

only-what-is-there-in-the-material-of-the-text) is incapable of reading.

This is the question: can a textual practice that has no interest in analyzing formal literary structures and techniques be classed as a kind of literary interpretation, and, if not, what does it do for, or what is it doing to, the study of literature? And while Pechter seems to follow the path of Frye in his evasion of the intention question, we could rightly ask as well: can such literary structures and techniques, irony among them, be understood or conceived without some recourse to the idea of a writer who intended them? In this manner, Pechter's critique of contemporary materialism raises the point that questions of authorial intention remain at the very core of a disciplinary practice, or perhaps that they should, or, in a more qualified manner, that they should form part of our metacritical awareness and positioning, our textual practice, as literary critics.

We can certainly see on SHAKSPER how running discussions about authorial intention inevitably culminate in debates about critical methodology; witness not only the more recent "Authorial Intention" thread (2007), but, more pointedly, the 2001 "Authorial Intention" thread, which quickly descended into a debate about the merit of "theory." This splitting into polar critical camps happens all too commonly on SHAKSPER; a clear dividing line separates "traditionalists", holding up the canon as a body of self-evident and timeless "truths" about the human condition, from "theorists", evidently determined to demystify such truth claims. This is a gross simplification, one that fails to do justice to the diversity of critical methodologies in professional criticism that inevitably inform debate on SHAKSPER, but it does echo the kind of antipathy commonly expressed on the list.

This is what I find truly remarkable about Woolf's writing, the way that she's able to mobilize a version of Shakespeare to serve her political ends, even while she remains invested in literature as a unique mode of writing, a product of genius that, when it works well, appears to transcend the material conditions of circumstance. The immaterial and material aspects of literary writing are not mutually exclusive interests, but codependent preconditions for the production of great literature-and, one assumes by extension, the understanding or appreciation of it. Of course, such positioning produces contradictions for Woolf, but she embraces these contradictions as part of her non-doctrinal critical philistinism.

I'm not at all advocating a "return" to a modernist or any other kind of critical perspective, but I do want to use the example of Woolf to raise

questions for our discussion here: have we abandoned the idea that literary expression requires a special kind of talent or insight, call it genius if you wish, that is finally reducible to a single originating source in the author? Is there more fluidity between genres of writing than we generally allow, and is it, therefore, possible to speak, in some qualified way, of dramatists as authors of fictions with intentions? Is it imperative for us as literary scholars and students, if not to speculate on the nature of Shakespeare's intentions as Woolf does in *\_A Room\_*, then, perhaps, to question the value or necessity, as Pechter does, of aesthetic pleasure or some equivalent principle of literary art as a precondition for the study of literary texts? Is it possible or desirable to recuperate such value-laden and inescapably political assumptions about genius and literary expression upon which the professional criticism of literature was founded, and which remain (some would say insidiously) embedded in contemporary critical paradigms?

#### Works Cited

Cook, Hardy M. (ed.). "Authorial Intention." Online posting. 5 Mar. 2001 to 2 Apr. 2001. *\_SHAKSPER: The Global Electronic Shakespeare Conference\_*. 21 April 2008.  
<<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2001/0525.html>>

--- "Authorial Intention." Online posting. 7 Sept. 2007 to 17 Oct. 2007. *\_SHAKSPER: The Global Electronic Shakespeare Conference\_*. 21 April 2008.  
<<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2007/0576.html>>

De Grazia, Margreta and Peter Stallybrass. "The materiality of the Shakespearean text." *\_Shakespeare Quarterly\_* 44.3 (1993): 255-83.

Pechter, Edward. "Making love to our employment; or, the immateriality of arguments about the materiality of the Shakespearean text." *\_Textual Practice\_* 11.1 (1997): 51-67.

Wimsatt, William K. and Monroe C. Beardsley. "The Intentional Fallacy." *\_Sewanee Review\_* 54 (1946): 468-488. Revised and republished in *\_The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry\_*. U of Kentucky P, 1954. 3-18.

Woolf, Virginia. *\_A Room of One's Own, a Project Gutenberg of Australia eBook\_*. Oct. 2002. Project Gutenberg Australia. 21 April 2008.  
<<http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200791.txt>>

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0252.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0250 Friday, 2 May 2008

From: Cary DiPietro <cary.dipietro@utoronto.ca>  
Date: Thursday, 1 May 2008 11:02:24 -0400  
Subject: Roundtable Digest: Shakespeare's Intentions

As we wait for potential contributors to gather their thoughts and weigh in on the discussion, we turn in this second installment of the Roundtable to John Drakakis writing on the topic of "Intention and Textual Authority." I should note that this title comes not from John; I initially asked if he would be interested in addressing the question of how a textual editor approaches intention, particularly in relation to the construction or reconstruction of an ideal or authoritative "authorial" text. What follows is a much wider ranging discussion, wonderfully so, and one that would be ill-served by the heading, "intention and editing." What I find particularly instructive here is how an intentional fallacy (though of a different sort than first formulated by Wimsatt and Beardsley) is shown to be "deeply embedded" in multiple related cultural practices, from the currently popular "speculative" biography to criticism and, especially, textual editing.

John raises a series of questions near the end of his discussion, questions that are not dissimilar to some of the questions I raised at the end of the last installment, though he comes at the topic from a slightly different angle: where John asks if "intention" has a place in contemporary textual practice in the "aftermath of theories of 'subjectivity,'" and how or whether "intention" might be revised in the absence of now outmoded assumptions about authorship, my own concerns revolve around the question of what it means to "do" literary criticism, whether it's possible to practice literary criticism proper without some recourse to intention, and, specifically, whether literary criticism as an institutional discipline is sustainable in the absence of those romanticist and aestheticist assumptions that propelled the initial professionalizing of "lit crit" in the early twentieth century. I think John implicitly answers this question, perhaps explicitly when he turns to Terence Hawkes and the now familiar argument for "presentism." While I'm inclined to agree with John when he suggests that "meaning by Shakespeare" involves, among other things, the projection of a set of

"intentions" upon "Shakespeare," the presentist argument that cultural and historical meanings are made, rather than lying latent in the text and uncovered by the critic, still raises problematic questions about canonicity and disciplinary practice.

I invite SHAKSPEREans to respond to any of the questions raised in the past two installments, or to offer other ways of thinking around intention. The next installment will begin with a leading contribution from Alan Dessen, writing from the perspective of a theatre historian on the question of how or whether the dramatist's intentions were accommodated in the Elizabethan/Jacobean theatre. I also invite potential participants to think about, weigh in or ask questions about the place of intention in theatrical performance, whether from a historical or contemporary perspective.

---

### "Intention and Textual Authority"

From time to time, the question of "intention" resurfaces, and, perhaps the latest spate of recent biographies of Shakespeare that seek to account for various details in the writer's life that have an implicitly or explicitly causal connection with his writings, have contributed in some ways to a return to the question. However, because of the availability of very limited, though still un-exhausted, evidence Shakespeare's writings are sifted as displaced or projected accounts of actual experience, and as symptoms of the evolution of a particular "mind" working mysteriously but not divorced from the principles of causality. Greenblatt's answering of the question of "How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare" is a lively, partly fictional, or perhaps "factional" account, and it manages with characteristic panache to persuade us to entertain a series of causal connections between actual experience and its resurfacing in the dramatist's "art." In a chapter whose title is tantalizingly Freudian, "Primal Scenes" he suggests a kind of "source" for parts of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, that he locates in a 1575 entertainment that Leicester staged for the Queen at Kenilworth when "a twenty-four-foot-long mechanical dolphin rose up out of the waters of the lake adjacent to the castle. On the back of the dolphin - in whose belly was concealed a consort of wind instruments - sat the figure of Arion, the legendary Greek musician, who sang... 'a delectable ditty' to the queen" (46). Shakespeare refers to "Orion on a dolphin's back" in a number of plays subsequently, but the connection between the Kenilworth Entertainment and Shakespeare's deployment of this striking image - certainly striking to a modern researcher sifting

through documents in an attempt to construct a plausible narrative - is the product of the biographical imagination. Greenblatt's own narrative is hedged around with "seems," "maybes," etc., to the point where we can see the writer being progressively seduced by the very fiction he is in the process of creating. We do not know if Shakespeare knew about this particular entertainment; we do not know whether he had watched it as a boy, we do not know if his father ever took him to see this spectacle, we do not know what contemporaries thought about an eight mile trip from Stratford to Kenilworth. But the adult playwright "remembered" this experience and it provided a useful image in a number of contexts. In other words, agency and intention combine in the moment of composition, to the point where it is difficult to determine whether the dramatist is engaged in an act of creation *\*ex nihilo\** so to speak, or whether, pace the structuralist assumptions of new historicism that we have come to associate with Greenblatt's critical methodology, this is no more than an example of the axis of selection intersecting with the axis of combination, within the overarching structure of a particular system of representation. It may be that just as we might be persuaded to think that Shakespeare was attracted to a particular image - a process that privileges the active agency of the writer - we might also be persuaded to think that the image attracted Shakespeare and in ways that he was unable to resist. In some respects, this is how the attractions of genre operate, although this might still not account for particular departures from generic decorum that we often attribute to a particular writer's "style."

In a sense, Greenblatt is subscribing here to a mode of thinking that we recognize from its general appearance in W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley's well-known 1946 essay "The Intentional Fallacy" where a judgment on the efficacy of - in this case - a striking poetic image, derives from a speculative encounter that (perhaps) made an impression on the boy Shakespeare, that he later recalled in a series of plays. We are being invited to observe a range of personal meanings (that in this case are expanded into wider cultural meanings), that afford an insight into the inner workings of the poet's imagination. There is a point beyond which the speculation simply cannot go, and the result is that the quest for cause vanishes into a mystery. The extraordinary success of Greenblatt's book, and of other recent biographies of Shakespeare testifies to an insatiable public appetite to pin down agency, intention and intentionality: to *\*explain\** whatever it was that prompted a writer of Shakespeare's capacity to do what he did, "How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare," or how the person Shakespeare became the poet Shakespeare. Not, of course, "How Shakespeare Became *\*Shakespeare\**."

Behind what appears to be a series of empirical and historical statements is - and I use the words here of Wimsatt and Beardsley - "an analytical judgment" that rests in the final analysis upon an "intentional fallacy [that] is a romantic one." I leave aside here the question of where this leaves a "new historicist" reading, simply because I want to identify a tendency that even in the discourse of an extraordinarily astute theoretically aware reader of Shakespeare's writings as Greenblatt, the intentional fallacy is deeply embedded. I am not seeking here to apportion blame, but rather to suggest that the genre of biographical writing employs a series of discursive maneuvers that, no matter how sophisticated the critical engagement of the biographer, ultimately influences in ways that we might want to think about more generally, a narrative strategy. Nor is the biographer free from speculation about her or his intention. Wimsatt and Beardsley quote with some relish (or perhaps not) E. E. Stoll's observation that "the words of a poem . . . come out of a head not of a hat" and the same is true of the words of the biographer. We might ask, what was the intention of the writer Germaine Greer in her "biography" *Shakespeare's Wife* (2007), or of Rene Weiss's *Shakespeare Revealed: A Biography* (2007)? What do they all mean? Of course, we tend to treat all of these texts, up to a point in the same way that we might treat a Shakespeare text, not as a series of what Wimsatt and Beardsley would call "practical messages" but as contributions to a particular "art form," and, therefore, available to the faculty of critical judgment. The ultimate yardstick by which we measure their "authority" derives from the extent to which we as readers perceive their narratives to accord with what we know of the ultimate "authority," of Shakespeare himself. Il n'ya pas hors d'intention! Or, as Derrida might have said (though I don't believe he ever did) "There is no outside intention."

The challenge that Wimsatt and Beardsley threw down in 1946 has, to use one of Terence Hawkes's pregnant phrases, "had modernity thrust upon it." They were clearly uncomfortable with the shackling of the meaning of a public document, a poem that was in public circulation, to the "authority" of an "author." The slogan "a poem must not mean but be" seems to me to be one of those utterances whose opacity usually becomes clear only when you are half way up the storming of the barricades, by which time any form of hesitation is potentially fatal. The issue has gone through one further transformation since the notorious "death of the author"; if the author is dead, then s/he can have no authority that will guarantee meaning. One of the un-exhausted strands in the recent "presentist" debate involves the investment of the critic/historian/cultural commentator in what the past has left, and the ways in which meanings are "made." Again to quote Terence Hawkes: "We

make meanings by Shakespeare." And it might be added, that the meanings we make are over-determined by our "intentions" however complex they may be. Those who believe, mistakenly in my view, that the chapters in Hawkes's *Shakespeare in the Present* (2002) are little more than idiosyncratic anecdotal "histories" of even more eccentric investors in the reputation and authority of Shakespeare, seem to have completely missed the point. Hawkes' careful, self-conscious, entertaining peeling off of the layers of meaning of these narratives demonstrates the extent to which we all (frequently at even our most guarded moments) can be caught in the act of projection, of displacing on to Shakespeare various attitudes, motives, yes, "intentions" that are our own. Positivist faith in the objective status of the Shakespearean "text" has been shown in the recent developments in textual bibliography to be shaky, if not downright misplaced. What critics believe to be one kind of discourse, frequently turns out to be another: what is thought to be the voice of the poet are sometimes the signatures of the compositor.

Let me focus on textual bibliography since it is within this area of Shakespeare Studies particularly, and of Literary Studies more generally, that the issue of "authority" appears in its most tendentious form. The production of texts is what underpins the enterprise of locating meaning, and meaning here is invariably bound up with statements and assumptions about a particular inflection of the principle of "authority." W. W. Greg's "The Rationale of Copy-Text" urges the editor to select a text that is the closest to what the "author" is thought to have composed, on the grounds that that will be the most "authentic." There is, of course, much to be said about what happens to that "authenticity" in the age of mechanical (and now electronic) reproduction that even the facsimile reproduction challenges. We know, for example, that Charlton Hinman's monumental facsimile of the Shakespeare *First Folio* - even in its second edition - is a fiction, and that no such actual book ever existed. What we tend to forget, of course, is that, for example, the modern editorial practice of normalizing speech-prefixes in printed dramatic texts is a practice dictated by general editors, publishers, and possibly by the assumptions made about the capacities of readers. So that, for example, in a modern text of a Shakespeare play, the appeal to "authority" masks a series of editorial interferences whose existence cannot be linked to the writer to whose "authority" the appeal is being made as a means of validating the editorial enterprise. The recent appearance of multiple or parallel texts of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, Shakespeare's *King Lear*, and now *Hamlet* is an attempt to refine the principles that sustain the general edifice of "authority" although this does little more than enshrine the principle of \*difference\* at the very source of

textual composition, still leaving open the question of "composition for what"?

These are general questions although they cannot be answered in general terms. Literary scholars have now come to realize, belatedly, that the business of editing a text and the questions to which that practice gives rise, are fundamental to everything we do as students of the various forms of linguistic representation and of the assumptions about language that we draw on. We are now much more self-conscious than ever about the decisions we make as editors and about the criteria by which we arrive at those decisions. In other words, just as we may seek to track down, locate, and explain the agency and the intentions of the writer whose texts we seek to re-assemble, so we are engaged in the mobilizing of intentions of our own - in the form of pragmatic decisions based upon a series of protocols that have been established by custom and practice within the field of textual editing.

All this, of course, may sound like a plea for the editor's confident and absolute control over the details of a text, where we might think of the marks on a page in a thoroughly positivist way. But behind that posture of positivism lies a series of assumptions about textual composition (writing), printing practice, contemporary theories of reading, the role of "art" in the society for which it was produced, and the historical transformations of reception since. In short, behind what appears to be a "scientific" practice is what Althusser would have called "a spontaneous philosophy."

A few initial examples might help to clarify some of these issues. Let us consider the case of "Innogen" the silent wife of the patriarch Leonato, whose name appears in two early scenes of *Much Ado About Nothing* but who doesn't say a word, and who is not referred to subsequently in the play. Virtually all editors of this play have expunged this character from the text. The Arden 2 editor, A. R. Humphreys erased Innogen on the grounds that she was an unrealized idea that the dramatist failed to, or simply did not develop. This editorial gesture, it would appear, is designed to cleanse the text of the play of imperfections, so that the finished article is the play in its most pristine form with the editor acting as (in this case) a male midwife to the dramatist's momentarily faltering imagination. At this particular moment of composition Shakespeare's "imagination" was too fertile for its own good, and it requires the superior "authority" of the editor to bring this imagination to heel. Humphreys also normalizes speech prefixes, so that Dogberry is \*always\* "Dogberry": he is never "Andrew," or even more interestingly, "Will Kempe," even though these are the

marks on the page in the 1600 quarto version of the text, and Humphreys emends the line at the end of act 5 that is there attributed to Leonato, to the Folio reading:

"Benedick: Peace I will stop your mouth."

Let me take "Innogen" first. The editorial assumption seems to be here that despite our perennial fulminations about the dramatic value of silence in performance, a play-text in print should only contain a record of those dramatic characters who actually speak. I have never seen a production of the play in which Innogen appears onstage, although given this particular play's commitment to various forms of gendered silence (in particular to the silence of Hero, and the patriarchally enforced silence of Beatrice at the end) Innogen would seem to occupy a position of no little importance. She is, in short, "the silent woman," a type that appears to have fascinated more than one dramatist (and indeed, audiences) during this period. The power of editorial tradition, however, is great; and, even in Claire McEachern's Arden 3 edition of the play, "Innogen" is "retired" gracefully from the fray. This example raises some questions: (i) what is the status of the 1600 text of the play? Where did it originate: in the theatre, or in the writer's "foul papers"? (ii) What therefore was the status of the hypothetical manuscript from which the compositor(s) set the play? (iii) If the manuscript was "foul papers," then what was Shakespeare's \*intention\* in writing the name "Innogen" at the head of opening scenes of the play? (iv) Who was the actual \*agent\* of the inscription? This is not an exhaustive list, but unless we explore it then the \*meaning\* of the name "Innogen" remains obscure. The solution, of course, is not to eliminate "Innogen" altogether.

The case of Dogberry is no less fascinating and has a very direct bearing on questions of agency and intention. In act 4 scene 2 of *Much Ado*, one of the lines attributed to Dogberry contains the speech-prefix "Andrew" (4.2.4), and another "Kemp" (4.2.10), and another attributed to Verges contains the speech-prefix "Couly" (4.2.70). The Arden 2 editor simply notes the variations, but McEachern's note reads as follows:

"The original SPs throughout this scene, which denote actors' (or intended actors') names, betray the marks of the play's composition, and perhaps the copy-text that served as the basis for Q was a promptbook used in the theatre and hence puzzled over by the compositor." (278, n. 1+)

McEachern's footnote is exemplary in that it directs our attention to a number of possible explanations. Although actors' names as

speech-prefixes are not common in late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century play-texts, they do occur; and the question is: are they the result of the writer's own inscription at the moment of composition, and, therefore, expressive of an \*intention\* or were they inserted subsequently at a stage before the manuscript arrived at the printing house, and are, therefore, a record of theatrical practice? I have my doubts about how much "puzzling" compositors went in for, since the instability of speech-prefixes in this instance is matched by an even greater instability in another play published in quarto in 1600 by James Roberts, not Valentine Simmes, *The Merchant of Venice* where Lancelot appears variously as abbreviations of that name and "Clown," and where Shylock occasionally appears as "Iewe."

In the case of the figure of the "clown/Andrew/Kemp/Dogberry," it is difficult to do more than conjecture about a precise sequence of inscription. The only actual prompt-book that I have seen, that of Dekker's *The Welsh Ambassador*, doesn't, I seem to recall, include the names of actors in speech-prefixes; although if that is indeed the case, it would provide insufficient evidence to negate a practice of which the *Much Ado* examples offer some evidence. But, if indeed, the instability occurred at the level of \*composition\*, then this seriously complicates the business of agency and intention. Here "intention" is over-determined by theatrical practice - that whereby a specialist actor was assumed to occupy a particular theatrical role. In other words, we need to revise radically our sense of what writerly "creativity" involved, even to the point where we might be able to suggest that in cases such as this custom and practice determined the flow of the writer's imagination to the point where it was the knowledge of the comic skills of Kemp and Cowley that governed what was written down. Here agency and intention look as though they could have been separated from each other. The need for precision at the level of inscription here \*might\* have been the consequence of a knowledge that specialist "clowns" frequently improvised. I am not sure whether this thought can be taken forward or in what direction, although I think we should take care when we speculate. What I am stumbling towards here is a species of "intertextuality" that \*may\* have operated at the deepest level of the business of the text's composition; either that, or that these examples are the traces of a different kind of "intertextuality" in which all we have is the residue of a theatrical practice that leaves its traces at a time when the impulse to normalization was still unstable. We are familiar with early modern texts as containing traces of compositorial practice, and as Jerome McGann urged us some years ago, we need to take care not to confuse linguistic and compositorial evidence when we read them.

There is a third, more radical possibility, and one that takes us back to a much undervalued book that Terence Hawkes published in 1975, *Shakespeare's Talking Animals* in which he made the case for the Elizabethan theatre as a space for "oral" literature. Subsequently, Bruce King, and in a very different way, Robert Weimann, have taken this topic up. What we do not have is a detailed examination of the practices of oral composition \*as they affect\* the business of playwriting. The work of Albert Lord, James Notopoulos (in the 1930s), and later Marshall McLuhan, all in various ways deal with questions of formulaic composition and the practices of the "oral" poet able to improvise within strict limits (I suppose that modern examples might be traditional Blues singers, or jazz improvisers). If we embark on this route, then we radically disrupt the romantic notions of "intention" and we are then forced to rethink "agency" as well, especially since it addresses that complex interface between the "non-literate" as a mode of being in language in the world and the "literate." Here the work of Eric Havelock on Plato, and Walter Ong on Ramus is important, I think. I am also aware that this strand could very easily lead into the question of the operations of "memory" of memorialization, of cultural memory, and of the role of the theatre in these operations.

But let me come back down to earth to deal briefly with a third example from *Much Ado*, that of the attribution of the line: "Peace. I will stop your mouth." (5.4.97). This line in Q and F is attributed to Leonato, but the Arden 2 editor follows Theobald in attributing it to Benedick and adds the substantive stage direction (following Theobald's "\*kissing her\*"):

\*Bene\*. Peace! I will stop your mouth [\*Kisses her\*.]

In an essay I wrote on the play in 1986, I mistakenly discarded the editorial tradition, took the Theobald reading as substantive and linked the implied gesture of Benedick to a passage on kissing in Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier*. I am now in the process of re-writing that essay, and I will not make the same mistake again. McEachern correctly attributes the line to Leonato and her edition reads:

LEONATO Peace! [\*to Beatrice\*] I will stop your mouth. [\*Hands her to Benedick\*.]

Leonato's patriarchal power at this point in the play should give us some pause for thought; and if the silent Innogen were also onstage at this moment, we might be prompted to wonder what Beatrice, and, of

course, Hero are getting into! Beatrice might have a point, and Hero is about to become another Innogen. If we extrapolated this thought further, then we need to revise our perception of the bastard Don John and of the social relations that this play represents. But the other question that these variant readings raise has to do with Theobald's editorial "intention" here in correcting (as he obviously saw it) the textual evidence of both quarto and folio. Was he *\*improving\** Shakespeare's text or was he unconsciously grafting onto it a particular model of marital relations that he thought appropriate? We could, of course, add to this list of examples from Johnson's edition of Shakespeare, but allow me to content myself with a general comment about editorial tradition: that the history of Shakespeare editing seems to have been remarkably obedient to editorial tradition and that in instances such as that of McEachern, these traditions now need to be re-examined and where necessary, revised. There are signs that they are beginning to be, but there is much more work to be done.

A number of general questions flow from the issues I have tried to raise briefly above: (1) In the aftermath of theories of "subjectivity" can we talk seriously any more about the very kind of "intention" that in a slightly different discursive register Wimsatt and Beardsley problematized? (2) If we take the view that despite a kind of common-sense "intention" involving the decision to write at all, the choice of form, idiom, genre, the choice of means of dissemination, etc., the writer can never be an authoritative *\*source\** how should we revise the concept of intention? (3) If we kill the author off, in the Barthesian, or even the Foucauldian sense of "the author" what are the conditions in which writing, as an event, takes place? (4) Should we not be a lot more precise in defining the *\*kinds\** of writing that a Shakespearean play contains? I do not believe that the case for Shakespeare's plays as examples of "literary" writing has been made, but what does "theatrical" writing, or indeed "oral" writing involve, and how relevant might these distinctions be to the matter in hand?

In these concluding remarks, I have in mind in relation to the third question Sean Burke's book *\_The Death and Return of the Author\_* (1992, reprinted 1999). Of Barthes, Derrida and Foucault, Burke writes:

"They *\*created\** oeuvres of great resonance, scope and variety. They became more than critics: a vast body of secondary literature around their work, one which generally has sought not to contest or deconstruct what they say, but rather has re-enacted precisely the predominance of source over supplement, master over disciple, primary over secondary. They have been accorded all the privileges traditionally bestowed upon

the great author. No contemporary author can lay claim to anything approaching the authority that their texts have enjoyed over the critical establishment in the last twenty years or so. Indeed, were we in search of the most flagrant abuses of critical \*auteurism\* in recent times then we need look no further than the secondary literature on Barthes, Foucault and Derrida, which is for the most part given over to scrupulously faithful and almost timorous reconstitutions of their thought." (178)

We would be mistaken if we thought this was a statement of someone who is antipathetic to careful theoretical enquiry, but it is something we need to think about when we construct that curious knot of concepts that entwine "intention" and "authority."

I have taxed patient readers with too long an introduction, but may I make one request: the previous "Roundtable" strands have petered off into obscurity simply because particular contributors used the opportunity to parade thoughtless prejudice. Perhaps on this occasion, we might pause to think about how we might take the debate forward without getting bogged down in entrenched positions. We have enough material within the Shakespeare oeuvre to provide us with a variety of examples that we can profitably discuss, and that may, I think, lead us to conclusions that we might not have expected when we started to think about this topic.

John Drakakis  
University of Stirling  
April, 2008

#### Works Cited

Burke, Sean. *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida*, 2nd ed. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998.

Greenblatt, Stephn. *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2004.

Hawkes, Terence. *Shakespeare's Talking Animals: Language and Drama in Society*. London: E. Arnold, 1973.

---. *Shakespeare in the Present*. London: Routledge, 2002.

Shakespeare, William. *„Much Ado About Nothing“*, Arden 2 series. Ed. A. R. Humphreys. London: Arden, 1981.

---. *„Much Ado About Nothing“*, Arden 3 series. Ed. Claire McEarchern. London: Arden, 2005.

Wimsatt, William K. and Monroe C. Beardsley. "The Intentional Fallacy." *„Sewanee Review“* 54 (1946): 468-488. Revised and republished in *„The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry“*. U of Kentucky P, 1954. 3-18.

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0253.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0251 Friday, 2 May 2008

From: Hardy M. Cook <editor@shaksper.net>  
Date: Friday, May 02, 2008  
Subject: Meta-Comment on Intentions Roundtable

John Drakakis concludes his thoughtful contribution to the SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions with the following paragraph:

I have taxed patient readers with too long an introduction, but may I make one request: the previous "Roundtable" strands have petered off into obscurity simply because particular contributors used the opportunity to parade thoughtless prejudice. Perhaps on this occasion, we might pause to think about how we might take the debate forward without getting bogged down in entrenched positions. We have enough material within the Shakespeare oeuvre to provide us with a variety of examples that we can profitably discuss, and that may, I think, lead us to conclusions that we might not have expected when we started to think about this topic.

As SHAKSPER's editor/moderator, I am moved to comment here. I developed the concept of the Roundtable format as a means of re-capturing some of the excitement of SHAKSPER's early days. At that time, virtually all of the members of SHAKSPER were academics for the simple reasons that in the early 1990s, for the most part, the majority of those who had access to the Internet were members of the military or members of the academy -- AOL, HOTMAIL, GMAIL, EARTHLINK, and such did not exist. During these early years, members of SHAKSPER were pioneers, adventurous spirits from the academy, who were creating an electronic alternative to Shakespeare Association of America seminars and departmental lounges, a place where

the likeminded discussed their scholarship and ideas, shaping in the process the very medium used for that discourse. The Internet brought together academics from around the world: a Shakespearean in Malta no longer felt isolated from her colleagues in Europe or in the United States; scholars from small colleges in rural Kansas could exchange ideas with their colleagues from major research universities on the coasts or across "the pond"; graduate students and tenure-track assistant professors could hone their academic eye-teeth debating with eminent scholars; while those eminent scholars could test their latest theoretical creations, getting reactions from a broad spectrum of potential buyers of their next scholarly tome. Now, that I have waxed nostalgic, let me return to the matter at hand.

I share John Drakakis's hope that in Roundtable 2 we will have profitable discussions of the topic rather than our being diverted into endless repetitions of the same-old, same-old culture wars confrontations that have characterized some of our efforts in the past to examine subjects of a theoretical nature.

Hardy M. Cook  
Editor-Moderator of SHAKSPER  
Professor of English

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0259.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0257 Monday, 5 May 2008

[1] From: Larry Weiss <larry@lweiss.net>  
Date: Friday, 02 May 2008 13:11:08 -0400  
Subj: Re: SHK 19.0250 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[2] From: Gabriel Egan <mail@GabrielEgan.com>  
Date: Saturday, 3 May 2008 11:52:05 +0100  
Subj: Re: SHK 19.0250 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[1]-----  
From: Larry Weiss <larry@lweiss.net>  
Date: Friday, 02 May 2008 13:11:08 -0400  
Subject: 19.0250 Roundtable Digest: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0250 Roundtable Digest: Shakespeare's Intentions

At the end of his very thoughtful and thought-provoking introduction to

the question of authorial intention in textual issues, John Drakakis seems to invite SHAKSPERIANS to suggest canonical passages which exemplify or illuminate the issue:

- >We have enough material within the Shakespeare oeuvre
- >to provide us with a variety of examples that we can
- >profitably discuss, and that may, I think, lead us to
- >conclusions that we might not have expected when we
- >started to think about this topic.

There is one in particular (which I have mentioned here before but which did not on those occasions excite responses) which I think epitomizes the question on several levels. In Act I, scene ii, of *The Taming of the Shrew*, Petruchio bids Grumio to knock at Baptista's door and Grumio misunderstands or pretends to misunderstand the demand, resulting in his being beaten. Grumio's reaction is given in most editions as "Help, masters, help! My master is mad." The folio, however, has the line as "Helpe mistris helpe, my master is mad." The emendation of "mistris" to "masters" was first made by Lewis Theobald, presumably as there are no female characters on stage who Grumio might be addressing, and his revision has generally been followed since (the Werstine-Mowat Folger edition and the Bate-Rasmussen "RSC" edition, which makes a point of following F1 almost religiously, are notable exceptions). Theobald's emendation is neither particularly funny nor thematic; in fact, it strikes me as rather awkward, with the repetition of "master" serving no poetic function. Nor does the emendation seem compelled by a likely misreading of the MS.

However, there is a way in which we can understand the F1 line which does no violence to the absence a female characters on the main stage and which heightens the comedy and, at the same time, serves a thematic function. If Grumio is addressing himself to the page in the Sly frame, who is present either aloft or at the side of the stage dressed as a lady, the line is an hilariously funny meta-theatrical dropping to the fourth wall. It also serves to remind the audience that they are watching a play within a play, not to be taken seriously on its own level. I don't want to over argue the point, but a moment such as this mitigates the harshness of the catastrophe perceived by modern audiences, especially if the Sly epilogue in "A Shrew" was originally part of the text.

[2]-----  
From: Gabriel Egan <mail@GabrielEgan.com>  
Date: Saturday, 3 May 2008 11:52:05 +0100

Subject: 19.0250 Roundtable Digest: Shakespeare's Intentions

Comment: Re: SHK 19.0250 Roundtable Digest: Shakespeare's Intentions

John Drakakis is quite right to argue that notions of intention are complexly invoked in acts of editing, but in trying to show this I think his Roundtable posting actually understates the problems.

Drakakis praises Claire McEachern's Arden<sup>3</sup> *Much Ado About Nothing*, at the point at which it reads "The original SPs throughout this scene, which denote actors' (or intended actors') names, betray the marks of the play's composition, and perhaps [that] the copy-text that served as the basis for Q was a promptbook used in the theatre [()] and hence puzzled over by the [a] compositor []." (p. 278)

(The square brackets indicate bits of McEachern left out of the quotation by Drakakis; the final 'the' is his too.)

Drakakis writes of this that:

- >McEachern's footnote is exemplary in
- >that it directs our attention to a number
- >of possible explanations.

Well, only if the "number" is one: the explanation that the names come from the promptbook. (She is not suggesting, as I think Drakakis might be misreading, that the puzzling compositors introduced the actors' names.)

Earlier in her introduction (p. 129) McEachern argued precisely the opposite from the same evidence, citing favourably F. P. Wilson's dismissal of the argument that the use of actors' names indicates promptbook copy for a printing and supporting Wilson's assertion that it must indicate authorial copy. Wilson was writing in 1942, well before Greg's famous disquisition on the topic in *The Shakespeare First Folio* (1955). It's a particular weakness of McEachern's edition (picked up in reviews) that she's nowhere near up-to-date on textual criticism. Greg's account of the phenomenon is more subtle than he is usually given credit for, and makes the distinction between actors' names standing in for characters' names and actors' names supplementing characters' names (that is, where both appear).

At the other end of the chain of transmission, Drakakis again misses some key distinctions.

He writes about

> . . . another play published in quarto in 1600 by  
> James Roberts, not Valentine Simmes, \_The  
> Merchant of Venice\_ . . .

This quarto will presumably be the basis for Drakakis's Arden3 edition, so the above statement reflects either important new knowledge (lightly glanced at), or Drakakis has misunderstood the conditions of textual production in the period, for the quarto title-page and the Stationers' Register entries concur: the publisher was Thomas Heyes.

This is germane to Drakakis's attempt to sophisticate our notions of intentionality, for the roles of bookseller, printer, and publisher were often played by the same men in various combinations within the Stationers' Company, and we need to be clear about who was doing what in each edition.

Thus, when Drakakis writes that

> . . . if indeed, the instability occurred at the  
> level of \*composition\*, then this seriously  
> complicates the business of agency and intention

and that

> . . . we need to revise radically our sense of  
> what writerly "creativity" involved . . .

we should all agree, but insist that the complexities go deeper than the trivial case of actors' names in speech prefixes.

With the printing of plays, two key areas of difficulty with 'intention' surely are:

\* The dramatist intends some others, the performers, to complete the meaning of the script by performing it.

\* Those writing for publication might well intend the printshop to complete the meaning by altering the accidentals (the punctuation and other matters not directly concerned with the choice of words), and so might leave the manuscript relatively incomplete in this regard.

A recognition of the first of these underlies the shift detectable in the Penguin and Oxford Shakespeare editions (and belatedly in the

Arden's Third series) towards stage-centered editing. Assertion of the second point by Philip Gaskell in his *\_A New Introduction to Bibliography\_* (1972) caused quite a stir. Whereas Greg's concern (in "The rationale of copy-text") was to get as close as possible to what would have stood in the author's manuscript if only we had it (and hence the authority of accidentals and of substantives had to be treated separately because each might be best represented in a different printing), Gaskell's retort was that we might very well know what would have been in the manuscript and consider it not fit to print.

The points of contention here are quite subtle, and I'm afraid it's a vulgarization of the whole debate for Drakakis to write:

- >W. W. Greg's "The Rationale of Copy-Text" urges
- >the editor to select a text that is the closest
- >to what the "author" is thought to have composed,
- >on the grounds that that will be the most "authentic."

At least, it is vulgar to leave it there and not pursue the real point of interest here, which is the idea of a split in authority. (If anything, Drakakis's account makes Greg sound like R. B. McKerrow, whose 'best text' approach to editing Greg was, in this very essay, dissenting from.)

Let me give a concrete example of how this bears on intentionality. I no longer bother to put into my SHAKSPER posts the usual MLA-style typescript representation of an em-line dash (which is two hyphens with no space either side) because for some reason Hardy Cook replaces them with single hyphens, and to my eye this makes the kinds of sentence constructions I favour rather hard to read. Thus I now rephrase sentences to suit my anticipation of what will happen on the way to publication. Indeed, I don't only rephrase the already-written, I compose in anticipation of this limitation. Who, then, 'intends' my alternative accidentals? Hardy is the root cause of them, but he may well have a good (mechanical) reason. But are they mine nonetheless?

Gabriel Egan

[Editor's Note: See my explanation that follows. I have not included it here because the explanation does not properly belong in the Roundtable thread. -HMC]

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0260.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0258 Monday, 5 May 2008

From: Hardy M. Cook <editor@shaksper.net>  
Date: Sunday, May 04, 2008  
Subject: Editing SHAKSPER as Related to Shakespeare's Intentions

Gabriel Egan writes,

>Let me give a concrete example of how this bears on  
>intentionality. I no longer bother to put into my  
>SHAKSPER posts the usual MLA-style typescript  
>representation of an em-line dash (which is two hyphens  
>with no space either side) because for some reason  
>Hardy Cook replaces them with single hyphens, and  
>to my eye this makes the kinds of sentence constructions  
>I favour rather hard to read. Thus I now rephrase sentences  
>to suit my anticipation of what will happen on the way to  
>publication. Indeed, I don't only rephrase the already-  
>written, I compose in anticipation of this limitation.  
>Who, then, 'intends' my alternative accidentals?  
>Hardy is the root cause of them, but he may well have a  
>good (mechanical) reason. But are they mine nonetheless?

Here, Gabriel hypothesizes that "[Hardy] may well have a good (mechanical) reason" behind the replacing "the usual MLA-style typescript representation of an em-line dash (which is two hyphens with no space either side) . . . with single hyphens." Gabriel has made an accurate assumption here, and I would like to explain how these changes happen.

Since I began editing SHAKSPER digests for distribution, I strove for a consistent "look and feel" to the digests, one that would appear roughly the same no matter what computer platform, web browser, or e-mail client the member used to send messages to or to read the digests from SHAKSPER.

At this point in writing this response, I had intended to describe in detail the procedures that I use, including the macros I have created, to transform an e-mail message I receive into the digest I send out. However, as I was writing, I realized that my detailed description was unnecessary. Let me momentarily continue as I was until I get to the explanation.

1. I save messages that appear in my inbox for SHAKSPER as Windows default "plain text" documents to a folder on one of my hard drives.
2. When I edit what I have received, I begin by opening a file I have named HEADER, I make adjustments so that the header reflects the day, date, and number of the digest I am working on, such as "The Shakespeare Conference: SHK XX.XXXx Monday, 5 May 2008" - Next, I select all and copy the header.

#### EXPLANATION FOR "MECHANICAL" REASON:

I am composing this response in WORD 2007 with the document format set to WORD 97-2003. Above, I just typed two hyphens after 2008" and Word automatically changed those two hyphens, as soon as I typed the comma after "Next," into an em-line dash in the default Tahoma 12 point font of the document.

In my efforts to create digests that look roughly the same no matter what computer platform, web browser, or e-mail client the member uses, I employ a "full block" format I have developed for SHAKSPER digests.

1. All lines are flush with left hand margin, including long quotations and bulleted or numbered lists (since the right hand margin is variable, having consistent-looking results is virtually impossible).
2. Lines are single-spaced.
3. Paragraphs are not indented; instead, separate paragraphs are indicated by having a blank line between them.
4. All sentences are formatted in a manner so that they word-wrap in the e-mail client; to avoid sentences that might begin with a single space indentation, I put one space between the terminal mark of punctuation and the beginning of the next sentence instead of two. (When an e-mail is saved, some computer platforms, web browsers, or e-mail clients insert "Carriage Returns" or "Line Feeds" or both at line breaks, so I have created a macro I use to remove "Carriage Returns," indicated by CR or the Paragraph symbol or CR/LF at the end of a line (EOL). If you are interested in these matters, you should read "The End-of-Line Story": <http://www.rfc-editor.org/EOLstory.txt>.)

When I am done formatting, I click on one of my macros and save the digest as a US-ASCII plain text file with character substitutions and

lines that word-wrap. As I format, any time I type two hyphens Word converts them into an em-line dash; furthermore, any two hyphens that members have typed are, at one stage in my formatting process, similarly converted into em-line dashes. Thus, when I am ready to click on my macro to conclude my editing/formatting, all em-line dashes appear as em-line dashes in the default Tahoma 12 point font of the document, and my final step of saving the file in US-ASCII transforms all these em-line dashes into single hyphens, since the basic ASCII character set does not have an em-line dash character (The initial ASCII character set consists of 128 characters, of which 33 are non-print control characters that affect how text is processed and of which 94 are the printable letters of the English alphabet <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ASCII>>.)

As limited as it is, the US-ASCII character set is generally acknowledged to be the de facto standard for electronic communication in English across computer platforms, Internet browsers, and e-mail clients: Jukka Korpela maintains that "ASCII is the safest character repertoire to be used in data transfer." In fact, "Most character codes currently in use contain ASCII as their subset in some sense" (Korpela <<http://www.cs.tut.fi/~jkorpela/chars.html>>).

I have read and made editing and stylistic changes in this document for perhaps the twentieth time and am ready to save it as a "plain text" (i.e., US-ASCII) file that I will later combine into the digest for the subject in the Subject line above. After I Save-as as I indicated above, the em-line dash in this file will become a single hyphen, explaining (I hope) the "mechanical" reason that Gabriel Egan mentions in his contribution.

Mechanically yours,  
Hardy M. Cook

#### Works Cited

RFC Editor. "The End-of-Line Story." Online document. 18 April 2004.  
RFC (Requests for Comments) Editor. 4 May 2008  
<<http://www.rfc-editor.org/EOLstory.txt>>.

"ASCII." Online article. 1 May 2008. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.  
4 May 2008 <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ASCII>>.

Korpela, Jukka. "A Tutorial on Character Code Issues." Online article.  
13 July 2007 <<http://www.cs.tut.fi/~jkorpela/chars.html>>.

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0265.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0263 Tuesday, 6 May 2008

From: Hugh Grady <HughGrady@comcast.net>  
Date: Monday, 5 May 2008 19:57:13 -0400  
Subject: 19.0250 Roundtable Digest: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: RE: SHK 19.0250 Roundtable Digest: Shakespeare's Intentions

A quick observational comment on the in-progress Roundtable: the first two substantial posts by Cary DiPietro and John Drakakis constitute some of the best critical argumentation ever to appear in SHAKSPER in my experience.

Congratulations.

--Hugh Grady

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0271.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0269 Thursday, 8 May 2008

From: Joseph Egert <tregej@yahoo.com>  
Date: Wednesday, 7 May 2008 13:31:54 -0700 (PDT)  
Subject: 19.0250 Roundtable Digest: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0250 Roundtable Digest: Shakespeare's Intentions

John Drakakis entreats:

>may I make one request: the previous "Roundtable"  
>strands have petered off into obscurity simply because  
>particular contributors used the opportunity to parade  
>thoughtless prejudice. Perhaps on this occasion, we  
>might pause to think about how we might take the  
>debate forward without getting bogged down in  
>entrenched positions."

Can Drs. Drakakis, Egan, et al, define for us the play editor's task or mission?

Thoughtfully yours,  
Joe Egert

[Editor's Note: This question seems to me to belong more properly in the "Meta-Comment on Intentions Roundtable" that I began on Friday, May 02, 2008 <<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0253.html>>, than to the Roundtable discussion itself. So I have added the question into that thread.

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0251 Friday, 2 May 2008

From: Hardy M. Cook <editor@shaksper.net>  
Date: Friday, May 02, 2008  
Subject: Meta-Comment on Intentions Roundtable

John Drakakis concludes his thoughtful contribution to the SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions with the following paragraph:

I have taxed patient readers with too long an introduction, but may I make one request: the previous "Roundtable" strands have petered off into obscurity simply because particular contributors used the opportunity to parade thoughtless prejudice. Perhaps on this occasion, we might pause to think about how we might take the debate forward without getting bogged down in entrenched positions. We have enough material within the Shakespeare oeuvre to provide us with a variety of examples that we can profitably discuss, and that may, I think, lead us to conclusions that we might not have expected when we started to think about this topic.

As SHAKSPER's editor/moderator, I am moved to comment here. I developed the concept of the Roundtable format as a means of re-capturing some of the excitement of SHAKSPER's early days. At that time, virtually all of the members of SHAKSPER were academics for the simple reasons that in the early 1990s, for the most part, the majority of those who had access to the Internet were members of the military or members of the academy -- AOL, HOTMAIL, GMAIL, EARTHLINK, and such did not exist. During these early years, members of SHAKSPER were pioneers, adventurous spirits from the academy, who were creating an electronic alternative to Shakespeare Association of America seminars and departmental lounges, a place where the likeminded discussed their scholarship and ideas, shaping in the process the very medium used for that discourse. The Internet brought together academics from around the world: a Shakespearean in Malta no longer felt isolated from her colleagues in Europe or in the United States; scholars from small colleges in rural Kansas could exchange ideas with their colleagues from major research universities on the

coasts or across "the pond"; graduate students and tenure-track assistant professors could hone their academic eye-teeth debating with eminent scholars; while those eminent scholars could test their latest theoretical creations, getting reactions from a broad spectrum of potential buyers of their next scholarly tome. Now, that I have waxed nostalgic, let me return to the matter at hand.

I share John Drakakis's hope that in Roundtable 2 we will have profitable discussions of the topic rather than our being diverted into endless repetitions of the same-old, same-old culture wars confrontations that have characterized some of our efforts in the past to examine subjects of a theoretical nature.

Hardy M. Cook  
Editor-Moderator of SHAKSPER  
Professor of English]

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0277.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0275 Friday, 9 May 2008

From: John Drakakis <[john.drakakis@stir.ac.uk](mailto:john.drakakis@stir.ac.uk)>  
Date: Friday, 9 May 2008 15:53:45 +0100  
Subject: 19.0269 Meta-Comment on Intentions Roundtable  
Comment: RE: SHK 19.0269 Meta-Comment on Intentions Roundtable

I wonder if I may reply both to Larry Weiss and Joe Egert in this contribution to the round-table discussion.

Joe Egert first: the question of what does an editor do is germane to the question of 'intention' insofar as much editing assumes that the business of preparing a text is to get as close to what the writer wrote. This has sometimes melted into "what the writer 'intended'" and I think that my responses to Larry Weiss, and separately to Gabriel Egan, will elaborate on this a little. Editors try to make sense of texts; but, also, in the case of early modern texts, they engage in a series of operations of modernization that disclose assumptions about the publishing industry, the predilections of the editor, etc.

Let me now respond to Larry Weiss. Rather like Larry Weiss's account of the Folio reading of 'mistris' at The Taming of The Shrew 1.2., and I am sorry that I missed it in earlier postings. It has a special relevance here since it invites us to speculate on what may have been

contained in a hypothetical manuscript, and what may have happened when the line was spoken on the stage. To take the speculation about the manuscript first: The Folio spelling is 'mistris', and this is the only text of the play that we have. But I am minded of the spelling 'Maisters' in *The Merchant of Venice* 4.1.51 in the phrase 'Maisters of passion', that in Q2 (1619) and F (1623) is emended to 'Masters of passion'. The four relevant lines in Q1 read:

And others when the bagpipe sings ith nose,  
cannot containe their vrine for affection.  
Maisters of passion swayes it to the moode  
of what it likes or loathes,  
(4.1.49-52)

Q2 reads as follows:

And others when the Bagpipe sings i'th nose,  
Cannot containe their vrine for affection.  
Masters of passion swayes it to the mood  
Of what it likes or loathes:

F reads:

And others, when the bag-pipe sings i'th nose,  
Cannot containe their Vrine for affection.  
Masters of passion swayes it to the moode  
Of what it likes or loaths,

(Throughout, I have silently emended long 's', but in all other respects these are the variants between the 3 texts). The absence of initial capitalization in the 2nd and 4th lines of Q1 can be attributed to type shortages of Roman caps, and there is other evidence (both of upper case W and lower case w on sig. G3v). All three reproduce the same error of punctuation after 'affection'. But Q2 and F emend the spelling 'Maisters' to 'Masters'. The spelling 'Maisters' for 'Masters' is not uncommon; indeed, if I recall, the spelling occurs in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* along with 'Maistres' where the context clearly gives the modern 'Masters'. What then, was the spelling in the manuscript of the word that F sets as 'mistris' and Theobald alters to 'Masters'? Could it have been 'maistris' or even 'maistrisse'? If so, then F's 'mistris' may constitute evidence of a theatrical intention (and even of Shakespeare's 'intention' when he wrote this scene) to keep the frame Induction on the stage throughout and to refer to its presence as an onstage audience. I am, of course, resisting the temptation simply to say that the F reading

is an error that an editor is at liberty to correct, since both 'Masters' and 'mistris' make sense even though we are on a weaker wicket if we ascribe authorial meaning to the reading. The same is not the case in the example from *\_The Merchant\_* where emendation is necessary. In this case, 'Masters' does not make sense, nor, except in a very minimal way does 'mistris'. In my forthcoming edition of the play, I have emended to 'maistrice' since I think it makes sense to conflate the sense of 'master/mistress' ('affection' being in this case gendered feminine, but having mastery over 'passion' behaves in an androgynous way). In the case that Weiss cites, the question of 'intention' is not necessarily confined to the writing subject Shakespeare, and even if we could prove that it was, we would also have to demonstrate its provenance, i.e., did it come purely from the dramatist's imagination or was it the product of a certain knowledge that Lord Strange's Men would stage the play in one way rather than another? Either way, this kind of example mounts a very serious challenge to the 'unique' authority of the 'author' Shakespeare and enjoins us as modern readers to distinguish between a 'meaning' that may or may not be adequately 'authorised' and a process of 'making sense of' that is properly the purview of reading.

Many thanks to Larry Weiss for raising this example.

Cheers,  
John Drakakis

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0278.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0276 Friday, 9 May 2008

From: John Drakakis <[john.drakakis@stir.ac.uk](mailto:john.drakakis@stir.ac.uk)>  
Date: Friday, 9 May 2008 16:42:59 +0100  
Subject: 19.0257 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: RE: SHK 19.0257 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Larry Weiss's and Gabriel Egan's postings came in together; I think they require to be addressed separately. I have addressed Weiss's contribution to the debate, and I now turn to Egan's.

In my original contribution, there were a few typographical errors. Four of them are obvious, one of which involves the omission of the word 'text' towards the end of the posting. Also, the part of the sentence for which Egan rightly takes me to task should read: "published in

quarto in 1600 printed by James Roberts, not Valentine Simmes." I did not mean to suggest that there had been some dispute over who printed Q1 of *The Merchant of Venice* nor did I wish to suggest that Roberts and Simmes were the publishers as well as the printers of *The Merchant* and *Much Ado* respectively. I merely wished to point out that some of the peculiarities concerning speech-prefixes were not confined to one printer. One more erratum, in the best tradition of Archbishop Spooner, when I referred to Bruce King, I really meant Bruce Smith. My apologies.

At one of the points to which Egan refers in my contribution, I was concerned to raise the question of 'intention' in relation to the variations of speech-prefix that appear in Q1 *Much Ado* at 4.2. and to suggest that different printing houses encountered various problems with them which they addressed in their own way. I was concerned to draw attention to the way in which McEachern had dealt with the issue in her recent edition of *Much Ado*. In quoting part of the note on p. 278 of McEachern's addition, I inadvertently omitted the brackets around the clause "(and hence puzzled over by a compositor)", and I also printed 'the' for 'a'. Such are the pitfalls of writing at speed, although I don't think that these minor inaccuracies affect the substance of the point I was making.

My concern was not to drag McEachern into a slanging match about who is the more virtuous editor, nor am I interested in subjecting her edition to the yardstick of bibliographical fashion. It contains plenty of material for which we should be grateful. I stick to my position that as footnotes go, the one to which I was referring is 'exemplary'. Since Egan seems to have got himself stuck in only one side of a binary, let me go through McEachern's suggestions:

1. that the appearance of the actors' names (or "intended actors") names betray the marks of the play's composition
2. "perhaps that the copy-text that served as the basis for Q was a promptbook used in the theatre"
3. and that it was this that was (. . . hence puzzled over by a compositor")

There is a difference between 1 and 2, and 3 adds another dimension. McEachern does not tell us what it was precisely that the compositor who set these pages may have 'puzzled over'. Were the characters' names scored out and the actors' names inserted? Was the copy 'foul papers' or a promptbook? What was the agency involved here? Was it Shakespeare who intended that Kemp and Cowley should play the parts of Dogberry and Verges, and if so do we not need (and this was my point) to modify the

rather crude model of intentionality that has hitherto accounted for dramatic composition?

I do not have a copy of Greg's *The Shakespeare First Folio* to hand, but I do have his comments on *Much Ado* in *The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare*. There he says -- and I shall do my best to transcribe it accurately -- that *Much Ado* was one of three plays that show evidence "that a playhouse manuscript existed and was consulted" (p. 121). He goes on:

<PROSEQUOTE>

At one point in the quarto of *Much Ado* the names of the actors Kemp and Cowley appear as prefixes for Dogberry and Verges, whence it has been assumed that the text was set up from a prompt copy. But Shakespeare must obviously have written the parts with particular actors in mind, and nothing is more likely than that he should have used their names. [Gregg appends a lengthy footnote that details all of the confusions.] Everything points to the copy having been foul papers that lacked final revision. The stage directions are obviously the author's, casual and often inadequate, [fn. See appendix (p.178)] and there is much inconsistency in designating the speakers." (pp.121-2) (my italics)

</PROSEQUOTE>

Greg challenges the consistency of Dover Wilson's explanation of what he took to be authorial anomalies in Q, while at the same time claiming that the play was printed directly from "the prompt-book". (p. 122). I will, of course, check the later Greg text, but I am not aware that he changed his position on this play substantially.

I have no desire to challenge the 'subtlety' of Greg's account of these matters, but all we can accuse McEachern of is conflating an existing explanation in an attempt to produce a succinct footnote. Like many eminent editors before her, she is perhaps a little too respectful of editorial tradition. I notice that Egan does not pick her up on her use of the term 'copy-text' in this footnote. He does, later, direct us to Gregg's 'The Rationale of Copy-Text' (reprinted in J. C. Maxwell's edition of *The Collected Papers of Sir Walter W. Greg*), but he is silent on those parts of the essay relevant to this discussion and on the extent to which that fascinating essay is littered with odd slippages between 'author' and 'writer'. Let's see what Egan has to say about the ideological investment in the following quotation from this very influential (but now largely superseded) essay:

<PROSEQUOTE>

It is therefore the modern editorial practice to choose whatever extant text may be supposed to represent most nearly what the author wrote and to follow it with the least possible alteration. [So far, so good] But here we need to draw a distinction between the significant, or as I shall call them 'substantive', readings of the text, those namely that affect the author's meaning or the essence of his expression, and others, such in general as spelling, punctuation, word-division, and the like, affecting mainly its formal presentation, which may be regarded as the accidents, or as I shall call them 'accidentals' of the text. (my italics) (p. 376)

</PROSEQUOTE>

We need to register here the slippage from 'what the author wrote' (what I understand by the term 'agency') to the larger question of readings "that affect the author's meaning or the essence of his expression" (by which I understand 'authority'). I feel certain that we shall come back to this at some point in our discussion, and not, I hope, in relation to whether or not Greg departed radically from McKerrow, since such matters are not strictly relevant.

But let me turn to an area of Egan's response on which we appear to agree: that involving a radical revision of, -- to use a short-hand-romantic notions of creativity. Our agreement is, regrettably, short-lived, since he thinks that "actors' names in speech-prefixes" (and I would take it further to include the instability of speech-prefixes tout court) are 'trivial'. I want to argue that they lead us into very complex questions, only some of which are relevant to our discussion of 'intention'. But was does the complexity to which Egan would direct us involve? That "the dramatist intends some others, the performers, to complete the meaning of the script by performing it". I resist the temptation to take a sledgehammer of theory to crack this poor defenseless nut. Like Gregg before him, thought with something less than Greg's eloquence, Egan has "the meaning of the script" very firmly in mind; and, in seeking to point out the mote that may or may not be in McEachern's eye, he overlooks the beam that is in his own. The issue is who's meaning, and was it, or was it not 'intended'. I insist that this is not a mere scholastic point, since we now have access to very detailed theories and accounts of what an 'author' is and how meaning is produced, and we should be very careful how we proceed. Pedestrian common sense will simply not do here.

Egan accuses McEachern of not being up to date in her bibliographical thinking, but I wonder how 'up to date' he is himself? Lest he takes this opportunity to tell us, perhaps I should point out to him that that

was a rhetorical question. But I ask it because his crude account of theatrical transaction and of the problem of 'intention' cannot really be allowed to stand after Barthes' 'The Death of The Author' and Foucault's 'What is an Author'. I will not tax the patience of members of the list by rehearsing some of these arguments, except to say that they imply a very clear distinction between 'agency' and 'intention' that Egan either simply fails to understand, or is reluctant to engage with. What distinction would he make between 'meaning production' and 'sense making' and how might these categories impinge upon our theme for this discussion? One of the questions I am asking is: what do we understand by 'intention' and how do we project that understanding onto texts whose 'intentions' (and I use these scare quotes deliberately) we may only, if at all, be in a position to read symptomatically? And moreover, since this leads to other questions, what are the forces that over-determine these 'intentions'? I have in mind here questions of genre, language itself, and everything that might come under the heading of 'motivation'. And how does the establishment of authorial meaning differ from the readerly practice of sense-making? I only raised the textual bibliographical issues insofar as they impinge on these questions, and I do not think that we should be diverted into areas that might be more appropriately treated in another round-table discussion.

Finally, the trouble with Egan's 'concrete example' is that it is just that: inert, thoughtless, and absolutely a-historical. He is not a 16th century dramatist, nor by any stretch of the imagination can he transform himself into an Elizabethan compositor. Leaving that 'complexity' aside, even at the most basic of levels, he confuses agency with authority, and he won't get out of this bind so long as he persists in regarding writing as an entirely instrumental mode of access to some Platonic realm of ideas. In spite of his concern with practical material matters of printing, there is a very clear Platonic strain in Greg's thinking, and in the bibliographical thinking of many of his contemporaries, including Bowers. It is no accident that D. F. McKenzie's ground-breaking article of 1969 should have been entitled 'Printers of the Mind'. What gives the game away for Egan is his possessiveness: the 'accidentals' of his writing are 'his'. I would be very interested to be a fly on the wall of a conversation between Egan and God!

Cheers,  
John Drakakis

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0284.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0282 Tuesday, 13 May 2008

From: Cary DiPietro <cary.dipietro@utoronto.ca>  
Date: Monday, 12 May 2008 21:02:20 -0400  
Subject: SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

We begin this week with Alan Dessen writing in answer to the question of whether we can determine or what we can determine about Shakespeare's intentions in the theatre based on the scant material evidence that has descended to us about rehearsal and staging practices; specifically, whether playwrights such as Shakespeare relinquished all control over their dramatic manuscripts when they turned them over to theatre companies, which is more or less the received view, or, as Grace Ioppolo argues in her recent book (discussed here at length), whether dramatists retained more significant control in the realization of their manuscripts to performance, and whether such "intentions" -- playwright as dramaturge -- might have been inscribed in the copy used for printing the different quarto and Folio versions of some plays, possibly at different points in time.

Although the topics are ostensibly different, there is a wonderful and obvious continuity between this and the last leading contribution by John Drakakis (originally, I had planned for one week on "intention and editing" followed by this week's "intention and [some aspect of] the theatre"). What I find especially interesting here is that many of the speculative questions about the place of the author in the transition from authorial manuscript to theatrical performance to printed text that Dessen raises, and which he admits are both tantalizing and disappointingly elusive, are questions that must be addressed and, in some cases, answered by the textual editor, especially when dealing with such theatrically specific markers in the text as stage directions and speech prefixes.

Curiously, the theatre as a space of textual determination is left out of Drakakis's formula when he writes that "behind that posture of positivism [i.e., the editor's confident and absolute control over the marks on the page] lies a series of assumptions about textual composition (writing), printing practice, contemporary theories of reading, the role of 'art' in the society for which it was produced, and the historical transformations of reception since." I assume this omission is accidental, but it's nevertheless demonstrative of the

problem of determining textual authority vis-a-vis the playwright as an "author" figure, and what has been, as Drakakis argues, the de facto assumption of authorial fair copy as the editor's "ideal" text since, at least, the time of Greg.

This is, in fact, one of the points at issue in the subsequent exchange between Drakakis and Gabriel Egan, who argues that Drakakis greatly understates the problem of intentionality, if not "vulgarizes" it. It would be easy to misinterpret the tone and meaning of Egan's retort here, as I think Drakakis does in his response to the response. When he uses the term "vulgar", Egan uses it in a sense borrowed from such coinages as "vulgar Marxism", to mean a positivist determinism; that is, a simplistic cause-and-effect relationship between a determining base, the author's intentions very strictly or homogeneously conceived (i.e., the meaning of the text), and the superstructure of the printed play text. I don't think it's wholly fair to accuse Drakakis of a positivist determinism in this way, of a "vulgar intentionalism," as it were, because this was, after all, the main point of Drakakis's own contribution.

In any case, Egan draws attention to, among other things, Drakakis's attribution of a "best text" approach to editing to Greg. This, Egan argues, belongs more properly to R. B. McKerrow, specifically, to his 1935 *Prolegomena for the Oxford Shakespeare*, in which McKerrow argues that the editor's text "should approach as closely as the extant material allows to a fair copy, made by the author himself, of his plays in the form which he intended finally to give them, and . . . should not in any way be coloured by the preconceived ideas or interpretations of later times" (6). Egan also argues the need to split or differentiate between kinds of intentionality, for example, stage directions and speech prefixes, which might be seen to be indicative of the author's intentions for the text's realization in performance, versus the accidentals, left by the writer (in the sense of the one who puts the marks on the page) to be more or less determined by the printer. Egan's raising of stage-centered editorial methodologies provides that useful link between the last installment and this one.

I've grouped the exchanges between Egan and Drakakis, following after Alan Dessen's contribution. These have already been sent out as Roundtable digests, but I'm reproducing them here for consistency's sake. There is a further response by Egan which I'm saving for next week; after the fashion of a nineteenth-century serialized novel, I'll leave you hanging until the next installment. There is also a series of substantive exchanges between Larry Weiss and John Drakakis centered upon a substantive example of emendation in *The Taming of the Shrew*.

with further questions posed by Joe Egert.

There is a further meta-thread on the Roundtable running concurrently on the list, prompted by Egan's SHAKSPER example in his response to Drakakis. When I suggested that we adopt MLA style in the Roundtable (assuming naively that, because I force my students to use MLA style, I'm also competent), I was unprepared for the numerous questions this would raise, some prompted by the nature of electronic publication, and others by the particular nature of SHAKSPER as non-traditional mode of discourse. To give you an example, in one of John Drakakis's posts below, he quotes two long prose passages from Greg, and he's obviously italicized key words or phrases therein because he's written at the end of both, "(my italics)." But, alas, the italics are gone, so we can only guess what key points he meant to emphasize. I've also gone over my own writing in these prefatory comments to change "Alan", "John", "Gabriel", etc., to "Dessen", "Drakakis" and "Egan", and so on, exchanging my usually casual, familiar tone on the list for a more formal professionalism in the Roundtable. But I'll retain my cosy familiarity with Hardy to thank him for explaining how it is SHAKSPER digests end up looking the way they do, as I direct your attention to the meta-thread.

Finally, it seemed a bit self-congratulatory to reproduce in this digest Hugh Grady's compliment last week on the quality of the discussion so far (thanks, Hugh), which is made all the better by this week's contribution from Alan Dessen and the round of exchanges reproduced below. And it gets better: in the next installment, we will have a double leading contribution on the topic of intention and meaning; Duncan Salkeld and Terence Hawkes will offer contrasting, if not exactly dialectical, positions. For those participants who have been, up to this point, whetting their definitions of "intention" on the grindstone, now would be a good time to jump into the fray.

---

"The intentions of the playwright"

As a theatre historian I am reluctant to venture into a discussion of "authorial intention" or other matters theoretical (for me, here there be dragons). That is not a value judgment (some of my best friends are theorists), but my mind just does not work efficiently with terms and problems that tantalize others on SHAKSPER. Rather, the three questions that have engaged me for roughly thirty years are: 1) at those first performances of *Twelfth Night* and *Hamlet* what did the original

playgoers actually see; 2) how can we tell today (i.e., what constitutes evidence); and, to borrow the persistent question from undergraduates and other non-belligerents, 3) so what?

Question #2 has generated for me what seems a never-ending study of the stage directions that have survived in the early manuscripts and printed editions, a study enhanced by my colleague, the indefatigable Leslie Thomson, who compiled a database of over 22,000 items from professional plays that formed the basis of our 1999 dictionary. Cary DiPietro's invitation to contribute to this Roundtable, however, has pulled me out of that comfort zone in italics and forced me to look more widely at the playhouse evidence about the role of \*playwrights\* (my term of choice, analogous to "shipwrights" and "wainwrights" who construct their products, though the prevalent term in the period appears to be "playmakers"). What follows is my own idiosyncratic formulation - so \*caveat lector\*.

To determine the contribution of a playwright to the staging of his play by an Elizabethan or Jacobean theatre company is, as with many comparable problems, to encounter a murky area where, in terms of actual evidence, the norm is silence - and this situation is particularly true for the practices of Shakespeare and his colleagues for most of his career, the Lord Chamberlain's and King's Men. What has been the standard view is provided by Gerald Eades Bentley: "The dramatist sold his manuscript to the acting company for which it had been prepared; after that it was no more his than the cloak that he might have sold to the actors at the same time" (82). For Bentley, examples of the sale of plays by third parties "without reference to the author . . . further emphasize the playwright's lack of control over his own compositions. Far from being a sacred holograph, a dramatist's manuscript was often treated simply as another theatrical commodity, like a cloth cloak or laced cuffs, 'things of small value'" (87). Neil Carson concentrates on the 1602-03 period in Henslowe's records and concludes: "Dramatists appear to have formed loose partnerships or syndicates which worked together for short periods and then broke up and reformed into other alliances," so that "The impression one is left with is of the playwright as a relatively independent agent who seems to have had considerable control over his own methods of work and to have used that freedom to market his skills, alone or in association with others, to his greatest advantage" (22-3).

In her 2006 book Grace Ioppolo challenges this widely accepted formulation on the basis of what she teases out of her reading of the Henslowe-Alleyn papers, surviving play manuscripts, and other documents

(e.g., the late 1630s dispute between playwright Richard Brome and the Salisbury Court Theatre). In her formulation: "Dramatists could, then, take an extraordinary, and hands-on, role in the staging of their plays, even in purchasing costumes" and therefore "did not simply hand over a completed manuscript, and their authority, at the playhouse door and disappear with no further contact with the company, its actors, and the play itself." Rather, playwrights such as Daborne, Dekker, and Jonson, "even if not exclusively attached to a particular company, appear to have had nearly continuous contact with the companies for which they worked," for "the overwhelming evidence provided by the Henslowe and Alleyn archive suggests that authors were not forced to surrender all authority in their plays once the manuscripts were presented." She concludes that "the authors could be consulted, or could interfere, when necessary . . . . In fact, acting companies frequently sought the advice of authors when casting actors in their plays and continued to turn to authors for other support during readings and rehearsal" (28-9).

This argument warrants attention, though such terms as "overwhelming" and "frequently" may be an overstatement (and other scholars who have pored over the playhouse annotations that survive in a few manuscripts and printed texts do not support some of Ioppolo's conclusions). Clearly those playwrights somehow attached to a given company (e.g., Shakespeare, Heywood, Fletcher) \*could\* have played a significant role in the process of turning an authorial manuscript into a performed play. However, the unwelcome truth (to repeat my mantra) is that despite the labors of generations of scholars, there is much of significance that we do not and may never know about the script to stage process in this period. As a result, both my work in reconstructing onstage business and that of Ioppolo is replete with uses of "may have," "seems," and the three P's: "probably," "presumably," and "perhaps."

Clearly, some playwrights \*were\* concerned with how their work was treated by theatrical professionals. The poster child for a playwright seeking to ensure that his "intentions" were realized is Ben Jonson, as witnessed by the explanations provided by his various choric commentators, most notably Cordatus and Mitis in *Every Man Out of His Humour* (a play that apparently was a 1599 success for the Lord Chamberlain's Men), two figures who provide a running commentary (at least in the post-performance extremely long "literary" version) on the action and on satire in general. Jonson's fixation on how his plays were treated in the theatre is one of the traits singled out in the attack on him in *Satiromastix* (1601). Here, as part of the punishment inflicted at the climax, Horace-Jonson is required to swear that he "shall not sit in a Gallery, when your Comedies and Enterludes haue entred their

Actions, and there make vile and bad faces at euerie lyne, to make Gentlemen haue an eye to you, and to make Players afraide to take your part" (5.2.298-301). Jonson, moreover, provides anecdotal evidence wherein he types himself as one who hovered over his plays in performance. In the Induction to *\_Bartholomew Fair\_* the Stage-keeper comments: "But for the whole play, will you ha' the truth on't? (I am looking, lest the poet hear me, or his man, Master Brome, behind the arras) it is like to be a very conceited scurvy one, in plain English" (6-9). In *\_Cynthia's Revels\_* one child actor asks to speak with the author, but another responds: "wee are not so officiously befriended by him, as to haue his presence in the tiring-house, to prompt vs aloud, stampe at the booke-holder, sweare for our properties, curse the poore tire-man, raile the music out of tune, and sweat for euerie veniall trespasse we commit, as some Authour would, if he had such fine engles as we" (Induction, 160-6).

Shakespeare, unlike Jonson, was an actor and company share-holder for most of his career and therefore available to tweak his original manuscript during the movement towards performance and provide his insight, if asked, into "intended" meanings, stagings, whatever. Although what he actually contributed to the post-manuscript part of the process remains a mystery, scholars with performance interests over the years have sought to find "signals in the script" or other markers (as in Ann Pasternak Slater's *\_Shakespeare the Director\_*). If the arrow in the dying Clifford's neck turns up in a putative performance-related text, the 1595 Octavo version of *\_3 Henry VI\_*, but not in the First Folio version (2.6.0), are we to conclude that Shakespeare was on hand to supply this detail from Holinshed that was not included in his submitted manuscript or was someone else in the company also reading source material? To eliminate Shakespeare (or Heywood or Fletcher) from further participation in the script to performance process seems illogical, but to pin down what or how much they contributed is daunting if not impossible.

One procedure often omitted from such discussions is the playreading. As Bentley notes: "A normal part of the dramatist's preparation of his play for the acting troupe was the reading of his manuscript to them for their approval," so that he cites several allusions to this practice in Henslowe's papers: e.g., five shillings "Lent at that time to the company for to spend at the reading of that book at the Sun in New Fish Street"; two shillings "Laid out for the company when they read the play of Jeffa for wine at the tavern." He points out further that since "all the companies of the time were repertory companies, the dramatist knew in advance a good deal about the kind of production his play might get,

and a skillful writer of experience could go far in adapting the requirements of at least the major roles to the leading members listening to his reading"; as a result, "a great advantage lay with the actor-dramatists like Samuel and William Rowley, William Shakespeare, Thomas Heywood, and Nathan Field, whose daily familiarity with the styles and talents of their fellows made it easier for them to exploit special gifts and to anticipate difficulties" (76-7).

In her review of the sparse evidence for such playreadings (evidence that does not include any examples linked to Shakespeare's company) Tiffany Stern observes that such a reading "gave the playwright a chance to speak the text in the manner in which he wished to hear it performed" (60). Here is an opportunity for a strong-minded playwright such as Jonson to make his wishes known. But to confront this playreading practice is to enter the misty realm of conjecture. Would a playwright who was also an actor have been histrionic in his presentation? E.g., Stern includes a passage from *Histriomastix* (1599) where Posthaste, a bumbling poet-playwright, "reads out his text highlighting the passion so strongly that it overtakes him." Would a playreader such as Jonson or Shakespeare have responded to questions or provided a running commentary? What tantalizes me (and perhaps no one else) is: would such a reading of a manuscript include a reading aloud of the stage directions? If so, would some of those signals -- e.g., the "fictional" ones that appear to tell the story or slip into a narrative mode -- be linked to the playwright's thinking ahead not only to the eventual performance but also to this reading-audition-trial run? More generally, if such a to-be-expected extra step between completed manuscript and preparation for performance was anticipated, would some manuscript features be conditioned by an author or authors taking into account that intermediate phase? Would such an author-centered event have conveyed a sense of his "intentions" to the players as auditors?

As will have become clear, I can offer many questions about the role of the playwright in the script to stage process but few answers. The primary evidence about the staging of plays in this period is provided by the extant stage directions, even taking into account the many silences when we would expect information and the many uses of coded terms that are difficult to interpret today, as with the many "*as*" or "*as [if]*" signals: "*as in prison*"; "*as in a garden*." My personal formulation is: in reading their playscripts today we enter into the middle of a conversation - a discourse in a language we only partly understand - between a playwright and his player-colleagues, a halfway stage that was completed in a performance now lost to us. Although we will never reconstitute that performance, we may be able to recover

elements of that theatrical vocabulary and hence better understand that conversation, whether the pre-production concept of the playwright or the implementation by the players. Nonetheless, we remain eavesdroppers.

I do not wish to conclude sounding like Prospero in his Epilogue ("And my ending is despair"), so as a final gesture to the focus on "authorial intention" I will invoke a recent essay by Cary Mazer ("The Intentional-Fallacy Fallacy") where the author, drawing on his experience as a dramaturg, posits a crucial distinction "between dramatic \*content\* and theatrical \*materials\*." In this formulation, for the theatre artist "the \*contents\* of the dramatist's intention are indecipherable, unknowable, or irrelevant; but the dramatist's artful arrangement of the dramatic and theatrical materials - the playwright's \*craftsmanship\* - is both discernible and knowable. With this distinction in mind, the stage-centered Shakespeare scholar can avoid questions of authorship and intentionality with regard to meaning, while at the same time embracing intentionality with regard to craftsmanship." The term "craftsmanship" is used "to cover questions about dramaturgical strategy -- the craft of dramatic story-telling -- and about theatrical conventions, the period-specific machinery of staging employed by the original theatrical collaborators in building the theater piece from the script provided by the playwright." Mazer argues that when "addressing questions of dramaturgical strategy, stage-centered scholars practice the Intentional Fallacy with impunity: there must be a reason for the playwright to have decided to delay this entrance, to introduce that character into this scene, to narrate this offstage event rather than showing it happening onstage, to have one character respond to an event with a lengthy speech and to another with silence" (102-3). As examples he invokes Brutus hearing the news of Portia's death not once but twice; Leontes' reunion with Perdita being placed offstage; and Edgar, not Albany, being given the final speech in Folio *\_King Lear\_*.

From the perspective of a theatre historian, much has been irretrievably lost about Shakespeare's role in the playhouse -- and his "intentions" -- but, even as eavesdroppers, some elements on some level (e.g., in terms of "craftsmanship" or "strategy") can still be recognized and, with effort, understood for our profit and delight. The rest is silence.

Alan Dessen

---

From: Gabriel Egan <mail@GabrielEgan.com>  
Date: Saturday, 3 May 2008 11:52:05 +0100  
Subject: 19.0250 Roundtable Digest: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0250 Roundtable Digest: Shakespeare's Intentions

John Drakakis is quite right to argue that notions of intention are complexly invoked in acts of editing, but in trying to show this I think his Roundtable posting actually understates the problems.

Drakakis praises Claire McEachern's Arden3 *Much Ado About Nothing*, at the point at which it reads "The original SPs throughout this scene, which denote actors' (or intended actors') names, betray the marks of the play's composition, and perhaps [that] the copy-text that served as the basis for Q was a promptbook used in the theatre [(] and hence puzzled over by the [a] compositor [)] ." (p. 278)

(The square brackets indicate bits of McEachern left out of the quotation by Drakakis; the final 'the' is his too.)

Drakakis writes of this that:

- >McEachern's footnote is exemplary in
- >that it directs our attention to a number
- >of possible explanations.

Well, only if the "number" is one: the explanation that the names come from the promptbook. (She is not suggesting, as I think Drakakis might be misreading, that the puzzling compositors introduced the actors' names.)

Earlier in her introduction (p. 129) McEachern argued precisely the opposite from the same evidence, citing favourably F. P. Wilson's dismissal of the argument that the use of actors' names indicates promptbook copy for a printing and supporting Wilson's assertion that it must indicate authorial copy. Wilson was writing in 1942, well before Greg's famous disquisition on the topic in *The Shakespeare First Folio* (1955). It's a particular weakness of McEachern's edition (picked up in reviews) that she's nowhere near up-to-date on textual criticism. Greg's account of the phenomenon is more subtle than he is usually given credit for, and makes the distinction between actors' names standing in for characters' names and actors' names supplementing characters' names (that is, where both appear).

At the other end of the chain of transmission, Drakakis again misses some key distinctions.

He writes about

- > . . . another play published in quarto in 1600 by
- > James Roberts, not Valentine Simmes, \_The
- > Merchant of Venice\_ . . .

This quarto will presumably be the basis for Drakakis's Arden3 edition, so the above statement reflects either important new knowledge (lightly glanced at), or Drakakis has misunderstood the conditions of textual production in the period, for the quarto title-page and the Stationers' Register entries concur: the publisher was Thomas Heyes.

This is germane to Drakakis's attempt to sophisticate our notions of intentionality, for the roles of bookseller, printer, and publisher were often played by the same men in various combinations within the Stationers' Company, and we need to be clear about who was doing what in each edition.

Thus, when Drakakis writes that

- > . . . if indeed, the instability occurred at the
- > level of \*composition\*, then this seriously
- > complicates the business of agency and intention

and that

- > . . . we need to revise radically our sense of
- > what writerly "creativity" involved . . .

we should all agree, but insist that the complexities go deeper than the trivial case of actors' names in speech prefixes.

With the printing of plays, two key areas of difficulty with 'intention' surely are:

\* The dramatist intends some others, the performers, to complete the meaning of the script by performing it.

\* Those writing for publication might well intend the printshop to complete the meaning by altering the accidentals (the punctuation and other matters not directly concerned with the choice of words), and so

might leave the manuscript relatively incomplete in this regard.

A recognition of the first of these underlies the shift detectable in the Penguin and Oxford Shakespeare editions (and belatedly in the Arden's Third series) towards stage-centered editing. Assertion of the second point by Philip Gaskell in his *\_A New Introduction to Bibliography\_* (1972) caused quite a stir. Whereas Greg's concern (in "The rationale of copy-text") was to get as close as possible to what would have stood in the author's manuscript if only we had it (and hence the authority of accidentals and of substantives had to be treated separately because each might be best represented in a different printing), Gaskell's retort was that we might very well know what would have been in the manuscript and consider it not fit to print.

The points of contention here are quite subtle, and I'm afraid it's a vulgarization of the whole debate for Drakakis to write:

- >W. W. Greg's "The Rationale of Copy-Text" urges
- >the editor to select a text that is the closest
- >to what the "author" is thought to have composed,
- >on the grounds that that will be the most "authentic."

At least, it is vulgar to leave it there and not pursue the real point of interest here, which is the idea of a split in authority. (If anything, Drakakis's account makes Greg sound like R. B. McKerrow, whose 'best text' approach to editing Greg was, in this very essay, dissenting from.)

Let me give a concrete example of how this bears on intentionality. I no longer bother to put into my SHAKSPER posts the usual MLA-style typescript representation of an em-line dash (which is two hyphens with no space either side) because for some reason Hardy Cook replaces them with single hyphens, and to my eye this makes the kinds of sentence constructions I favour rather hard to read. Thus I now rephrase sentences to suit my anticipation of what will happen on the way to publication. Indeed, I don't only rephrase the already-written, I compose in anticipation of this limitation. Who, then, 'intends' my alternative accidentals? Hardy is the root cause of them, but he may well have a good (mechanical) reason. But are they mine nonetheless?

Gabriel Egan

---

From: John Drakakis <john.drakakis@stir.ac.uk>  
Date: Friday, 9 May 2008 16:42:59 +0100  
Subject: 19.0257 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: RE: SHK 19.0257 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Larry Weiss's and Gabriel Egan's postings came in together; I think they require to be addressed separately. I have addressed Weiss's contribution to the debate [below], and I now turn to Egan's.

In my original contribution, there were a few typographical errors. Four of them are obvious, one of which involves the omission of the word "text" towards the end of the posting. Also, the part of the sentence for which Egan rightly takes me to task should read: "published in quarto in 1600 printed by James Roberts, not Valentine Simmes." I did not mean to suggest that there had been some dispute over who printed Q1 of *The Merchant of Venice* nor did I wish to suggest that Roberts and Simmes were the publishers as well as the printers of *The Merchant* and *Much Ado* respectively. I merely wished to point out that some of the peculiarities concerning speech-prefixes were not confined to one printer. One more erratum, in the best tradition of Archbishop Spooner, when I referred to Bruce King, I really meant Bruce Smith. My apologies.

At one of the points to which Egan refers in my contribution, I was concerned to raise the question of "intention" in relation to the variations of speech-prefix that appear in Q1 *Much Ado* at 4.2. and to suggest that different printing houses encountered various problems with them which they addressed in their own way. I was concerned to draw attention to the way in which McEachern had dealt with the issue in her recent edition of *Much Ado*. In quoting part of the note on p. 278 of McEachern's edition, I inadvertently omitted the brackets around the clause "(and hence puzzled over by a compositor)", and I also printed "the" for "a." Such are the pitfalls of writing at speed, although I don't think that these minor inaccuracies affect the substance of the point I was making.

My concern was not to drag McEachern into a slanging match about who is the more virtuous editor, nor am I interested in subjecting her edition to the yardstick of bibliographical fashion. It contains plenty of material for which we should be grateful. I stick to my position that as footnotes go, the one to which I was referring is "exemplary." Since Egan seems to have got himself stuck in only one side of a binary, let me go through McEachern's suggestions:

1. that the appearance of the actors' names (or "intended actors") names betray the marks of the play's composition
2. "perhaps that the copy-text that served as the basis for Q was a promptbook used in the theatre"
3. and that it was this that was (" . . . hence puzzled over by a compositor").

There is a difference between 1 and 2, and 3 adds another dimension. McEachern does not tell us what it was precisely that the compositor who set these pages may have "puzzled over." Were the characters' names scored out and the actors' names inserted? Was the copy "foul papers" or a promptbook? What was the agency involved here? Was it Shakespeare who intended that Kemp and Cowley should play the parts of Dogberry and Verges, and if so do we not need (and this was my point) to modify the rather crude model of intentionality that has hitherto accounted for dramatic composition?

I do not have a copy of Greg's *The Shakespeare First Folio* to hand, but I do have his comments on *Much Ado* in *The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare*. There he says-and I shall do my best to transcribe it accurately-that *Much Ado* was one of three plays that show evidence "that a playhouse manuscript existed and was consulted" (p. 121). He goes on:

<PROSEQUOTE>

At one point in the quarto of *Much Ado* the names of the actors Kemp and Cowley appear as prefixes for Dogberry and Verges, whence it has been assumed that the text was set up from a prompt copy. But Shakespeare must obviously have written the parts with particular actors in mind, and nothing is more likely than that he should have used their names. [Gregg appends a lengthy footnote that details all of the confusions.] Everything points to the copy having been foul papers that lacked final revision. The stage directions are obviously the author's, casual and often inadequate, [fn. See appendix (p.178)] and there is much inconsistency in designating the speakers. (121-2) (my italics)

</PROSEQUOTE>

Greg challenges the consistency of Dover Wilson's explanation of what he took to be authorial anomalies in Q, while at the same time claiming that the play was printed directly from "the prompt-book" (122). I will, of course, check the later Greg text, but I am not aware that he changed his position on this play substantially.

I have no desire to challenge the "subtlety" of Greg's account of these

matters, but all we can accuse McEachern of is conflating an existing explanation in an attempt to produce a succinct footnote. Like many eminent editors before her, she is perhaps a little too respectful of editorial tradition. I notice that Egan does not pick her up on her use of the term "copy-text" in this footnote. He does, later, direct us to Gregg's "The Rationale of Copy-Text" (reprinted in J. C. Maxwell's edition of *The Collected Papers of Sir Walter W. Greg*), but he is silent on those parts of the essay relevant to this discussion and on the extent to which that fascinating essay is littered with odd slippages between "author" and "writer." Let's see what Egan has to say about the ideological investment in the following quotation from this very influential (but now largely superseded) essay:

<PROSEQUOTE>

It is therefore the modern editorial practice to choose whatever extant text may be supposed to represent most nearly what the author wrote and to follow it with the least possible alteration. [So far, so good] But here we need to draw a distinction between the significant, or as I shall call them "substantive", readings of the text, those namely that affect the author's meaning or the essence of his expression, and others, such in general as spelling, punctuation, word-division, and the like, affecting mainly its formal presentation, which may be regarded as the accidents, or as I shall call them "accidentals" of the text. (376)  
(my italics)

</PROSEQUOTE>

We need to register here the slippage from "what the author wrote" (what I understand by the term "agency") to the larger question of readings "that affect the author's meaning or the essence of his expression" (by which I understand "authority"). I feel certain that we shall come back to this at some point in our discussion, and not, I hope, in relation to whether or not Greg departed radically from McKerrow, since such matters are not strictly relevant.

But let me turn to an area of Egan's response on which we appear to agree: that involving a radical revision of, -- to use a short-hand-romantic notions of creativity. Our agreement is, regrettably, short-lived, since he thinks that "actors' names in speech-prefixes" (and I would take it further to include the instability of speech-prefixes tout court) are "trivial." I want to argue that they lead us into very complex questions, only some of which are relevant to our discussion of "intention." But was does the complexity to which Egan would direct us involve? That "the dramatist intends some others, the performers, to complete the meaning of the script by performing it"? I

resist the temptation to take a sledgehammer of theory to crack this poor defenseless nut. Like Gregg before him, though with something less than Greg's eloquence, Egan has "the meaning of the script" very firmly in mind; and, in seeking to point out the mote that may or may not be in McEachern's eye, he overlooks the beam that is in his own. The issue is who's meaning, and was it, or was it not 'intended'? I insist that this is not a mere scholastic point, since we now have access to very detailed theories and accounts of what an "author" is and how meaning is produced, and we should be very careful how we proceed. Pedestrian common sense will simply not do here.

Egan accuses McEachern of not being up to date in her bibliographical thinking, but I wonder how 'up to date' he is himself? Lest he takes this opportunity to tell us, perhaps I should point out to him that that was a rhetorical question. But I ask it because his crude account of theatrical transaction and of the problem of 'intention' cannot really be allowed to stand after Barthes' 'The Death of The Author' and Foucault's 'What is an Author'. I will not tax the patience of members of the list by rehearsing some of these arguments, except to say that they imply a very clear distinction between 'agency' and 'intention' that Egan either simply fails to understand, or is reluctant to engage with. What distinction would he make between 'meaning production' and 'sense making' and how might these categories impinge upon our theme for this discussion? One of the questions I am asking is: what do we understand by 'intention' and how do we project that understanding onto texts whose 'intentions' (and I use these scare quotes deliberately) we may only, if at all, be in a position to read symptomatically? And moreover, since this leads to other questions, what are the forces that over-determine these 'intentions'? I have in mind here questions of genre, language itself, and everything that might come under the heading of 'motivation'. And how does the establishment of authorial meaning differ from the readerly practice of sense-making? I only raised the textual bibliographical issues insofar as they impinge on these questions, and I do not think that we should be diverted into areas that might be more appropriately treated in another round-table discussion.

Finally, the trouble with Egan's "concrete example" is that it is just that: inert, thoughtless, and absolutely a-historical. He is not a 16th century dramatist, nor by any stretch of the imagination can he transform himself into an Elizabethan compositor. Leaving that "complexity" aside, even at the most basic of levels, he confuses agency with authority, and he won't get out of this bind so long as he persists in regarding writing as an entirely instrumental mode of access to some Platonic realm of ideas. In spite of his concern with practical material

matters of printing, there is a very clear Platonic strain in Greg's thinking, and in the bibliographical thinking of many of his contemporaries, including Bowers. It is no accident that D. F. McKenzie's ground-breaking article of 1969 should have been entitled "Printers of the Mind." What gives the game away for Egan is his possessiveness: the "accidentals" of his writing are "his." I would be very interested to be a fly on the wall of a conversation between Egan and God!

Cheers,  
John Drakakis

---

From: Larry Weiss <larry@lweiss.net>  
Date: Friday, 02 May 2008 13:11:08 -0400  
Subject: 19.0250 Roundtable Digest: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0250 Roundtable Digest: Shakespeare's Intentions

At the end of his very thoughtful and thought-provoking introduction to the question of authorial intention in textual issues, John Drakakis seems to invite SHAKSPERIANS to suggest canonical passages which exemplify or illuminate the issue:

- >We have enough material within the Shakespeare oeuvre
- >to provide us with a variety of examples that we can
- >profitably discuss, and that may, I think, lead us to
- >conclusions that we might not have expected when we
- >started to think about this topic.

There is one in particular (which I have mentioned here before but which did not on those occasions excite responses) which I think epitomizes the question on several levels. In Act I, scene ii, of *The Taming of the Shrew*, Petruchio bids Grumio to knock at Baptista's door and Grumio misunderstands or pretends to misunderstand the demand, resulting in his being beaten. Grumio's reaction is given in most editions as "Help, masters, help! My master is mad." The folio, however, has the line as "Helpe mistris helpe, my master is mad." The emendation of "mistris" to "masters" was first made by Lewis Theobald, presumably as there are no female characters on stage who Grumio might be addressing, and his revision has generally been followed since (the Werstine-Mowat Folger edition and the the Bate-Rasmussen "RSC" edition, which makes a point of following F1 almost religiously, are notable exceptions). Theobald's emendation is neither particularly funny nor thematic; in fact, it

strikes me as rather awkward, with the repetition of "master" serving no poetic function. Nor does the emendation seem compelled by a likely misreading of the MS.

However, there is a way in which we can understand the F1 line which does no violence to the absence a female characters on the main stage and which heightens the comedy and, at the same time, serves a thematic function. If Grumio is addressing himself to the page in the Sly frame, who is present either aloft or at the side of the stage dressed as a lady, the line is an hilariously funny meta-theatrical dropping to the fourth wall. It also serves to remind the audience that they are watching a play within a play, not to be taken seriously on its own level. I don't want to over argue the point, but a moment such as this mitigates the harshness of the catastrophe perceived by modern audiences, especially if the Sly epilogue in "A Shrew" was originally part of the text.

---

From: John Drakakis <john.drakakis@stir.ac.uk>  
Date: Friday, 9 May 2008 15:53:45 +0100  
Subject: 19.0269 Meta-Comment on Intentions Roundtable  
Comment: RE: SHK 19.0269 Meta-Comment on Intentions Roundtable

I wonder if I may reply both to Larry Weiss and Joe Egert [posted in the in the "Meta-Comment on Intentions Roundtable" begun Friday, May 02, 2008 <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0253.html>] in this contribution to the round-table discussion.

Joe Egert first: the question of what does an editor do is germane to the question of "intention" insofar as much editing assumes that the business of preparing a text is to get as close to what the writer wrote. This has sometimes melted into "what the writer 'intended'" and I think that my responses to Larry Weiss, and separately to Gabriel Egan, will elaborate on this a little. Editors try to make sense of texts; but, also, in the case of early modern texts, they engage in a series of operations of modernization that disclose assumptions about the publishing industry, the predilections of the editor, etc.

Let me now respond to Larry Weiss. Rather like Larry Weiss's account of the Folio reading of "mistris" at *\_The Taming of The Shrew\_ 1.2.*, and I am sorry that I missed it in earlier postings. It has a special relevance here since it invites us to speculate on what may have been contained in a hypothetical manuscript, and what may have happened when

the line was spoken on the stage. To take the speculation about the manuscript first: The Folio spelling is "mistris," and this is the only text of the play that we have. But I am reminded of the spelling "Maisters" in *The Merchant of Venice* 4.1.51 in the phrase "Maisters of passion," that in Q2 (1619) and F (1623) is emended to "Masters of passion." The four relevant lines in Q1 read:

And others when the bagpipe sings ith nose,  
cannot containe their vrine for affection.  
Maisters of passion swayes it to the moode  
of what it likes or loathes,  
(4.1.49-52)

Q2 reads as follows:

And others when the Bagpipe sings i'th nose,  
Cannot containe their vrine for affection.  
Masters of passion swayes it to the mood  
Of what it likes or loathes:

F reads:

And others, when the bag-pipe sings i'th nose,  
Cannot containe their Vrine for affection.  
Masters of passion swayes it to the moode  
Of what it likes or loaths,

(Throughout, I have silently emended long 's', but in all other respects these are the variants between the 3 texts.) The absence of initial capitalization in the 2nd and 4th lines of Q1 can be attributed to type shortages of Roman caps, and there is other evidence (both of upper case W and lower case w on sig. G3v). All three reproduce the same error of punctuation after "affection." But Q2 and F emend the spelling "Maisters" to "Masters." The spelling "Maisters" for "Masters" is not uncommon; indeed, if I recall, the spelling occurs in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* along with "Maistres" where the context clearly gives the modern "Masters." What then, was the spelling in the manuscript of the word that F sets as "mistris" and Theobald alters to "Masters"? Could it have been "maistris" or even "maistrisse"? If so, then F's "mistris" may constitute evidence of a theatrical intention (and even of Shakespeare's "intention" when he wrote this scene) to keep the frame Induction on the stage throughout and to refer to its presence as an onstage audience. I am, of course, resisting the temptation simply to say that the F reading is an error that an editor is at liberty to correct, since both

"Masters" and "mistris" make sense even though we are on a weaker wicket if we ascribe authorial meaning to the reading. The same is not the case in the example from *\_The Merchant\_* where emendation is necessary. In this case, "Masters" does not make sense, nor, except in a very minimal way does "mistris." In my forthcoming edition of the play, I have emended to "maistrice" since I think it makes sense to conflate the sense of "master/mistress" ("affection" being in this case gendered feminine, but having mastery over "passion" behaves in an androgynous way). In the case that Weiss cites, the question of "intention" is not necessarily confined to the writing subject Shakespeare, and even if we could prove that it was, we would also have to demonstrate its provenance, i.e., did it come purely from the dramatist's imagination or was it the product of a certain knowledge that *Lord Strange's Men* would stage the play in one way rather than another? Either way, this kind of example mounts a very serious challenge to the "unique" authority of the "author" Shakespeare and enjoins us as modern readers to distinguish between a "meaning" that may or may not be adequately "authorized" and a process of "making sense of" that is properly the purview of reading.

Many thanks to Larry Weiss for raising this example.

Cheers,  
John Drakakis

---

From: Joseph Egert <tregej@yahoo.com>  
Date: Sunday, 11 May 2008 16:28:44 -0700 (PDT)  
Subject: 19.0275 Roundtable Digest: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0275 Roundtable Digest: Shakespeare's Intentions

John Drakakis writes:

>[...] The same is not the case in the example from *\_The  
>Merchant\_* where emendation is necessary. In this case,  
>"Masters" does not make sense, nor, except in a very minimal  
>way does "mistris." In my forthcoming edition of the play, I  
>have emended to "maistrice" since I think it makes sense to  
>conflate the sense of "master/mistress" ("affection" being in  
>this case gendered feminine, but having mastery over  
>"passion" behaves in an androgynous way).

What does Dr Drakakis believe Shakespeare wrote or intended to write?

"Maistrice"? And why does "mistris" make sense only "in a very minimal way"?

Puzzled,  
Joe Egert

#### Works cited

Bentley, Gerald Eades. *The Profession of Dramatist in Shakespeare's Time 1590-1642*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1971.

Carson, Neil. "Collaborative Playwriting: The Chettle, Dekker, Heywood Syndicate." *Theatre Research International* 14 (1989): 13-23.

Dekker, Thomas, *Satiromastix*. In *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, ed. Fredson Bowers. 4 vols. Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1953. 1:299-391.

Dessen, Alan C. and Leslie Thomson. *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580-1642*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999.

Greg, Walter W., and J. C. Maxwell. *Collected Papers of W.W.Greg*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966

Greg, W. W. *The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare; A Survey of the Foundations of the Text*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954

Ioppolo, Grace. *Dramatists and their Manuscripts in the Age of Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton, and Heywood: Authorship, authority and the playhouse*. London and New York: Routledge, 2006.

Jonson, Ben. *Bartholomew Fair*, ed. E. A. Horsman. *Revels Plays*. London: Methuen, 1960.

---. *Cynthia's Revels*. In *Ben Jonson*, ed. C. H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson. 11 vols. London: Oxford UP, 1925-52. 4:1-184.

Mazer, Cary. "The Intentional-Fallacy Fallacy." In *Staging Shakespeare*, ed. Lena Cowen Orlin and Miranda Johnson-Haddad. Newark: University of Delaware P, 2007. 99-113.

McKerrow, Ronald B. *Prolegomena to the Oxford Shakespeare: A Study in Editorial Method*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939.

Slater, Ann Pasternak. *\_Shakespeare the Director\_*. Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982.

Stern, Tiffany. *\_Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan\_*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000.

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0312.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0310 Thursday, 22 May 2008

From: Cary DiPietro <cary.dipietro@utoronto.ca>  
Date: Wednesday, 21 May 2008 17:49:53 -0400  
Subject: 19.0282 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: RE: SHK 19.0282 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[Editor's Note: Cary DiPietro and I have decided to try a new procedure for this Roundtable discussion. I will post responses to any of the contributions in this digest as they appear without comment, and then a week later Cary will put together a digest of all of the previous week's discussions, of any essays that he has asked various Shakespeare scholars to contribute to the Roundtable, and of his comments as guest moderator. We are interested in seeing how this procedure will affect the Roundtable. We want to encourage thoughtful response rather than off-the-cuff ones, but we would also like to encourage greater participation. -Hardy]

This week's installment of the Roundtable features a double leading contribution, a longer essay by Duncan Salkeld on "Meaning and Intention," and a shorter contribution from Terence Hawkes, "Sans Everything." I should explain why these two contributions appear in this exceptional manner. The first reason is practical: Hawkes has very graciously allowed me to reproduce a section of an article that he is currently writing to be produced in another venue; as a result, the piece below is not self-contained in the way that other leading contributions have been so far, and Hawkes does not directly or explicitly address the kinds of questions we've been asking in this discussion. I had asked if he would be interested in contributing to the topic of meaning and intention on the basis of his earlier work on meaning. His arguments are epitomized by the oft-intoned catch-phrase, "meaning by Shakespeare," which is also the title of his 1992 book. It was, perhaps, inevitable that Hawkes's writing would enter the discussion, as it did in John Drakakis's leading contribution in the second digest. As one SHAKSPERean pointed out to me recently off the list, Hawkes's more recent argument for a critical presentism continues this repudiation of intentional meaning begun in earlier works; she quotes the 2002 volume, *\_Shakespeare in the Present\_*: "We choose the facts. We choose the texts. We do the inserting. We do the perceiving. Facts and texts, that is to say, don't simply speak, don't merely mean. We speak, we mean, by them" (3).

Hawkes's shorter contribution here needs to be read in this context, as the continuation or extension of a now seminal argument in Shakespeare studies.

While I'm inclined to agree with his position, I find the case made by Salkeld for, as he writes, a "modest" intentionalist position equally compelling, and this is my second reason for pairing the two contributions this week. He argues here that, if not all, then some of Shakespeare's intentions can be known, and this fact "opens up Shakespeare studies in rich and fascinating ways." Salkeld's is no "common sense" approach. He draws on the case "against theory" made by Stephen Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels in 1992 to respond to Derrida's view of intention as yet another example of a "metaphysics of presence."

In the lead up to this argument, Salkeld suggests that the arguments made by presentists are not dissimilar to those made by reader-response critics that "only a text's end-uses will count." I would argue, on the one hand, that these remain very distinct and separate modes of critical inquiry (and, of course, diverse each within their own fields) because presentism, by and large, does not give emphasis to the experiential dimension of the written text in the way that such phenomenological encounters do; all agency is given to the "end-user" who acts upon and through the text in what sometimes seems like a sinister conspiracy, when, instead, that end-user might also be seen to act as a repository for the experiences, both individual and social, the text instigates. On the other hand, the possibility of crossover between them strikes me as potentially very rewarding. I think, in particular, of critics such as Wolfgang Iser, who argues in *The Implied Reader* (1972) and elsewhere that the text is not inert, but provides norms that guide the reader's response, which is a fulfillment of the conditions structured in the text. This in-built structure of experience, a reworking of ideas from Husserl, is its "intentionality." Rethinking intention in this way as determined by the reader but also guided by the text productively collapses the distance between intentionalists and presentists. This is a binary that's reproduced by Salkeld below, and one that might seem antagonistic in the pairing of his and Hawkes's contributions, even though Salkeld offers a more medial position. But pairing them in this way compels us to consider, as I think Salkeld does, whether or how they can be reconciled to one another.

This dialectic echoes in interesting, if not exactly parallel, ways in the continued dialogue between Gabriel Egan and John Drakakis. Egan, in particular, argues against the utility of Barthes and Foucault, brought into the discussion by Drakakis, because, he states, in their respective treatments of authorship, they are not attuned to social aspects of drama, including instances of collaboration between authors, and authors with performers. Both Egan and Drakakis pose questions about editorial practice, once again, in relation to the dramatic nature of the play text. Drakakis also poses a number of further questions for Alan Dessen about "implied" stage directions.

The digest concludes with two shorter contributions from David Evett and Tom Reedy respectively, both responding to the last digest headed by Dessen. Evett makes a valuable comparison between manuscript readings in Shakespeare's theatre and the contemporary rehearsal hall, and, in doing so, he anticipates a later leading contribution on the theatre. Reedy responds to my, perhaps inaccurate, summary of Dessen's argument. For the next installment, I have a leading contributor lined up, but for reasons I'll explain later, I leave you on the edge of your seats wondering who it might be... the topic for the next installment will continue in the same vein, "giving intention its due," and I invite participants to engage with this or any other aspect of Shakespeare's intentions.

---

### "Meaning and Intention"

The idea that consideration of authorial intention is neither legitimate nor even possible has gained wide currency, despite the fact that everyday practice and common intuition tell us the reverse. Anti-intentionalists are presumably not against human intention per se, but against the notion that an author's intention should constrain the ways in which a text can be understood. It is said, for example, that since the author is "dead," he or she cannot "guarantee" the meaning of their work. Living authors are no less defunct since (the argument runs) cognitions are notoriously complex, contingent, and uncertain. The strict impossibility of inhabiting another's consciousness means that interpretation cannot be de-limited on so flimsy a basis as intention. Accordingly, only a text's end-uses will count. This is a view espoused by a number of reader-response critics and, I believe, akin to that argued by "presentists." Hence the work of criticism should be, and can only be, a political project of generating multiple readings, of cultivating diversity and incorporating as many social voices as possible. But it is an odd multivocality that shuts out the author's voice.

Few, I hope, would deny the attraction of widening the discussion. Yet what principle or "theory" could possibly legislate that talk of authorial intention at all times and in all places is invalid? I do not mean to imply that any of my fellow contributors adopt such a position but many of us will know of those who do (in principle or practice). Why prefer this absolutism? We cannot show that Shakespeare's intentions always were and will forever prove unreliable. Readers' cognitions are not by definition superior to those of authors. Were an author's intentions to be partly clear, anti-intentionalists must refuse to admit them. But why would anyone want to be so dogmatic? Between the two claims either that we know nothing at all of the author's mind or that we can know it for certain lies a wide ground worth considering. If it is the pure unknowability of what Shakespeare thought that rules out what has been unfortunately termed "the genetic fallacy," then should that unknowability once begin to crack, the fallacy crumbles. The anti-intentionalist case thus rests on the radical inscrutability or absolute indeterminacy of intention. This is, in my view, a mistake: the conclusion that all claims to authorial

intention are inadmissible does not follow from the premise that some are. That intentions can be unclear is no argument against the view that there are authorial intentions that matter. My modest proposal here is that Shakespeare's intentions can sometimes be known, if hazily, and, rather than being anything to worry about, this heartening fact opens up Shakespeare studies in rich and fascinating ways.

A further, closely-related point is that if the concept of intention comes with some difficulties, this does not mean it is fatally disabled or should be entirely disregarded. The difficulties are what make the concept interesting. The possibility of sharing in Shakespeare's ideas is animating (I imagine this is why there are Shakespeareans) and the plausibilities in doing so are intriguing. The fact that literary intentions matter to varying degrees, that they might be more accessible in some textual features and less so in others, should hardly surprise us but supplies no warrant for dismissing the concept outright. If we do not know Shakespeare's intentions with an absolute, God-like assurance, this does not mean we cannot know them at all, or lack good reason for claiming to know them. Nor does it mean that Shakespeare did not know his own intentions, or entertain quite good reason for believing that he did. Crucial here is the strength we demand of the verb "to know." Once we drop the requirement for crystalline, perfect certainty, a compelling dialogue about evidence can begin. Much of what I've said in this introduction rests upon a vein of philosophical debate about the topic of intention (Searle, 1994; Davidson 2005). Some readers of this Roundtable may be unfamiliar with, or perhaps tired of, literary theory and Hardy has asked us not to revisit old battles. Consequently, I outline only in the briefest possible terms some of the "theory" behind my argument, and anyone preferring to get straight to Shakespeare may like to skip my next two paragraphs.

Somewhere behind my position is the view that language and thought are pre-suppositional: there are some things we just do presuppose. These include that there are "things-in-the-world," that some of those "things" are people, and that most of those people are capable of intentions. Words are "things-in-the-world": Saussure called their material structures "signifiers." It may sound elliptical but, as Derrida noted, the signified (meaning) of the signifier "signifier" is itself (Derrida 1976: 7; 1978: 281). Derrida wrote repeatedly about writing as though it were both a referent and a meaning, splitting writing down into mini-"things-in-the-world" such as "marks," strokes of the pen, "graphemes" and so forth (Derrida 1976: 9, 49-50; 1982: 316, 318). He regretted as "stupidities" readings that took him to mean that "there is nothing beyond language" or that "we are imprisoned in language" (Kearney 1984: 124; Norris 1987: 144). For him, deconstruction is only possible within or by virtue of metaphysics and hence the paradox must work both ways: in order to assert the restless disseminating or "iterable" play of language one has to arrest that play: as he once said in an interview, "Deconstruction always presupposes affirmation" (Kearney 1984: 118). On intention, Derrida wrote in "Signature, Event, Context," that, "the category of intention will not disappear; it will have its place but from this place it will no longer govern the entire scene and system of utterance" because, he claimed, written and spoken

utterances will always be prone to "iterability" or repetition out of context. Other aspects of everyday language-function equally have their place. In the same essay, Derrida emphatically refused to conclude that there is no "relative specificity to the effects of consciousness" any more than there are no "effects of speech . . . of the performative . . . of ordinary language . . . of presence and of speech acts." All these make ordinary communication possible. He argued only that these effects "presuppose" their "opposite" (Derrida 1982: 326-7). It might be worth asking to whom or to what should the deconstructing be attributed? Whether we ascribe the agency for meaning (or un-meaning) to authors, to language, to Being (Dasein), to ideology or to readers, the fact that we do not have agent-less verbs ensures that pronominal subject-positions (i.e. subjectivity) will always be presupposed as notional starting points. So, for all that has been written on the question, in all its complexity, no necessity lurks in literary theory to eradicate the possibility of either the subject or authorial intention.

Somewhere also behind my position is an article published in the journal *Critical Inquiry* (Summer 1982) in which Stephen Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels argued that meaning and intention are synonymous. Entitled "Against Theory," their article was re-published as a book in 1985, with responses by Stanley Fish, Richard Rorty and others (see Mitchell 1985: 11-30 and *passim*). The article, and a sequel, generated further critiques and replies published in the same journal and elsewhere. As Mitchell pointed out in his introduction, Knapp and Michaels' pragmatist argument that theory merely re-states in abstract terms what we ordinarily do anyway ironically generated more theory rather than less. But although their claim that intention and meaning are one-that there are no intentionless meanings- has met with disagreement from several critics (including the philosopher John Searle whose writing on intention should be central to any discussion of the concept; see for example Searle 1994), none has demonstrably refuted their argument because, I suspect, it is irrefutable (though this does not necessarily mean it is correct). So meager a sketch unfortunately reduces Knapp and Michaels's case and its replies: resolutions for problems of authorial intention and meaning are far from straightforward and this is why Knapp and Michaels's attempt at one is attractive. Theirs, I suggest, is an intriguing "holding position" from which to start; one which, for all its apparent simplicity, is by no means naive. So in discussing examples from Shakespeare, and taking my cue from Knapp and Michaels, I openly make an assumption: that to read is to presuppose authorial intention.

What did Shakespeare mean by "intention"? He used the noun only twice, in *Merry Wives* (1.3.) and *The Winter's Tale* (1.2) and on both occasions in relation to lust. The OED is helpful in outlining the various uses and meanings of "intention," from mental effort or application towards understanding to having an aim, design, purpose, or inclination. Shakespeare used the verb "to intend" on 89 or so occasions, so often as to positively invite discussion of character-intentions. Critics fruitfully debate character-intentions all the time (*Lear* 1623: . . . "Tis our fast intent / To shake all cares and business from our age . . . " 1.1.36-7). Many will accept that a character's declared

plans, purposes, aims, and motivations are valid topics for investigation and analysis. But Shakespeare, it may be said, is not like his characters: he does not disclose his intentions. Were the Sonnets autobiographical, we perhaps might locate his intentions more securely, but even there Shakespeare deploys the term only once and in an unusual way, blending mental imagery with travel: "For then my thoughts, from far where I abide, / Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee" (Sonnet 27, l. 6). Yet the sonnets do (if only in part) seem to be autobiographical. As has already been noted in this Roundtable, if Andrew Gurr is correct, sonnet 145 alludes to Anne Hathaway, for "hate away she threw." How do we know that Shakespeare intended this pun? Gurr makes a case substantial enough for most editors and commentators to accept that he did.

Getting a joke involves both understanding the language conventions of jokes in general and seeing something of the teller's intention. Satire, for example, is an intentional genre. We see Shakespeare's intentions at work in moments of comedy. In the first scene of *Romeo and Juliet*, Samson and Gregory laugh about being "civil with the maids" by cutting off their heads. Just to ensure his audience gets the point of this rather clumsy gag, Shakespeare explains it:

Gregory: The heads of the maids?

Samson: Ay the heads of the maids, or their maidenheads,  
take it in what sense thou wilt. (1.1.22-25)

Having signaled his bawdy intent, Shakespeare makes the jokes even ruder: "Me they shall feel while I am able to stand . . . Draw thy tool . . . My naked weapon is out" (1.1.27, 31-2). Getting the jokes involves seeing the intention. Similarly, in a bitter quip, Hamlet asks Ophelia if she imagines he intended "country matters," famously stressing the first syllable (3.2.111). We know what Hamlet meant even if Ophelia seems unsure. At other times, Shakespeare's humor is more subtle. When Beatrice speaks of Benedick as "civil as an orange, and something of that jealous complexion" (2.1.256), the likelihood that he intends a pun on "civil"/"Seville" enriches the line. These examples are (I hope) uncontroversial: so should be the fact that to understand their implications is to grasp their intention.

Shakespeare's intentions matter also because they were sometimes unclear to him. In his landmark Oxford edition of *Henry V*, Gary Taylor noted that the first imprint (the 1600 quarto) switches the Duke of Bourbon in place of the Dauphin in scenes that correspond to the 1623 Folio's 3.7, 4.2 and 4.5 respectively. In 3.5.64-6, the French king clearly instructs the Dauphin to stay at Rouen. The Dauphin obeys in the 1600 text, but not in the 1623 text. This alteration is so structural to the play that it is probably authorial. As Taylor puts it, "The simplest explanation . . . is that Shakespeare who, in his own draft wavered about whether to include the Dauphin at Agincourt, eventually decided not to, reverted to his original intention (as spelled out in 3.5.64-6), put the Duke of Bourbon in the Dauphin's place and altered 2.4 and 3.5 to

accommodate this change" (Taylor 1982: 25). We should perhaps note that the later text of 1623 was written (but not printed) earlier than the first imprint of 1600.

Shakespeare repeatedly left his second thoughts visible. The two versions of *King Lear* offer salient examples, so also perhaps those of *Othello*, but we see them across a number of variant texts of his plays. The two earliest imprints of *Romeo and Juliet* contain a multitude of varying words and lines that do little to alter the sense but seem to represent Shakespeare's tinkering or revisions: for example, Romeo's line "This but begins the woe others must end" becomes "This but begins what other days must end" (3.1.120), a change that preserves the metre and only slightly varies the sense. It is difficult to identify the precise agencies behind such alterations but, given their number, some at least are likely to be authorial. Often, groups of lines are re-worked. Once Romeo has descended from Juliet's balcony, for example, Juliet declares in the 1599 imprint (Q2, composed earlier than that printed in 1597),

Art thou gone so, love, lord, ay husband, friend?  
I must hear from thee every day in the hour,  
For in a minute there are many days.  
O, by this count I shall be much in years  
Ere I again behold my Romeo. (3.5.43-47)

Juliet's slightly longer equivalent complaint in the 1597 text (Q1) makes a little more of her anxiety about time:

Art thou gone so, my lord, my love, my friend  
I must hear from thee every day in the hour,  
For in an hour there are many minutes;  
Minutes are days, so will I number them.  
O, by this count I shall be much in years  
Ere I see thee again.

Both versions are, on the whole, metrically even, both express the same attitude or feeling, and both follow with an appropriate logic. Differences become clearer from the third and subsequent lines. The 1599 text (Q2) introduces a metaphor of many days in a minute, while the 1597 version is more literal ("For in an hour there are many minutes"), following directly with a metrical line that aims at the sense achieved in Q2 ("Minutes are days, so will I number them"). One explanation of the variants here is that Q1 constitutes an actor's attempt at remembering the lines of Q2. Another is that the differences indicate authorial hesitation. Shakespeare drew on Arthur Brooke's poem *Romeus and Juliet* (1562) for much of his story. In Brooke, we find the phrases, "Eche minute seemed an howre, and every howre a day" (l. 747) and "For my part, I do gesse eche howre seems twenty yere" (l. 823). It is not unreasonable to think that Shakespeare may have paused over how to phrase Brook

e's protractions, re-cast the lines to see if he could improve them, and hence two variant "intentions" are preserved in the early imprints.

A less ambiguous instance of such hesitation occurs in the 1599 imprint where, at the end of 2.1, Romeo speaks two couplets that Friar Laurence utters at the start of 2.2. Editors concur that Shakespeare was unsure as to whom he should give these lines and that having duplicated them, he failed to mark one set for deletion, and hence they were printed twice (in Q2). We can know that Shakespeare intended to try the words first with Romeo and then with Friar Laurence but not which version he preferred. Shakespeare also remained indecisive about some names. He variously labeled Juliet's mother, "Lady of the house", "Old Lady," "Lady," "Wife" or "Mother"; he momentarily named the Prince "Eskales" or Escalus, introduced a mute character named Petruccio at 3.1 (earlier mentioned in 1.4) for whom he found no further use, and brought in Will Kemp as Peter at 4.4.128. We find uncertainties in composition elsewhere, for example in Romeo's final speech where the lines "I will believe" and "O true Apothecary, Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die" feature twice. Editors plausibly regard these repetitions as first and second attempts. Shakespeare, perhaps writing in some haste, did not take time to clear up indecisions left behind in what were relatively unfinished sheets. In her recent book, Grace Ioppolo has commented on the fact that when he began *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare remained open-minded about certain aspects of characterization and plotting. So Act 1 Scene 4 begins with a rather vague stage direction: "Enter Romeo, Mercutio, Benuolio, with fiue or sixe other Maskers, torchbearers." An author in the process of composing is likely, Ioppolo reasonably suggests, to wish "to be imprecise about the number of minor characters coming on stage" (Ioppolo 2006: 176). Shakespeare evidently intended to leave his options open as he drafted his plays, options that might eventually be closed off in a fair copy for the censor or in company rehearsals, but were not closed in the foul papers that found their way into print. What Ioppolo's detailed, substantial and painstaking work indicates is that early modern dramatists, "often changed their minds about character and plot by the end of Act I, or even as far along as the beginning of Act 5 . . . some authors went back and fixed their inconsistencies, though more often than not they, like Fletcher, did not correct their foul papers but made changes to later transcripts" (Ioppolo 2006: 74).

I have argued that to read Shakespeare is to infer (successfully or otherwise) his aims, purposes, inclinations, choices, expectations, and intentions, all those overlapping cognitive processes alive in composition. They may not always be as clear as we would like but to imagine that those processes just do not count leads to incoherence. I have argued, too, that Shakespeare's vacillations over what he intended can enable historical understanding of their inscription. Ignoring intention is not a realistic option. As previous contributors have already hinted, editorial attempts at dispensing with intention are likely to run into their own difficulties. With all due respect to a prolific and widely admired Shakespearean, I take as an example the "Shakespeare Originals" edition of the first imprint of *King Lear*, the 1608 "Pied Bull" quarto (Q1) published by Prentice Hall in 1995. Until the 1980s, this play-text was widely thought to have been a

"bad" quarto, a script reconstructed from memory (or maybe stenography) for a bootleg actors' version. From the late 1970s onwards, a series of critical scholars, including Michael Warren, Peter Blayney, Steven Urkowitz, Gary Taylor, and Stanley Wells changed the consensus by establishing a strong case for the quarto as a legitimate early version later revised by Shakespeare into the text of the 1623 Folio. The two King Lears, formerly one "bad" and the other "good", were now two "good" texts, each bearing their own "integrity", the second encapsulating Shakespeare's revisions or second thoughts.

The Prentice Hall editor of Q1 regards the revisionist case as mistakenly rooted in a strong notion of authorial intention. "Shakespeare," he demurs, "becomes something very like a determining principle - a guarantor of authority and meaning, the fixed and stable point through which a clear relationship among multiple texts can be drawn" (18). He regards the case for revision as in thrall to "the determining framework of an authorial construction" or to "an authorial cultural apparatus" which inhibits the exciting "radical theoretical possibilities" otherwise ahead. These new possibilities include "deconstruction of the mainstream editorial tradition," an "archaeological excavation of the 'real foundations' of that cultural edifice," and "liberation of texts from canonical colonization and authorial sovereignty" (19). Without authorial constraints, the "modern post-structuralist reader" can join in a "celebration of textual multiplicity" and "freely manipulate the textual elements of the various texts to form any number of differential versions" in a "free play of assemblage and disassemblage" (22-23). I am quoting selectively here, though not I think unfairly. I do so to indicate that no "celebration" or "play" is as innocent or free as this author implies, and this is precisely what his own notes to the edition bear out.

The textual notes seek to explain the difficulties, obscurities, and incoherencies of the 1608 printing, offering where possible to make some kind of sense of them. We are informed repeatedly that a particular word or phrase in the 1608 text "is acceptable," "is appropriate," is "in accordance," "is presumably an allusion" or "is certainly appropriate." In so doing, the editor tacitly acknowledges that a text cannot mean anything at all, that words and meanings have their historical remit, and that there cannot be "any number of differential versions" or such free manipulation as he had imagined. When remarking on Edgar's words "poor Turlygod," the editor writes that "a number of possible explanations for 'Turlygod', a word not otherwise known, have been proposed" (160) -- but crucially, not any number of explanations since not any number is, as he puts it, "possible." Furthermore, when Lear's outburst, "Vassall recreant" is noted, we are told that "its use in the first instance is clearly consistent with the intended meaning" (156). Anyone, of course, can be inconsistent, but when the editor picks out the word "questrits" as "a Shakespearean coinage," we know (if we had not already surmised) that authorial intention has been assumed all along despite the disclaimers. What else can a "Shakespearean coinage" be if not an instance of authorial agency and intention? In seeking to expand the ways in which Shakespeare's text may be understood, the editor has needlessly committed himself to a philosophical position

he simply cannot sustain -- not because he lacks intelligence, but because the position itself does not make sense.

To conclude, the fact that we cannot be certain beyond the faintest scintilla of a doubt that the few examples cited here are indeed instances of authorial intention is insufficient reason to hold that they are not, or to regard them as immaterial. I could add several further examples but prefer to finish on a different point. The fact that locating Shakespeare's intentions is no precise art is educationally motivating. Taylor and Ioppolo are just two of many editors and critics who have given us glimpses of how Shakespeare thought, worked, and saw his lines coming to life in the plays. There are others I would have liked to acknowledge, including E. A. J. Honigmann and John Jones, but too many to recognize adequately here. To dismiss such work as speculative is simply not to engage with it. Reading Shakespeare inevitably requires us to negotiate, grasp, and misconstrue his intentions. Where we are unsure about what was intended we have no warrant to assume that Shakespeare was equally unsure or that we will always be so uncertain. Reading the poems and plays, we constantly encounter Shakespeare's intentions: the wit in Petruccio's rejoinder to Kate, "What, with my tongue in your tail?" (2.1.213) is not so hard to comprehend. Shakespeare knew how to seed, cultivate and bring to bloom a good jest (recall *Twelfth Night's* Feste outwitting Olivia: "Take away the fool, gentlemen" 1.5.62). Yet we need not make recovering intent the grail of analysis. Shakespeare says, "take it in what sense thou wilt," trusting that the audience will remain attentive to the impress of words not their own. So what benefit does recognizing the place of Shakespeare's intentions afford? It allows us to be more articulate about what we read in his plays and can generate the excitement and pleasure of understanding. Lastly, think of *Mistress Quickly*, *Dogberry*, and *Elbow*: they don't intend what they say: or, putting it positively, they intend what they don't say. The conditions that make for communicative success are probably more interesting philosophically than those that make for failure, but the impact of that success throughout the plays makes the malapropisms all the more brilliant, sharp and, let's face it, joyful. In sum, the value of intention should be on every Shakespeare syllabus.

Duncan Salkeld

---

"Sans Everything"

In the last year or so, a Russian company has produced an edited and translated version of *Twelfth Night* which the actors speak in Russian. In America, this was received with wild enthusiasm. Recently the Russian text of the play was displayed to the audience in Buenos Aires in Spanish, though elsewhere it might be displayed in Turkish, or Finish or Japanese. Nevertheless, the audience universally has thought it was "marvelous" and applauded wildly. Meanwhile, newspapers are alive with reports of Shakespeare performed in Northern Canada in Inuit. Worse, the pressures of war have even brought talk of a stellar performance in Kabul. A production of *Love's Labour's*

Lost\_, set in Afghanistan and translated into the Dari language, played to packed audiences there in 2005. The plot was recast to feature Afghan characters. As to the local provisions of Muslim patterns of behavior, not usually allowed beyond the playhouse, these scarcely applied. The feminine actors didn't use veils or the burqua, and were able to flirt roundly with their colleagues. The performances, lasting an astonishing five nights, were sponsored by the British Council.

That encouraged co-adaptor Steven Landrigan summarily to banish dismay. With the sort of mistaken confidence that the Council unerringly backs, he averred that "Shakespeare is so adaptable because he writes universal truths of human experience." In fact, says, one viewer, the play's commitment is not, perish the thought, to language at all. It is to "Theater."

The climax to this cozy flight from discourse has recently been a newly unveiled performance by a group called the American Synetic Theatre. It was called, quite literally, a "wordless" Macbeth. It had been operating in Washington DC: needless to say to ecstatic reviews.

The mind may boggle, but works originally written in English seem to have acquired a strange capacity. They need not be reduced to anyone's puny linguistics to renew their potency. In these terms, access from Shakespeare's intense height seems to make all culture's kin. A "wordless" Macbeth? May the Lord preserve us from it. The "universal truths of human experience"? Let Angels and Ministers of Grace defend us. But at the moment, if you've learnt "theater," it seems that you can wing it all to the last hurrah.

Terence Hawkes

---

[1]-----  
From: Gabriel Egan <mail@GabrielEgan.com>  
Date: Saturday, 10 May 2008 21:00:45 +0100  
Subject: 19.0276 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0276 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

John Drakakis insists that when reading W.W. Greg's "The rationale of copy text," which Drakakis thinks is "now largely superseded," we need to stick to the main ideological matters and avoid being dragged into the question of "whether or not Greg departed radically from McKerrow, since such matters are not strictly relevant."

It's impossible to respond to an analysis of Greg's essay that attends to its "odd slippages between 'author' and 'writer'" while disregarding as irrelevant the whole point of the essay, which is to disagree with the view of copy-text given in McKerrow's Prolegomena.

From Drakakis's perspective these slippages matter because our notions of authorship and intention have been thoroughly revised by Barthes's "The death of the author" and Foucault's "What is an author?" One could take the point much further back and argue that since Freud we have had to be more circumspect about intentions, since most of us accept that we are none of us fully in charge of our minds, let alone our mouths and fingers.

We can all agree (I hope) that Barthes's and Foucault's essays were important improvements in the theorizing of writers' intentions, but their usefulness in relation to early-modern drama is distinctly limited. This is because they are not addressed to the social aspects of drama even though their shared rejections of the lone autonomous author would seem suited to it. Barthes wrote that "To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing" and it was in precisely these terms that Foucault answered Barthes the following year when he argued that authors are not so much intrinsic originators of texts but rather extrinsic products of the consumption of texts, and that the emergence of the concern for the author as the primary determinant in meaning could be dated historically to around 1800. Importantly, Barthes and Foucault were broadening the notion of sole-authorship, but had nothing to say about collaborations of authors with authors and of authors with performers, which are crucial to our subject.

When "intention" includes the projection of the obligation to complete the work onto other people, the stakes are considerably higher than the (I insist, trivial) matters of speech prefix variation and the use of actors' names in place of characters' names. Indeed, to focus on the author's inconsistencies ("Lady", "Lady Capulet", "Mother" to take the famous case) as though they revealed the heart of the problem is to miss the more tricky complexities of intention that arise when one expects another, or others, to complete one's work.

I should make the distinction, however, that where variant speech prefixes seem to emerge because of incompleteness, then the matter does become terribly interesting in relation to intention. Thus the 1598 quarto of *Love's Labour's Lost* seems to be printed from a manuscript in an unpolished state in which it was not yet settled which of the two women, Rosaline and Katharine, is wooed by Berowne and which by Dumaine. (Or, rather, to put it another way, which lady has which name wasn't settled.) Here I think Drakakis and I can at least talk to one another rather than past one another, for the silent Innogen (wife to Leonato) in the 1600 quarto of *Much Ado About Nothing* is surely such another case in point: in the processes that were bound to follow from use of this manuscript to launch a performance, Innogen would doubtless have been removed. That Shakespeare at one point, in the heat of composition, thought he might use this character doesn't make the part worth saving.

Ind

eed, there's a kind of editorial hubris in saving her, since it amounts to helping Shakespeare write what the editor thinks he ought to have written (and what suits our modern concerns), but probably didn't write: a silent bystanding woman.

And yet, to make the obvious Marxist manoeuvre at this point, one could argue that for all that performance disperses authority, and that authors are not really the originating centres of their own creations, the early-modern state was having none of this post-structuralist nonsense. When plays gave offence, their writers (not the players, usually) went to jail. For all that the script was circulated in fragments, as Simon Palfrey and Tiffany Stern's new book argues, it also had to come together as a singularity to be authorized by the state censor. The forces of authority acted centripetally against these centrifugal tendencies, rendering the dispersed, fragmentary, unstable, and plural text into something fairly singular. Thus an editor who follows the emerging fashion for not regularizing speech prefixes\* on the grounds that irregularity inheres in the early-modern dramatic textual condition has simply mistaken the medium for the message.

Gabriel Egan (Who vows to say nothing more for the moment, feeling guilty at treating a Roundtable like a duologue.)

\* An interesting defence of doing something similar was mounted in the recent Arden<sup>3</sup> edition of *Henry 6* by the editors John D. Cox and Eric Rasmussen, who retained the prefix "Widow" for Lady Grey in 3.2 on the grounds that "she's known to the audience only as a widow at this point" (175). This might be true of inattentive audience members reading their editions in the theatre during the performance, but those attending to the actors surely notice that King Edward begins the scene by saying that "at Saint Alban's field | This lady's husband, Sir Richard Grey, was slain" and thus know who she is. And if what is coming in the sequent play is of any concern at all now, then audiences and readers need to know that she's not just any old widow but Lady Grey.

[2]-----

From: John Drakakis <john.drakakis@stir.ac.uk>  
Date: Wednesday, 21 May 2008 16:45:52 +0100  
Subject: 19.0282 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: RE: SHK 19.0282 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Can I raise two issues here that are not strictly speaking connected with each other?

1. On the "best text" approach, this implies a qualitative distinction that I don't think that Greg makes, since the text that is hypothetically closest to the writer is not necessarily the "best" text.

Also on the flinging round by Egan of the epithet "vulgar," anybody who has tried any early modern editing will know the difference between a "positivist determinism" of a

rather narrow kind, and the constant shuttling backwards and forwards between "theory" and "practice" that the activity requires. The overdetermined practices of composers are subject to regular review (and they need to be in relation to any ONE project, since each case might well throw up something that hasn't been encountered before. The activity has to be "positivist" in the sense that we start from the inked marks on the page. Things get a lot more speculative when we start asking questions about what they may "mean" and how those speculations might relate to what we are calling authorial "intention."

2. We must be grateful for Alan Dessen's clear overview, and for the candor with which he illuminates issues about which our knowledge is uncertain. In passing it might be worth reminding ourselves that we need one (or possibly TWO) set(s) of protocols when we are dealing with a printed text, and a third when dealing with the issue of "intention" as regards performance. My question to Alan is this: How might what I want to call "implied" stage directions factor into the issue of "intention" and if they do, then whose "intentions" might they reflect? I have in mind moments when one dramatic character refers to a gesture of another, or, even more problematically, when a gesture is "assumed" and where we might be able to infer it by the speech that follows. I suppose this connects, in part, with the example that I offered from *\_Much Ado\_* where the actor's name, his role, and his stage persona ALL appear at one point in the 1600Q. Is this the actor "writing" the writer and in such a way that it invalidates the notion of the writer as "creator" or legitimizing origin of the text? Or are we here into a realm of intertextuality, which, along with issues such as explicit and implied stage directions, refer to a field of discourse in which the writer occupies a "function" rather than simply being a "creative" origin?

Best wishes,  
John Drakakis

[3]-----  
From: David Evett <d.evett@csuohio.edu>  
Date: Tuesday, 13 May 2008 20:44:35 -0400  
Subject: 19.0282 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0282 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Would a playreader such as Jonson or Shakespeare have responded to questions or provided a running commentary? What tantalizes me (and perhaps no one else) is: would such a reading of a manuscript include a reading aloud of the stage directions? If so, would some of those signals -- e.g., the "fictional" ones that appear to tell the story or slip into a narrative mode -- be linked to the playwright's thinking ahead not only to the eventual performance but also to this reading-audition-trial run? More generally, if such a to-be-expected extra step between completed manuscript and preparation for performance was anticipated, would some manuscript features be conditioned by an

author or authors taking into account that intermediate phase? Would such an author-centered event have conveyed a sense of his "intentions" to the players as auditors?

Alan Dessen's questions reverberate in the contemporary rehearsal hall, where the virtually obligatory (I recognize the companies out there that start with actors on their feet, sides in hands) practice at the first readthrough of plays ancient or modern includes reading (usually by the stage manager) of all stage directions that have survived the preliminary editing process. At first rehearsals of contemporary plays, the author sometimes takes the chair.

David Evett

[4]-----

From: Tom Reedy <tomreedy@verizon.net>  
Date: Thursday, 15 May 2008 22:40:24 -0500  
Subject: Re: SHAKSPER Digest - 9 May 2008 to 13 May 2008 (#2008-48)

Cary DiPietro <cary.dipietro@utoronto.ca> wrote:

>We begin this week with Alan Dessen writing in answer to  
>the question of whether we can determine or what we can  
>determine about Shakespeare's intentions in the theatre  
>based on the scant material evidence that has descended  
>to us about rehearsal and staging practices; specifically,  
>whether playwrights such as Shakespeare relinquished all  
>control over their dramatic manuscripts when they turned  
>them over to theatre companies, which is more or less the  
>received view, or, as Grace Ippolo argues in her recent book  
>(discussed here at length), whether dramatists retained more  
>significant control in the realization of their manuscripts to  
>performance, and whether such "intentions" -- playwright  
>as dramaturge -- might have been inscribed in the copy used  
>for printing the different quarto and Folio versions of some  
>plays, possibly at different points in time.

I am enjoying reading this discussion, but I am surprised that the idea that playwrights "relinquished all control over their dramatic manuscripts when they turned them over to theatre companies" is considered to be "more or less the received view," especially with such external evidence as the testimony of Johannes Rheanus, who visited England in 1611 and translated a play by Thomas Tomkis into German in 1613.

Martin White quotes Rheanus' preface in his Renaissance Drama in Action (Routledge, 1998), "So far as actors are concerned they, as I noticed in England, are daily instructed, as it were in a school, so that even the most eminent actors have to

allow themselves to be taught their places by the Dramatists, which arrangement gives life and ornament to a well-written play, so that it is no wonder that the English players (I speak of skilled ones) surpass and have the advantage of others (34)."

Tom Reedy

---

Works cited:

Davidson, Donald Davidson. *Truth, Language, and History*. Oxford: Clarendon, 2005.

Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*. Translation and preface by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.

---. *Writing and Difference*. Translation and introduction with notes by Alan Bass. London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978.

---. *Margins of Philosophy*. Translation with notes by Alan Bass. New York and London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1982.

Ioppolo, Grace. *Dramatists and their Manuscripts in the Age of Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton and Heywood: Authorship, authority and the playhouse*. London and New York: Routledge, 2006.

Hawkes, Terence. *Shakespeare in the Present*. London: Routledge, 1992.

Iser, Wolfgang. *The Implied Reader: patterns in communication of prose fiction from Bunyan to Beckett*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1974.

Kearney, Richard (ed.) *Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1984).

Knapp, Steven and Walter Benn Michaels. "Against Theory." *Critical Inquiry* 8.4 (Summer, 1982): 723-742.

---. "Against Theory 2: Hermeneutics and Deconstruction." *Critical Inquiry* 14.1 (1987): 49-68.

Mitchell, W. J. T. (ed.). *Against Theory: Literary Studies and the New Pragmatism*. Chicago and London: The Chicago University Press, 1985). Knapp and Michaels's article "Against Theory" together with replies by E. D. Hirsch, Stanley Fish, Richard Rorty and others originally appeared in the following issues of *Critical Inquiry*: Summer 1982, Vol. 8 No. 4; June 1983, Vol. 9, No. 4; and March 1985, Vol. 11. No. 3.

Norris, Christopher. *\_Derrida\_*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987.

Searle, John R. "Literary Theory and Its Discontents." *\_New Literary History\_* 25.3 (25th Anniversary Issue, Part 1) (Summer, 1994): 637-667.

Shakespeare, William. *\_Henry V\_*. Ed. Gary Taylor. Oxford: Clarendon, 1982.

Shakespeare, William. *\_M. William Shak-speare: His True Chronicle History of the life and death of king LEAR and his three Daughters\_*. Ed. Graham Holderness. London and New York: Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1995.

White, Martin. *\_Renaissance Drama in Action\_*. London: Routledge, 1998.

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0315.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0310 Thursday, 22 May 2008

From: Cary DiPietro <cary.dipietro@utoronto.ca>  
Date: Wednesday, 21 May 2008 17:49:53 -0400  
Subject: 19.0282 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: RE: SHK 19.0282 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[Editor's Note: Cary DiPietro and I have decided to try a new procedure for this Roundtable discussion. I will post responses to any of the contributions in this digest as they appear without comment, and then a week later Cary will put together a digest of all of the previous week's discussions, of any essays that he has asked various Shakespeare scholars to contribute to the Roundtable, and of his comments as guest moderator. We are interested in seeing how this procedure will affect the Roundtable. We want to encourage thoughtful response rather than off-the-cuff ones, but we would also like to encourage greater participation. -Hardy]

This week's installment of the Roundtable features a double leading contribution, a longer essay by Duncan Salkeld on "Meaning and Intention," and a shorter contribution from Terence Hawkes, "Sans Everything." I should explain why these two contributions appear in this exceptional manner. The first reason is practical: Hawkes has very graciously allowed me to reproduce a section of an article that he is currently writing to be produced in another venue; as a result, the piece below is not self-contained in the way that other leading contributions have been so far, and Hawkes does not directly or explicitly address the kinds of questions we've been asking in this discussion. I had asked

if he would be interested in contributing to the topic of meaning and intention on the basis of his earlier work on meaning. His arguments are epitomized by the oft-intoned catch-phrase, "meaning by Shakespeare," which is also the title of his 1992 book. It was, perhaps, inevitable that Hawkes's writing would enter the discussion, as it did in John Drakakis's leading contribution in the second digest. As one SHAKSPERean pointed out to me recently off the list, Hawkes's more recent argument for a critical presentism continues this repudiation of intentional meaning begun in earlier works; she quotes the 2002 volume, *Shakespeare in the Present*: "We choose the facts. We choose the texts. We do the inserting. We do the perceiving. Facts and texts, that is to say, don't simply speak, don't merely mean. We speak, we mean, by them" (3). Hawkes's shorter contribution here needs to be read in this context, as the continuation or extension of a now seminal argument in Shakespeare studies.

While I'm inclined to agree with his position, I find the case made by Salkeld for, as he writes, a "modest" intentionalist position equally compelling, and this is my second reason for pairing the two contributions this week. He argues here that, if not all, then some of Shakespeare's intentions can be known, and this fact "opens up Shakespeare studies in rich and fascinating ways." Salkeld's is no "common sense" approach. He draws on the case "against theory" made by Stephen Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels in 1992 to respond to Derrida's view of intention as yet another example of a "metaphysics of presence." In the lead up to this argument, Salkeld suggests that the arguments made by presentists are not dissimilar to those made by reader-response critics that "only a text's end-uses will count." I would argue, on the one hand, that these remain very distinct and separate modes of critical inquiry (and, of course, diverse each within their own fields) because presentism, by and large, does not give emphasis to the experiential dimension of the written text in the way that such phenomenological encounters do; all agency is given to the "end-user" who acts upon and through the text in what sometimes seems like a sinister conspiracy, when, instead, that end-user might also be seen to act as a repository for the experiences, both individual and social, the text instigates. On the other hand, the possibility of crossover between them strikes me as potentially very rewarding. I think, in particular, of critics such as Wolfgang Iser, who argues in *The Implied Reader* (1972) and elsewhere that the text is not inert, but provides norms that guide the reader's response, which is a fulfillment of the conditions structured in the text. This in-built structure of experience, a reworking of ideas from Husserl, is its "intentionality." Rethinking intention in this way as determined by the reader but also guided by the text productively collapses the distance between intentionalists and presentists. This is a binary that's reproduced by Salkeld below, and one that might seem antagonistic in the pairing of his and Hawkes's contributions, even though Salkeld offers a more medial position. But pairing them in this way compels us to consider, as I think Salkeld does, whether or how

they can be reconciled to one another.

This dialectic echoes in interesting, if not exactly parallel, ways in the continued dialogue between Gabriel Egan and John Drakakis. Egan, in particular, argues against the utility of Barthes and Foucault, brought into the discussion by Drakakis, because, he states, in their respective treatments of authorship, they are not attuned to social aspects of drama, including instances of collaboration between authors, and authors with performers. Both Egan and Drakakis pose questions about editorial practice, once again, in relation to the dramatic nature of the play text. Drakakis also poses a number of further questions for Alan Dessen about "implied" stage directions.

The digest concludes with two shorter contributions from David Evett and Tom Reedy respectively, both responding to the last digest headed by Dessen. Evett makes a valuable comparison between manuscript readings in Shakespeare's theatre and the contemporary rehearsal hall, and, in doing so, he anticipates a later leading contribution on the theatre. Reedy responds to my, perhaps inaccurate, summary of Dessen's argument. For the next installment, I have a leading contributor lined up, but for reasons I'll explain later, I leave you on the edge of your seats wondering who it might be... the topic for the next installment will continue in the same vein, "giving intention its due," and I invite participants to engage with this or any other aspect of Shakespeare's intentions.

---

### "Meaning and Intention"

The idea that consideration of authorial intention is neither legitimate nor even possible has gained wide currency, despite the fact that everyday practice and common intuition tell us the reverse. Anti-intentionalists are presumably not against human intention per se, but against the notion that an author's intention should constrain the ways in which a text can be understood. It is said, for example, that since the author is "dead," he or she cannot "guarantee" the meaning of their work. Living authors are no less defunct since (the argument runs) cognitions are notoriously complex, contingent, and uncertain. The strict impossibility of inhabiting another's consciousness means that interpretation cannot be de-limited on so flimsy a basis as intention. Accordingly, only a text's end-uses will count. This is a view espoused by a number of reader-response critics and, I believe, akin to that argued by "presentists." Hence the work of criticism should be, and can only be, a political project of generating multiple readings, of cultivating diversity and incorporating as many social voices as possible. But it is an odd multivocality that shuts out the author's voice.

Few, I hope, would deny the attraction of widening the discussion. Yet what principle or "theory" could possibly legislate that talk of authorial intention at all times and in all places is invalid? I do not mean to imply that any of my fellow contributors adopt such a position but many of us will know of those who do (in principle or practice). Why prefer this absolutism? We cannot show that Shakespeare's intentions always were and will forever prove unreliable. Readers' cognitions are not by definition superior to those of authors. Were an author's intentions to be partly clear, anti-intentionalists must refuse to admit them. But why would anyone want to be so dogmatic? Between the two claims either that we know nothing at all of the author's mind or that we can know it for certain lies a wide ground worth considering. If it is the pure unknowability of what Shakespeare thought that rules out what has been unfortunately termed "the genetic fallacy," then should that unknowability once begin to crack, the fallacy crumbles. The anti-intentionalist case thus rests on the radical inscrutability or absolute indeterminacy of intention.

This is, in my view, a mistake: the conclusion that all claims to authorial intention are inadmissible does not follow from the premise that some are. That intentions can be unclear is no argument against the view that there are authorial intentions that matter. My modest proposal here is that Shakespeare's intentions can sometimes be known, if hazily, and, rather than being anything to worry about, this heartening fact opens up Shakespeare studies in rich and fascinating ways.

A further, closely-related point is that if the concept of intention comes with some difficulties, this does not mean it is fatally disabled or should be entirely disregarded. The difficulties are what make the concept interesting. The possibility of sharing in Shakespeare's ideas is animating (I imagine this is why there are Shakespeareans) and the plausibilities in doing so are intriguing. The fact that literary intentions matter to varying degrees, that they might be more accessible in some textual features and less so in others, should hardly surprise us but supplies no warrant for dismissing the concept outright. If we do not know Shakespeare's intentions with an absolute, God-like assurance, this does not mean we cannot know them at all, or lack good reason for claiming to know them. Nor does it mean that Shakespeare did not know his own intentions, or entertain quite good reason for believing that he did. Crucial here is the strength we demand of the verb "to know." Once we drop the requirement for crystalline, perfect certainty, a compelling dialogue about evidence can begin. Much of what I've said in this introduction rests upon a vein of philosophical debate about the topic of intention (Searle, 1994; Davidson 2005). Some readers of this Roundtable may be unfamiliar with, or perhaps tired of, literary theory and Hardy has asked us not to revisit old battles. Consequently, I outline only in the briefest possible terms some of the "theory" behind my argument, and anyone preferring to get straight to Shakespeare may like to skip my next two paragraphs.

Somewhere behind my position is the view that language and thought are pre-suppositional: there are some things we just do presuppose. These include that there are "things-in-the-world," that some of those "things" are people, and that most of those people are capable of intentions. Words are "things-in-the-world": Saussure called their material structures "signifiers." It may sound elliptical but, as Derrida noted, the signified (meaning) of the signifier "signifier" is itself (Derrida 1976: 7; 1978: 281). Derrida wrote repeatedly about writing as though it were both a referent and a meaning, splitting writing down into mini-"things-in-the-world" such as "marks," strokes of the pen, "graphemes" and so forth (Derrida 1976: 9, 49-50; 1982: 316, 318). He regretted as "stupidities" readings that took him to mean that "there is nothing beyond language" or that "we are imprisoned in language" (Kearney 1984: 124; Norris 1987: 144). For him, deconstruction is only possible within or by virtue of metaphysics and hence the paradox must work both ways: in order to assert the restless disseminating or "iterable" play of language one has to arrest that play: as he once said in an interview, "Deconstruction always presupposes affirmation" (Kearney 1984: 118). On intention, Derrida wrote in "Signature, Event, Context," that, "the category of intention will not disappear; it will have its place but from this place it will no longer govern the entire scene and system of utterance" because, he claimed, written and spoken utterances will always be prone to "iterability" or repetition out of context. Other aspects of everyday language-function equally have their place. In the same essay, Derrida emphatically refused to conclude that there is no "relative specificity to the effects of consciousness" any more than there are no "effects of speech . . . of the performative . . . of ordinary language . . . of presence and of speech acts." All these make ordinary communication possible. He argued only that these effects "presuppose" their "opposite" (Derrida 1982: 326-7). It might be worth asking to whom or to what should the deconstructing be attributed? Whether we ascribe the agency for meaning (or un-meaning) to authors, to language, to Being (Dasein), to ideology or to readers, the fact that we do not have agent-less verbs ensures that pronominal subject-positions (i.e. subjectivity) will always be presupposed as notional starting points. So, for all that has been written on the question, in all its complexity, no necessity lurks in literary theory to eradicate the possibility of either the subject or authorial intention.

Somewhere also behind my position is an article published in the journal *Critical Inquiry* (Summer 1982) in which Stephen Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels argued that meaning and intention are synonymous. Entitled "Against Theory," their article was re-published as a book in 1985, with responses by Stanley Fish, Richard Rorty and others (see Mitchell 1985: 11-30 and passim). The article, and a sequel, generated further critiques and replies published in the same journal and elsewhere. As Mitchell pointed out in his introduction, Knapp

and Michaels' pragmatist argument that theory merely re-states in abstract terms what we ordinarily do anyway ironically generated more theory rather than less. But although their claim that intention and meaning are one-that there are no intentionless meanings- has met with disagreement from several critics (including the philosopher John Searle whose writing on intention should be central to any discussion of the concept; see for example Searle 1994), none has demonstrably refuted their argument because, I suspect, it is irrefutable (though this does not necessarily mean it is correct). So meager a sketch unfortunately reduces Knapp and Michaels's case and its replies: resolutions for problems of authorial intention and meaning are far from straightforward and this is why Knapp and Michaels's attempt at one is attractive. Theirs, I suggest, is an intriguing "holding position" from which to start; one which, for all its apparent simplicity, is by no means naive. So in discussing examples from Shakespeare, and taking my cue from Knapp and Michaels, I openly make an assumption: that to read is to presuppose authorial intention. What did Shakespeare mean by "intention"? He used the noun only twice, in *\_Merry Wives\_* (1.3.) and *\_The Winter's Tale\_* (1.2) and on both occasions in relation to lust. The OED is helpful in outlining the various uses and meanings of "intention," from mental effort or application towards understanding to having an aim, design, purpose, or inclination. Shakespeare used the verb "to intend" on 89 or so occasions, so often as to positively invite discussion of character-intentions. Critics fruitfully debate character-intentions all the time (Lear 1623: . . . "Tis our fast intent / To shake all cares and business from our age . . . " 1.1.36-7). Many will accept that a character's declared plans, purposes, aims, and motivations are valid topics for investigation and analysis. But Shakespeare, it may be said, is not like his characters: he does not disclose his intentions. Were the Sonnets autobiographical, we perhaps might locate his intentions more securely, but even there Shakespeare deploys the term only once and in an unusual way, blending mental imagery with travel: "For then my thoughts, from far where I abide, / Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee" (Sonnet 27, l. 6). Yet the sonnets do (if only in part) seem to be autobiographical. As has already been noted in this Roundtable, if Andrew Gurr is correct, sonnet 145 alludes to Anne Hathaway, for "hate away she threw." How do we know that Shakespeare intended this pun? Gurr makes a case substantial enough for most editors and commentators to accept that he did.

Getting a joke involves both understanding the language conventions of jokes in general and seeing something of the teller's intention. Satire, for example, is an intentional genre. We see Shakespeare's intentions at work in moments of comedy. In the first scene of *Romeo and Juliet*, Samson and Gregory laugh about being "civil with the maids" by cutting off their heads. Just to ensure his audience gets the point of this rather clumsy gag, Shakespeare explains it:

Gregory: The heads of the maids?

Samson: Ay the heads of the maids, or their maidenheads,  
take it in what sense thou wilt. (1.1.22-25)

Having signaled his bawdy intent, Shakespeare makes the jokes even ruder: "Me they shall feel while I am able to stand . . . Draw thy tool . . . My naked weapon is out" (1.1.27, 31-2). Getting the jokes involves seeing the intention. Similarly, in a bitter quip, Hamlet asks Ophelia if she imagines he intended "country matters," famously stressing the first syllable (3.2.111). We know what Hamlet meant even if Ophelia seems unsure. At other times, Shakespeare's humor is more subtle. When Beatrice speaks of Benedick as "civil as an orange, and something of that jealous complexion" (2.1.256), the likelihood that he intends a pun on "civil"/"Seville" enriches the line. These examples are (I hope) uncontroversial: so should be the fact that to understand their implications is to grasp their intention.

Shakespeare's intentions matter also because they were sometimes unclear to him. In his landmark Oxford edition of *Henry V*, Gary Taylor noted that the first imprint (the 1600 quarto) switches the Duke of Bourbon in place of the Dauphin in scenes that correspond to the 1623 Folio's 3.7, 4.2 and 4.5 respectively. In 3.5.64-6, the French king clearly instructs the Dauphin to stay at Rouen. The Dauphin obeys in the 1600 text, but not in the 1623 text. This alteration is so structural to the play that it is probably authorial. As Taylor puts it, "The simplest explanation . . . is that Shakespeare who, in his own draft wavered about whether to include the Dauphin at Agincourt, eventually decided not to, reverted to his original intention (as spelled out in 3.5.64-6), put the Duke of Bourbon in the Dauphin's place and altered 2.4 and 3.5 to accommodate this change" (Taylor 1982: 25). We should perhaps note that the later text of 1623 was written (but not printed) earlier than the first imprint of 1600.

Shakespeare repeatedly left his second thoughts visible. The two versions of *King Lear* offer salient examples, so also perhaps those of *Othello*, but we see them across a number of variant texts of his plays. The two earliest imprints of *Romeo and Juliet* contain a multitude of varying words and lines that do little to alter the sense but seem to represent Shakespeare's tinkering or revisions: for example, Romeo's line "This but begins the woe others must end" becomes "This but begins what other days must end" (3.1.120), a change that preserves the metre and only slightly varies the sense. It is difficult to identify the precise agencies behind such alterations but, given their number, some at least are likely to be authorial. Often, groups of lines are re-worked. Once Romeo has descended from Juliet's balcony, for example, Juliet declares in the 1599 imprint (Q2, composed earlier than that printed in 1597),

Art thou gone so, love, lord, ay husband, friend?

I must hear from thee every day in the hour,  
For in a minute there are many days. O, by this count I shall be much  
in years  
Ere I again behold my Romeo. (3.5.43-47)

Juliet's slightly longer equivalent complaint in the 1597 text (Q1) makes a little more of her anxiety about time:

Art thou gone so, my lord, my love, my friend  
I must hear from thee every day in the hour,  
For in an hour there are many minutes;  
Minutes are days, so will I number them.  
O, by this count I shall be much in years  
Ere I see thee again.

Both versions are, on the whole, metrically even, both express the same attitude or feeling, and both follow with an appropriate logic. Differences become clearer from the third and subsequent lines. The 1599 text (Q2) introduces a metaphor of many days in a minute, while the 1597 version is more literal ("For in an hour there are many minutes"), following directly with a metrical line that aims at the sense achieved in Q2 ("Minutes are days, so will I number them"). One explanation of the variants here is that Q1 constitutes an actor's attempt at remembering the lines of Q2. Another is that the differences indicate authorial hesitation. Shakespeare drew on Arthur Brooke's poem *Romeus and Juliet* (1562) for much of his story. In Brooke, we find the phrases, "Eche minute seemed an howre, and every howre a day" (l. 747) and "For my part, I do gesse eche howre seems twenty yere" (l. 823). It is not unreasonable to think that Shakespeare may have paused over how to phrase Brooke's protractions, re-cast the lines to see if he could improve them, and hence two variant "intentions" are preserved in the early imprints.

A less ambiguous instance of such hesitation occurs in the 1599 imprint where, at the end of 2.1, Romeo speaks two couplets that Friar Laurence utters at the start of 2.2. Editors concur that Shakespeare was unsure as to whom he should give these lines and that having duplicated them, he failed to mark one set for deletion, and hence they were printed twice (in Q2). We can know that Shakespeare intended to try the words first with Romeo and then with Friar Laurence but not which version he preferred. Shakespeare also remained indecisive about some names. He variously labeled Juliet's mother, "Lady of the house", "Old Lady," "Lady," "Wife" or "Mother"; he momentarily named the Prince "Eskales" or Escalus, introduced a mute character named Petruccio at 3.1 (earlier mentioned in 1.4) for whom he found no further use, and brought in Will Kemp as Peter at 4.4.128. We find uncertainties in composition elsewhere, for example in Romeo's final speech where the lines "I will believe" and "O true

Apothecary, Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die" feature twice. Editors plausibly regard these repetitions as first and second attempts. Shakespeare, perhaps writing in some haste, did not take time to clear up indecisions left behind in what were relatively unfinished sheets. In her recent book, Grace Ioppolo has commented on the fact that when he began *\_Romeo and Juliet\_*, Shakespeare remained open-minded about certain aspects of characterization and plotting. So Act 1 Scene 4 begins with a rather vague stage direction: "Enter Romeo, Mercutio, Benuolio, with fiue or sixe other Maskers, torchbearers." An author in the process of composing is likely, Ioppolo reasonably suggests, to wish "to be imprecise about the number of minor characters coming on stage" (Ioppolo 2006: 176). Shakespeare evidently intended to leave his options open as he drafted his plays, options that might eventually be closed off in a fair copy for the censor or in company rehearsals, but were not closed in the foul papers that found their way into print. What Ioppolo's detailed, substantial and painstaking work indicates is that early modern dramatists, "often changed their minds about character and plot by the end of Act I, or even as far along as the beginning of Act 5 . . . some authors went back and fixed their inconsistencies, though more often than not they, like Fletcher, did not correct their foul papers but made changes to later transcripts" (Ioppolo 2006: 74).

I have argued that to read Shakespeare is to infer (successfully or otherwise) his aims, purposes, inclinations, choices, expectations, and intentions, all those overlapping cognitive processes alive in composition. They may not always be as clear as we would like but to imagine that those processes just do not count leads to incoherence. I have argued, too, that Shakespeare's vacillations over what he intended can enable historical understanding of their inscription. Ignoring intention is not a realistic option. As previous contributors have already hinted, editorial attempts at dispensing with intention are likely to run into their own difficulties. With all due respect to a prolific and widely admired Shakespearean, I take as an example the "Shakespeare Originals" edition of the first imprint of *\_King Lear\_*, the 1608 "Pied Bull" quarto (Q1) published by Prentice Hall in 1995. Until the 1980s, this play-text was widely thought to have been a "bad" quarto, a script reconstructed from memory (or maybe stenography) for a bootleg actors' version. From the late 1970s onwards, a series of critical scholars, including Michael Warren, Peter Blayney, Steven Urkowitz, Gary Taylor, and Stanley Wells changed the consensus by establishing a strong case for the quarto as a legitimate early version later revised by Shakespeare into the text of the 1623 Folio. The two *King Lears*, formerly one "bad" and the other "good", were now two "good" texts, each bearing their own "integrity", the second encapsulating Shakespeare's revisions or second thoughts.

The Prentice Hall editor of Q1 regards the revisionist case as mistakenly rooted in a strong notion of authorial intention. "Shakespeare," he demurs, "becomes something very like a determining principle - a guarantor of authority and

meaning, the fixed and stable point through which a clear relationship among multiple texts can be drawn" (18). He regards the case for revision as in thrall to "the determining framework of an authorial construction" or to "an authorial cultural apparatus" which inhibits the exciting "radical theoretical possibilities" otherwise ahead. These new possibilities include "deconstruction of the mainstream editorial tradition," an "archaeological excavation of the 'real foundations' of that cultural edifice," and "liberation of texts from canonical colonization and authorial sovereignty" (19). Without authorial constraints, the "modern post-structuralist reader" can join in a "celebration of textual multiplicity" and "freely manipulate the textual elements of the various texts to form any number of differential versions" in a "free play of assemblage and disassemblage" (22-23). I am quoting selectively here, though not I think unfairly. I do so to indicate that no "celebration" or "play" is as innocent or free as this author implies, and this is precisely what his own notes to the edition bear out.

The textual notes seek to explain the difficulties, obscurities, and incoherencies of the 1608 printing, offering where possible to make some kind of sense of them. We are informed repeatedly that a particular word or phrase in the 1608 text "is acceptable," "is appropriate," is "in accordance," "is presumably an allusion" or "is certainly appropriate." In so doing, the editor tacitly acknowledges that a text cannot mean anything at all, that words and meanings have their historical remit, and that there cannot be "any number of differential versions" or such free manipulation as he had imagined. When remarking on Edgar's words "poor Turlygod," the editor writes that "a number of possible explanations for 'Turlygod', a word not otherwise known, have been proposed" (160) -- but crucially, not any number of explanations since not any number is, as he puts it, "possible." Furthermore, when Lear's outburst, "Vassall recreant" is noted, we are told that "its use in the first instance is clearly consistent with the intended meaning" (156). Anyone, of course, can be inconsistent, but when the editor picks out the word "questrits" as "a Shakespearean coinage," we know (if we had not already surmised) that authorial intention has been assumed all along despite the disclaimers. What else can a "Shakespearean coinage" be if not an instance of authorial agency and intention? In seeking to expand the ways in which Shakespeare's text may be understood, the editor has needlessly committed himself to a philosophical position he simply cannot sustain -- not because he lacks intelligence, but because the position itself does not make sense.

To conclude, the fact that we cannot be certain beyond the faintest scintilla of a doubt that the few examples cited here are indeed instances of authorial intention is insufficient reason to hold that they are not, or to regard them as immaterial. I could add several further examples but prefer to finish on a different point. The fact that locating Shakespeare's intentions is no precise art is educationally motivating. Taylor and Ioppolo are just two of many editors

and critics who have given us glimpses of how Shakespeare thought, worked, and saw his lines coming to life in the plays. There are others I would have liked to acknowledge, including E. A. J. Honigmann and John Jones, but too many to recognize adequately here. To dismiss such work as speculative is simply not to engage with it. Reading Shakespeare inevitably requires us to negotiate, grasp, and misconstrue his intentions. Where we are unsure about what was intended we have no warrant to assume that Shakespeare was equally unsure or that we will always be so uncertain. Reading the poems and plays, we constantly encounter Shakespeare's intentions: the wit in Petruccio's rejoinder to Kate, "What, with my tongue in your tail?" (2.1.213) is not so hard to comprehend. Shakespeare knew how to seed, cultivate and bring to bloom a good jest (recall Twelfth Night's Feste outwitting Olivia: "Take away the fool, gentlemen" 1.5.62). Yet we need not make recovering intent the grail of analysis. Shakespeare says, "take it in what sense thou wilt," trusting that the audience will remain attentive to the impress of words not their own. So what benefit does recognizing the place of Shakespeare's intentions afford? It allows us to be more articulate about what we read in his plays and can generate the excitement and pleasure of understanding. Lastly, think of Mistress Quickly, Dogberry, and Elbow: they don't intend what they say: or, putting it positively, they intend what they don't say. The conditions that make for communicative success are probably more interesting philosophically than those that make for failure, but the impact of that success throughout the plays makes the malapropisms all the more brilliant, sharp and, let's face it, joyful. In sum, the value of intention should be on every Shakespeare syllabus.

Duncan Salkeld

---

### "Sans Everything"

In the last year or so, a Russian company has produced an edited and translated version of *Twelfth Night* which the actors speak in Russian. In America, this was received with wild enthusiasm. Recently the Russian text of the play was displayed to the audience in Buenos Aires in Spanish, though elsewhere it might be displayed in Turkish, or Finnish or Japanese. Nevertheless, the audience universally has thought it was "marvelous" and applauded wildly. Meanwhile, newspapers are alive with reports of Shakespeare performed in Northern Canada in Inuit. Worse, the pressures of war have even brought talk of a stellar performance in Kabul. A production of *Love's Labour's Lost*, set in Afghanistan and translated into the Dari language, played to packed audiences there in 2005. The plot was recast to feature Afghan characters. As to the local provisions of Muslim patterns of behavior, not usually allowed beyond the playhouse, these scarcely applied. The feminine actors didn't use veils or the burqua, and were able to flirt roundly with their colleagues. The performances, lasting an astonishing five nights, were sponsored by the British Council.

That encouraged co-adaptor Steven Landrigan summarily to banish dismay. With the sort of mistaken confidence that the Council unerringly backs, he averred that "Shakespeare is so adaptable because he writes universal truths of human experience." In fact, says, one viewer, the play's commitment is not, perish the thought, to language at all. It is to "Theater."

The climax to this cozy flight from discourse has recently been a newly unveiled performance by a group called the American Synetic Theatre. It was called, quite literally, a "wordless" Macbeth. It had been operating in Washington DC: needless to say to ecstatic reviews.

The mind may boggle, but works originally written in English seem to have acquired a strange capacity. They need not be reduced to anyone's puny linguistics to renew their potency. In these terms, access from Shakespeare's intense height seems to make all culture's kin. A "wordless" Macbeth? May the Lord preserve us from it. The "universal truths of human experience"? Let Angels and Ministers of Grace defend us. But at the moment, if you've learnt "theater," it seems that you can wing it all to the last hurrah.

Terence Hawkes

---

[1]-----

From: Gabriel Egan <mail@GabrielEgan.com>

Date: Saturday, 10 May 2008 21:00:45 +0100

Subject: 19.0276 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Comment: Re: SHK 19.0276 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

John Drakakis insists that when reading W.W. Greg's "The rationale of copy text," which Drakakis thinks is "now largely superseded," we need to stick to the main ideological matters and avoid being dragged into the question of "whether or not Greg departed radically from McKerrow, since such matters are not strictly relevant."

It's impossible to respond to an analysis of Greg's essay that attends to its "odd slippages between 'author' and 'writer'" while disregarding as irrelevant the whole point of the essay, which is to disagree with the view of copy-text given in McKerrow's Prolegomena.

> From Drakakis's perspective these slippages matter because our notions of authorship and intention have been thoroughly revised by Barthes's "The death of the author" and Foucault's "What is an author?" One could take the point much further back and argue that since Freud we have had to be more circumspect about intentions, since most of us accept that we are none of us fully in charge of

our minds, let alone our mouths and fingers.

We can all agree (I hope) that Barthes's and Foucault's essays were important improvements in the theorizing of writers' intentions, but their usefulness in relation to early-modern drama is distinctly limited. This is because they are not addressed to the social aspects of drama even though their shared rejections of the lone autonomous author would seem suited to it. Barthes wrote that "To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing" and it was in precisely these terms that Foucault answered Barthes the following year when he argued that authors are not so much intrinsic originators of texts but rather extrinsic products of the consumption of texts, and that the emergence of the concern for the author as the primary determinant in meaning could be dated historically to around 1800. Importantly, Barthes and Foucault were broadening the notion of sole-authorship, but had nothing to say about collaborations of authors with authors and of authors with performers, which are crucial to our subject.

When "intention" includes the projection of the obligation to complete the work onto other people, the stakes are considerably higher than the (I insist, trivial) matters of speech prefix variation and the use of actors' names in place of characters' names. Indeed, to focus on the author's inconsistencies ("Lady", "Lady Capulet", "Mother" to take the famous case) as though they revealed the heart of the problem is to miss the more tricky complexities of intention that arise when one expects another, or others, to complete one's work.

I should make the distinction, however, that where variant speech prefixes seem to emerge because of incompleteness, then the matter does become terribly interesting in relation to intention. Thus the 1598 quarto of *Love's Labour's Lost* seems to be printed from a manuscript in an unpolished state in which it was not yet settled which of the two women, Rosaline and Katharine, is wooed by Berowne and which by Dumaine. (Or, rather, to put it another way, which lady has which name wasn't settled.) Here I think Drakakis and I can at least talk to one another rather than past one another, for the silent Innogen (wife to Leonato) in the 1600 quarto of *Much Ado About Nothing* is surely such another case in point: in the processes that were bound to follow from use of this manuscript to launch a performance, Innogen would doubtless have been removed. That Shakespeare at one point, in the heat of composition, thought he might use this character doesn't make the part worth saving. Indeed, there's a kind of editorial hubris in saving her, since it amounts to helping Shakespeare write what the editor thinks he ought to have written (and what suits our modern concerns), but probably didn't write: a silent bystander woman.

And yet, to make the obvious Marxist manoeuvre at this point, one could argue

that for all that performance disperses authority, and that authors are not really the originating centres of their own creations, the early-modern state was having none of this post-structuralist nonsense. When plays gave offence, their writers (not the players, usually) went to jail. For all that the script was circulated in fragments, as Simon Palfrey and Tiffany Stern's new book argues, it also had to come together as a singularity to be authorized by the state censor. The forces of authority acted centripetally against these centrifugal tendencies, rendering the dispersed, fragmentary, unstable, and plural text into something fairly singular. Thus an editor who follows the emerging fashion for not regularizing speech prefixes\* on the grounds that irregularity inheres in the early-modern dramatic textual condition has simply mistaken the medium for the message.

Gabriel Egan (Who vows to say nothing more for the moment, feeling guilty at treating a Roundtable like a duologue.)

\* An interesting defence of doing something similar was mounted in the recent Arden3 edition of *Henry 6* by the editors John D. Cox and Eric Rasmussen, who retained the prefix "Widow" for Lady Grey in 3.2 on the grounds that "she's known to the audience only as a widow at this point" (175). This might be true of inattentive audience members reading their editions in the theatre during the performance, but those attending to the actors surely notice that King Edward begins the scene by saying that "at Saint Alban's field | This lady's husband, Sir Richard Grey, was slain" and thus know who she is. And if what is coming in the sequent play is of any concern at all now, then audiences and readers need to know that she's not just any old widow but Lady Grey.

[2]-----

From: John Drakakis <john.drakakis@stir.ac.uk>  
Date: Wednesday, 21 May 2008 16:45:52 +0100  
Subject: 19.0282 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: RE: SHK 19.0282 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Can I raise two issues here that are not strictly speaking connected with each other?

1. On the "best text" approach, this implies a qualitative distinction that I don't think that Greg makes, since the text that is hypothetically closest to the writer is not necessarily the "best" text.

Also on the flinging round by Egan of the epithet "vulgar," anybody who has tried any early modern editing will know the difference between a "positivist determinism" of a rather narrow kind, and the constant shuttling backwards and forwards between "theory" and "practice" that the activity requires. The overdetermined practices of compositors are subject to regular review (and they

need to be in relation to any ONE project, since each case might well throw up something that hasn't been encountered before. The activity has to be "positivist" in the sense that we start from the inked marks on the page. Things get a lot more speculative when we start asking questions about what they may "mean" and how those speculations might relate to what we are calling authorial "intention."

2. We must be grateful for Alan Dessen's clear overview, and for the candor with which he illuminates issues about which our knowledge is uncertain. In passing it might be worth reminding ourselves that we need one (or possibly TWO) set(s) of protocols when we are dealing with a printed text, and a third when dealing with the issue of "intention" as regards performance. My question to Alan is this: How might what I want to call "implied" stage directions factor into the issue of "intention" and if they do, then whose "intentions" might they reflect? I have in mind moments when one dramatic character refers to a gesture of another, or, even more problematically, when a gesture is "assumed" and where we might be able to infer it by the speech that follows. I suppose this connects, in part, with the example that I offered from *Much Ado* where the actor's name, his role, and his stage persona ALL appear at one point in the 1600Q. Is this the actor "writing" the writer and in such a way that it invalidates the notion of the writer as "creator" or legitimizing origin of the text? Or are we here into a realm of intertextuality, which, along with issues such as explicit and implied stage directions, refer to a field of discourse in which the writer occupies a "function" rather than simply being a "creative" origin?

Best wishes,  
John Drakakis

[3]-----

From: David Evett <d.evett@csuohio.edu>  
Date: Tuesday, 13 May 2008 20:44:35 -0400  
Subject: 19.0282 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0282 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Would a playreader such as Jonson or Shakespeare have responded to questions or provided a running commentary? What tantalizes me (and perhaps no one else) is: would such a reading of a manuscript include a reading aloud of the stage directions? If so, would some of those signals -- e.g., the "fictional" ones that appear to tell the story or slip into a narrative mode -- be linked to the playwright's thinking ahead not only to the eventual performance but also to this reading-audition-trial run? More generally, if such a to-be-expected extra step between completed manuscript and preparation for performance was anticipated, would some manuscript features be conditioned by an author or authors taking into account that intermediate phase? Would such an

author-centered event have conveyed a sense of his "intentions" to the players as auditors?

Alan Dessen's questions reverberate in the contemporary rehearsal hall, where the virtually obligatory (I recognize the companies out there that start with actors on their feet, sides in hands) practice at the first readthrough of plays ancient or modern includes reading (usually by the stage manager) of all stage directions that have survived the preliminary editing process. At first rehearsals of contemporary plays, the author sometimes takes the chair.

David Evett

[4]-----

From: Tom Reedy <tomreedy@verizon.net>  
Date: Thursday, 15 May 2008 22:40:24 -0500  
Subject: Re: SHAKSPER Digest - 9 May 2008 to 13 May 2008 (#2008-48)

Cary DiPietro <cary.dipietro@utoronto.ca> wrote:

>We begin this week with Alan Dessen writing in answer to >the question of whether we can determine or what we can >determine about Shakespeare's intentions in the theatre >based on the scant material evidence that has descended >to us about rehearsal and staging practices; specifically, >whether playwrights such as Shakespeare relinquished all >control over their dramatic manuscripts when they turned >them over to theatre companies, which is more or less the >received view, or, as Grace Ippolo argues in her recent book >(discussed here at length), whether dramatists retained more >significant control in the realization of their manuscripts to >performance, and whether such "intentions" -- playwright >as dramaturge -- might have been inscribed in the copy used >for printing the different quarto and Folio versions of some >plays, possibly at different points in time.

I am enjoying reading this discussion, but I am surprised that the idea that playwrights "relinquished all control over their dramatic manuscripts when they turned them over to theatre companies" is considered to be "more or less the received view," especially with such external evidence as the testimony of Johannes Rheanus, who visited England in 1611 and translated a play by Thomas Tomkis into German in 1613.

Martin White quotes Rheanus' preface in his *Renaissance Drama in Action* (Routledge, 1998), "So far as actors are concerned they, as I noticed in England, are daily instructed, as it were in a school, so that even the most eminent actors have to allow themselves to be taught their places by the Dramatists, which arrangement gives life and ornament to a well-written play, so

that it is no wonder that the English players (I speak of skilled ones) surpass and have the advantage of others (34)."

Tom Reedy

---

Works cited:

Davidson, Donald Davidson. *Truth, Language, and History*. Oxford: Clarendon, 2005.

Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*. Translation and preface by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.

---. *Writing and Difference*. Translation and introduction with notes by Alan Bass. London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978.

---. *Margins of Philosophy*. Translation with notes by Alan Bass. New York and London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1982.

Ioppolo, Grace. *Dramatists and their Manuscripts in the Age of Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton and Heywood: Authorship, authority and the playhouse*. London and New York: Routledge, 2006.

Hawkes, Terence. *Shakespeare in the Present*. London: Routledge, 1992.

Iser, Wolfgang. *The Implied Reader: patterns in communication of prose fiction from Bunyan to Beckett*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1974.

Kearney, Richard (ed.) *Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1984).

Knapp, Steven and Walter Benn Michaels. "Against Theory." *Critical Inquiry* 8.4 (Summer, 1982): 723-742.

---. "Against Theory 2: Hermeneutics and Deconstruction." *Critical Inquiry* 14.1 (1987): 49-68.

Mitchell, W. J. T. (ed.). *Against Theory: Literary Studies and the New Pragmatism*. Chicago and London: The Chicago University Press, 1985). Knapp and Michaels's article "Against Theory" together with replies by E. D. Hirsch, Stanley Fish, Richard Rorty and others originally appeared in the following issues of *Critical Inquiry*: Summer 1982, Vol. 8 No. 4; June 1983, Vol. 9, No. 4; and March 1985, Vol. 11. No. 3.

Norris, Christopher. *Derrida*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987.

Searle, John R. "Literary Theory and Its Discontents." *New Literary History* 25.3 (25th Anniversary Issue, Part 1) (Summer, 1994): 637-667.

Shakespeare, William. *Henry V*. Ed. Gary Taylor. Oxford: Clarendon, 1982.

Shakespeare, William. *M. William Shakespeare: His True Chronicle History of the life and death of king LEAR and his three Daughters*. Ed. Graham Holderness. London and New York: Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1995.

White, Martin. *Renaissance Drama in Action*. London: Routledge, 1998.

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0321.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0315 Monday, 26 May 2008

[1] From: Kenneth Chan <kckc@pacific.net.sg>  
Date: Sunday, 25 May 2008 10:38:13 +0800  
Subj: Re: SHK 19.0310 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[2] From: Alan Dessen <acdesen@email.unc.edu>  
Date: Monday, 26 May 2008 18:37:58 -0400  
Subj: "Intentions" Roundtable

[1]-----

From: Kenneth Chan <kckc@pacific.net.sg>  
Date: Sunday, 25 May 2008 10:38:13 +0800  
Subject: 19.0310 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0310 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

An interesting point is highlighted by Terence Hawkes's contribution "Sans Everything." Although Shakespeare's actual words constitute the most crucial aspect of his works, there is nonetheless more to a Shakespearean play than the language in his text. This probably explains why a Shakespearean play may retain much of its impact even when the original language is translated. And even if we remove all the words (as in the "wordless" Macbeth), it is still not "sans everything."

This may be a relevant point in the debate on intention. Let us look again at the quote from the 2002 volume, *Shakespeare in the Present*: "We choose the facts. We choose the texts. We do the inserting. We do the perceiving. Facts and

texts, that is to say, don't simply speak, don't merely mean. We speak, we mean, by them"

This quote would be largely true if it refers to the language in the text. A play, however, is more than just the language in the text. It also has structure and plot content (by "plot content," I mean the action or "what is actually happening" in the scenes).

While much of the debate on intention is focused on the author's words, these other aspects of Shakespeare's plays should perhaps also be considered together with the words. Clues as to the author's possible intention may also be found in the structure of the play and in its plot content -- i.e., those aspects of the play that are not altered by a translation of its language.

Here is an example of how a play's structure and plot content may be relevant to the debate on intention. In many Shakespearean plays, certain key motifs are echoed repeatedly throughout the play, from start to finish. Significantly, these repeating motifs are different for different plays. For instance, no other Shakespearean play comes even remotely close to Hamlet in the number of references to death and its inevitability. This would suggest authorial intention. And a translation of Hamlet into another language would not alter this fact.

Thus, with regards to the debate on intention, I believe it is reasonable that we also consider the structure and the plot content of the play together with the words in the text. We will, at least, then have the benefit of a more complete picture.

Kenneth Chan

[2]-----  
From: Alan Dessen <acdessen@email.unc.edu>  
Date: Monday, 26 May 2008 18:37:58 -0400  
Subject: "Intentions" Roundtable

I enjoyed David Evett's comment with reference to my speculations about the practice of playreading to assembled company members: that stage directions are sometimes read aloud during an initial read-through in today's rehearsal hall. I have no such rehearsal room experience, but I have seen at least one Mike Alfreds production (the 2001 London Globe *Cymbeline*), done with six actors and two percussionists, where for added clarity Alfreds had his cast speak aloud various stage directions ("Enter Cloten, the Queen's son"; "Enter Imogen dressed as a boy"; "Enter Caius Lucius, Soothsayer, Roman Captain") or place indicators (Rome, Cymbeline's court, Imogen's bed chamber, A cave in the Welsh mountains).

In response to Tom Reedy's citation of the Johannes Rhenanus comment -- that in England actors "are daily instructed, as it were in a school, so that even the most eminent actors have to allow themselves to be taught their places by the Dramatists" -- that passage has indeed been invoked for various purposes. For example, first Alfred Hart (in 1941) and later David Klein (in 1962) in articles with the same title in *Modern Language Review* ("Did Shakespeare Produce His Own Plays?") cited Rhenanus on different sides of the question (Hart argued no, Klein yes). In her rehearsal book Tiffany Stern observes that "Rhenanus" passage is often quoted as a description of rehearsals in the Elizabethan public theatre, but it occurs in the introduction to *Speculum Aestheticum* (1613), a translation of Thomas Tomkis' Trinity College, Cambridge, play *Lingua*." Stern concludes: "Almost certainly Rhenanus is writing about academic productions . . . and he is probably making a direct reference to the preparation of *Lingua* itself" (p. 40). For a more recent summary of her argument in behalf of one-on-one "Instruction" (as opposed to group rehearsals), occasionally by the playwright but more commonly by senior actors, see *Shakespeare in Parts* (co-authored with Simon Palfrey), pp. 66-70. As I noted in my original post, a playwright attached to a given company (as was Shakespeare) may have played a significant role in the script to stage process, but the fragmentary nature of the evidence forestalls any firm conclusions. Meanwhile, for me the work of G. E. Bentley, although not the final word, remains a model of scholarship that I have learned to trust, hence my reference to "the standard view."

Finally, as to John Drakakis' query, I'm not sure I understand the distinctions he is invoking, but I do have major problems with so-called "implied" stage directions as evidence. Again, for me here there be dragons. As he rightly notes many onstage actions can be inferred from dialogue (e.g., kisses, embraces, kneelings), but such inferences are subject to a range of transhistorical assumptions and reflexes (what I term "theatrical essentialism") that can lead to questionable conclusions. For the sake of brevity, I will limit myself to three examples.

First is the question of timing. My pet example is the final bit of the penultimate scene in *Taming of the Shrew* where Petruchio gets Kate, after some initial resistance, to kiss him in public. The Wells-Taylor Oxford edition provides "They kiss" at 5.1.139 (and that inserted signal is not placed within square brackets). Does indeed the kiss come here (so she kisses him, he reacts "Is not this well?") or does he say "Is not this well?" (to the playgoer? in response to her verbal acquiescence?) and then kisses her. In a production, this kiss can be a major and memorable moment, but that moment can be defined or understood differently depending upon its timing and how a playgoer understands "is not this well?" Yes, a kiss is implied and does take place; yes, an editor is entitled to choose a placement (that's what editors do); but the placement of

the action is not self-evident.

A second example is provided by one of the many lessons I have learned from the choices of actors and directors. After the blinding of Gloucester, Cornwall says: "Regan, I bleed apace, / Untimely comes this hurt. Give me your arm" (3.7.97-8), and the Riverside is typical in providing: "Exit [led by Regan]." I have lost count of the number of *King Lear* productions I have seen (by now close to fifty), but more than a few have produced a very strong effect by having Regan ignore her husband's outstretched arm and stride offstage. What kind of evidence is provided by "Give me your arm"?

Finally, consider the tricky question of what should and should not be designated an "aside." As noted in our dictionary entry, many asides are specified in the original manuscripts and early printed texts (e.g., twenty-five in *The Jew of Malta*), but more often such signals are provided by today's editor. E. A. J. Honigmann notes that by inserting "aside" an editor "often implies that the speaker would not have dared to utter the same words openly," but "if the situation includes an impudent speaker or an inattentive listener the case for an aside is weakened." For Honigmann, Hamlet's "A little more than kin, and less than kind" (1.2.65 - designated [Aside.] in the Riverside) "expresses the riddling impudence that is characteristic of all of his exchanges with Claudius before Act V"; why then "assume that he would not have dared to speak out loud, and that the only alternative is an aside?" Another alternative is "that Hamlet, the arch-soliloquiser, not infrequently mutters to himself and cares not a rap whether or not others catch his words," but "Such opportunities are lost if the editor prints 'Aside'" (176-78).

My own pet example is found at the end of the caldron scene where Macbeth, although onstage with Lennox, devotes 12 lines (4.1.144-55 - also labeled [Aside.] in the Riverside) to his plans against the Macduffs and his innermost thoughts. Most editors treat this passage as an aside and have Macbeth address Lennox again only in the final line and a half of the scene, a choice that can work effectively in today's productions. But, like Honigmann's Hamlet, Macbeth by this point may not care who knows what he is thinking or planning or, as an alternative, may be so rapt in his little world of man (as in 1.3) that he is momentarily unaware of Lennox's presence. As with Honigmann's examples, to mark this speech as an aside is to enforce upon the unsuspecting reader one choice at the expense of other equally interesting options. For example, in his 1987 Oregon Shakespeare Festival production director Jim Edmondson provided a rationale for the appearance of the "messenger" who, after the departure of Rosse, appears with a warning for Lady Macduff (4.2.65-73) by having that figure overhear Macbeth's "The castle of Macduff I will surprise" comment (4.1.150-53).

In these comments on "implied" s.d.s I have drifted away from John's query and

the focus on intentions but I remain faithful (or so I think) to my paradigm of a conversation started by the playwright that resulted in a production now lost to us, the eavesdroppers.

Alan Dessen

#### Works Cited

Hart, Alfred. "Did Shakespeare Produce His Own Plays?" \_Modern Language Review\_ 36 (1941): 173-83.

Honigmann, E. A. J. \_Myriad-minded Shakespeare\_. Second Edition. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.

Klein, David. "Did Shakespeare Produce His Own Plays?" \_Modern Language Review\_ 57 (1962): 556-60.

Palfrey, Simon and Tiffany Stern. \_Shakespeare in Parts\_. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007.

Stern, Tiffany. \_Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan\_. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000.

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0323.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0318 Wednesday, 28 May 2008

[1] From: Martin Mueller <martinmueller@northwestern.edu>  
Date: Monday, 26 May 2008 20:24:29 -0500  
Subj: Re: SHK 19.0315 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[2] From: Larry Weiss <larry@lweiss.net>  
Date: Tuesday, 27 May 2008 01:08:01 -0400  
Subj: Re: SHK 19.0315 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[1]-----  
From: Martin Mueller <martinmueller@northwestern.edu>  
Date: Monday, 26 May 2008 20:24:29 -0500  
Subject: 19.0315 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0315 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

This is a puzzled and not very well thought-through response to the thread about

Shakespeare's intentions. One of the problems in that phrase is "Shakespeare's." How different is he from "us," whoever we are? And if he was spectacularly good at what he did -- which I'm inclined to agree was the case in many cases -- does that make any difference to what "he means" or what "we mean by him." My answer to that question is that it doesn't, and that we shouldn't talk about "Shakespeare's" intentions unless we are prepared to think of it as a particular (and not necessarily special) case of what anybody means by anything.

But if we start thinking about what anybody means by anything and whether anybody ever understands anything that anybody else says we are in a largely probabilistic universe. Good enough uptake happens all the time. Misunderstandings happen all the time. Some misunderstandings get transformed into good enough uptake after clarification (both of us now think, rightly or wrongly that my uptake of what you said corresponds to what you meant to say). There are less common, and highly telling, instances of one person understanding another person "all too well," which the other person may or may not get.

Another variable is the degree of semantic specification. When Polonius says "Take this from this if this be otherwise" (Hamlet, 2.2.156) there is a high probability that he means something like "cut off my head" or perhaps "take away my staff of office." When Cornwall says: "Regan, I bleed apace, / Untimely comes this hurt. Give me your arm" (3.7.97-8), there is an equally high probability that Cornwall is asking for Regan's arm (and that the author meant for Cornwall to have this intention). It is much harder to judge whether Shakespeare "meant" for Regan to lend her arm to Cornwall and whether a modern director would be inside or outside the playwright's intention in making Regan conspicuously ignore this clearly intended call for help. It might be best to say that we are in an underspecified situation.

At some level, we are always in underspecified situation. Good-enough uptake is never or almost never the only possible response to an unambiguous signal. But perhaps the whole business of intention should not start from difficult cases, where people have good reason to argue this way or that way. They should argue from obvious cases and figure out why (by and large) we don't say things like

Cordelia is the mother of Lear

Ophelia is actually the daughter of Claudius

In the closet scene, Gertrude and Hamlet shared amicable reminiscences about a recent trip to the Hebrides

Instead we argue most of the time about what the lawyers call the "hard cases" that make for poor law and we ignore the very large body of agreement that makes

interesting disagreement possible in the first place. At what point do disagreements about the blindingly obvious begin to break down? And when we begin to argue, do we argue about the last or first five percent?

[2]-----

From: Larry Weiss <larry@lweiss.net>  
Date: Tuesday, 27 May 2008 01:08:01 -0400  
Subject: 19.0315 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0315 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Alan Dessen's observations about the slipperiness of "implied stage directions" calls to mind a s.d. interpolated by the Oxford editors (Taylor with Wells) in Act III scene i of T&C. In that scene, Pandarus encounters Paris and Helen and attempts to deliver a message to Paris from Troilus but is repeatedly interrupted by jokingly flirtatious behavior by Helen. At one point, after Helen's line "O sir" (addressed to Pandarus), Oxford adds the stage direction: "[She tickles him]." The Textual Companion explains the emendation as "necessary" to explain the word "fits" in the ensuing line and as being "supported" by an earlier (I.ii) account of Helen ticking Troilus, Pandarus's use of the word "ticles" in his song later in the scene and Helen's touching him later in the scene. The last is another additional s.d. by the Oxford editors ("[She strokes his fore-head]"). These stage directions may be correct, but it strikes me that the choice is better left to directorial than editorial discretion.

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shakspers.net/archives/2008/0326.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0321 Thursday, 29 May 2008

[1] From: David Evett <d.evett@csuohio.edu>  
Date: Wednesday, 28 May 2008 20:43:43 -0400  
Subj: Re: SHK 19.0318 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[2] From: Alan Horn <alanshorn@gmail.com>  
Date: Thursday, 29 May 2008 08:38:41 -0400  
Subj: Re: SHK 19.0310 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[3] From: Alan Dessen <acdesse@email.unc.edu>  
Date: Thursday, 29 May 2008 15:21:33 -0500  
Subj: Intentions again

[1]-----  
From: David Evett <d.evett@csuohio.edu>  
Date: Wednesday, 28 May 2008 20:43:43 -0400  
Subject: 19.0318 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0318 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Thanks to Martin Mueller for his splendidly clear and provocative statement of the Intentional Problem-though it leaves a little understated the imperative need we have in both ordinary and extraordinary moments of practical life to seek for intention in the utterances and actions of others.

Intentionally?

David Evett

[2]-----  
From: Alan Horn <alanshorn@gmail.com>  
Date: Thursday, 29 May 2008 08:38:41 -0400  
Subject: 19.0310 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0310 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Duncan Salkeld makes what I consider an important point in his Roundtable contribution. He argues that just because we may never understand an author's intentions with perfect clarity or perfect certainty does not mean we can't or shouldn't allow consideration of these intentions to constrain our reading. One could make a similar point against the similar all-or-nothing logic of presentism.

However, I was surprised to see Salkeld endorse the view of Knapp and Michaels that meaning and intention are one and the same. I can certainly think of ways in which meanings with no intentions behind them can arise in literary works.

To take a crude example, some of the famous cruxes in Shakespeare may well be the consequence of arbitrary typographical substitutions. Let's say this is the case for "Indian"/"Iudean." If so, one of the two alternate meanings of this part of Othello's penultimate speech not only does not reflect Shakespeare's intentions, but reflects no human intentions at all. Knapp and Michaels, who argue in a hypothetical example that a poem inscribed on the shore by the chance mechanical action of the surf would necessarily be meaningless, would have to say the same thing about one of the two textual possibilities here. Yet the meaning of each has been grasped and described by any number of competent readers.

Maybe "meaning" is being specially defined here as "the author's intended meaning." In this case, the argument is indeed "irrefutable," as Salkeld proposes, but only because it's circular.

Alan Horn

[3]-----  
From: Alan Dessen <acdessen@email.unc.edu>  
Date: Thursday, 29 May 2008 15:21:33 -0500  
Subject: Intentions again

Martin Mueller's assessment of "a largely probabilistic universe" with respect to authorial "intentions" makes excellent sense to me, as does his category of the "underspecified situation" (e.g., when considering Regan's response to Cornwall's "Give me your arm"). "Doing" theatre history means repeatedly dealing with the probable and the possible -- hence my invocation of Cary Mazer's "craftsmanship" and "strategy" as opposed to authorial meaning or meanings -- and the term "underspecified" fits neatly with a wealth of evidence I have collected about so-called "permissive" or "open" stage directions (see our dictionary entry for "permissive," as with an entrance that includes "as many as may be").

At the risk of muddying the waters, I would like to cite a comparable set of distinctions. Along with "intentions," another much debated term (particularly when dealing with the script to stage process) is "authenticity." These days few scholars have kind things to say about this term (and I studiously avoid using it in my own work), but in his essay "In Defense of Authenticity" Michael Friedman provides some distinctions that further develop what is specified and underspecified in Mueller's terms. Reacting to the "rhetoric of slavery and emancipation" that underlies many of the attacks on "authenticity," Friedman reexamines "the extent to which a Shakespearean text limits the performative options of an authentic production." He posits "the existence of five different categories of regulation: the text either *\_forbids\_*, *\_discourages\_*, *\_allows\_*, *\_encourages\_*, or *\_demands\_* any specific performance choice" (pp. 46-7 -- and he credits Megan Lloyd for this configuration). He then uses a sequence from *\_Much Ado\_*, 4.1 to illustrate his categories. Friedman notes that "By far the largest percentage of performance choices may be classified as those which the text *\_allows\_*." For example, "We may presume, for instance, that all of the characters on stage wear costumes, and that those costumes often convey significant information to an audience, but the text rarely specifies a particular character's attire, and when it does, it seldom offers more than one detail about it" (48). In his formulation, "a production approaches authenticity to the degree that it abides by what the text demands or encourages and avoids what the text discourages or forbids" (50).

My summary does not do justice to this section of the essay, so interested readers should check it out for themselves.

I also see the point in Mueller's warning not to build upon what lawyers term "hard cases," though in such oddities or stretches, I confess, I have found some of my most telling examples of the gap between then and now. Again and again my playgoing in Ashland, Oregon, in the 1970s (starting with a 1974 *Titus Andronicus*) led me to moments that were demanded or encouraged for Elizabethan or early Jacobean performance but were resisted by today's theatrical professionals. Two of my pet examples are the juxtaposition of Kent in the stocks with Edgar in flight; and the onstage presence of Duke Senior's "banquet" with Orlando and Adam complaining of starving. For me such anomalies have provided revealing windows into the past, though what works for my theatre history project certainly does not rule out Mueller's cautionary suggestion.

Alan Dessen

Michael D. Friedman. "In Defense of Authenticity." *Studies in Philology* 94 (2002): 33-56.

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0328.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0323 Sunday, 1 June 2008

- [1] From: Steve Urkowitz <surkowitz@aol.com>  
Date: Thursday, 29 May 2008 10:49 am  
Subj: Re: SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions
- [2] From: Duncan Salkeld <D.Salkeld@chi.ac.uk>  
Date: Friday, 30 May 2008 17:18:51 +0000 (GMT)  
Subj: Re: SHK 19.0321 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[1]-----  
From: Steve Urkowitz <surkowitz@aol.com>  
Date: Thursday, 29 May 2008 10:49 am  
Subject: Re: SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Time for me to step in to swing wildly at various pitches being thrown around this Intentionality ball-field.

First, in my vulgar Bronx way, many years ago I argued that Shakespeare intended to write what we find in Q1 KING LEAR and that he also intended to write what we

see in the F version of that play. My book, SHAKESPEARE'S REVISION OF KING LEAR and subsequent articles and presentations on HAMLET, ROMEO AND JULIET, THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR, HENRY V, RICHARD III, and HENRY VI PARTS 2 AND 3, present intentional arguments that run something like this: "Here are five (or maybe fifteen) examples of a kind of textual variant between Q1 and F LEAR or Q1 and Q2 and F HAMLET etc., that would produce noticeable blips on an alert theatrical observer's radar if the versions were to be played one after the other on a stage. Although any one or two of such blipping variants might be generated accidentally or by other agents, the "so-muchness" or "so-many-ness" and especially the "so-goodness" of the patterns of variants lead me to conclude that they result from an author's intervention in his composition.

When SHAKESPEARE'S REVISION OF KING LEAR came out, almost all reviewers found that the marshaling of lots of evidence and my arguments were indeed convincing. Some critics felt, however, that specific instances of patterns I cited were instead more likely to have resulted from non-authorial interventions or accidents. The passage most often cited by those critics is the dialog between Kent and a Gentleman in LEAR 3.1. which I show is one of many "interrupted speeches" that appear in the Folio but not found in the Q1 version. I feel the strength of my argument is that (at least in my part of the Bronx) purposeful patterns of repeated variation in elegant linguistic designs really do signal some kind of intention. Shakespeare's intention. Since then, though, my basic claims and especially my citation of what I see as authorially-introduced and intended \_patterns\_ have been dismissed or ignored. Or most often a particular instance of a general pattern might be noted while the generality is passed over silently. Ah, well. I keep on writing.

Let me bring to this roundtable discussion two of what I feel are interesting sets of textual variants that lead me to believe that Shakespeare himself intentionally altered the early printed versions of HENRY VI PARTS 2 AND 3 to generate what we see in the Folio text of those plays. (Other similar patterns of intentional authorial revision may be found in my essays "'If I Mistake in Those Foundations Which I Build Upon': Peter Alexander's Textual Analysis of HENRY VI PARTS 2 AND 3," ELR 18 [1988], 230-56, and "'Brother, can you spare a paradigm?' Textual Generosity and the Printing of Shakespeare's Multiple-Text Plays by Contemporary Editors," CRITICAL SURVEY 7 (1995) 292-8.)

When Richard of Gloucester learns of the death of his father Richard of York, in the 1595 version of 3H6 a six-line passage gives the actor playing Richard of Gloucester a vivid action and strong emotions to play:

I cannot weepe, for all my breasts moisture  
Scarse serves to quench my furnace burning hart:  
I cannot joie till this white rose be dide

Even in the hart bloud of the house of Lancaster.  
Richard, I bare thy name, and Ile revenge thy death,  
Or die my selfe in seeking of revenge.

As a dramatic script, we should assume that the author's intention behind the words "this white rose" was for the actor to hold up or point to a physical object. And when the actor says "Richard, I bare thy name, and I'll revenge . . . " the author intended that the actor address the imagined soul or offstage dead body of his father while verbally and likely with a robust gesture swearing himself to enact some later revenge.

The later-printed version does not have the lines about the rose. Instead of "this white rose" and the actions attendant on indicating it, the later-printed Folio text contains lines which hold two patterns of iterated imagery found only in a number of other passages also unique to the Folio versions of both HENRY VI PART 2 and PART 3. The F-only lines are indicated by capitals.

I cannot weepe: for all my bodies moysture  
Scarse serves to quench my Furnace-burning hart:  
NOR CAN MY TONGUE UNLOADE MY HEARTS GREAT BURTHEN,  
FOR SELFE-SAME WINDE THAT I WOULD SPEAKE WITHALL,  
IS KINDLING COALES THAT FIRES ALL MY BREST,  
AND BURNES ME UP WITH FLAMES, THAT TEARS WOULD QUENCH,  
TO'WEEPE, IS TO MAKE LESSE THE DEPTH OF GREEFE:  
TEARES THEN FOR BABES; BLOWES, AND REVENGE FOR MEE.  
Richard, I beare thy name, Ile venge thy death,  
Or dye renowned by attempting it.

Here the instruction to the actor is first to enact a kind of "inexpressibility topos" about his inner feelings, and then to vow to take revenge. In this version, first he directs attention to his inner self rather than to the physical rose and then, as in the earlier-printed text, he addresses his father's spirit. The portrayal of Richard of Gloucester being unable or unwilling to reveal what he feels or thinks appears earlier in 2H6, (TLN 2111) as an aside undercutting his surface-allegiance to his brother: "I heare, yet say not much, but thinke the more." And similarly a speech unique to the Folio has Richard report his inner thoughts at TLN 2157-9.

The capitalized passage also offers one of the many (ten or a dozen) images of "wind" as a destructive or unpredictable force found in these plays, all unique to the Folio. For these iterated imagistic patterns to appear in only one or the other version indicates either that some agent put them in on purpose or took 'em out, equally on purpose. The wind images appear in a variety of characters' roles:

(1) Richard of York: "all my followers to the eager foe / Turne back, and flye,  
like Ships before the Winde (TLN 461-2).

(2) King Henry:

. . . like a Mighty Sea,  
Forc'd by the Tide, to combat with the Winde:  
Now swayes it that was, like the selfe-same Sea,  
Forc'd to retyre by furie of the Winde.  
Sometime, the Flood Prevailes; and than the Winde:

(3) the father who has killed his son in battle:

. . . see, see, what showres arise,  
Blowne with the windie Tempest of my heart,  
Upon thy wounds, that killes mine Eye, and Heart.

(4) King Henry:

. . . Looke, as I blow this Feather from my Face,  
And as the Ayre blowes it to me againe,  
Obeying with my winde when I do blow,  
And yeelding to another, when it blowes,  
Colmmanded alwayes by the greater gust:  
Such is the lightnesse of you, common men.

(4) The King of France:

Renowned Queene,  
With patience calme the Storme,  
While we bethinke a meanes to breake it off.

(5) Queen Margaret, referring to Warwick,

. . . now begins a second Storme to rise,  
For this is hee that moves both Winde and Tyde.

(6) Edward, when captured by Warwick,

What Fates impose, that men must needs abide;  
It boots not to resist both winde and tide.

(7) Edward, threatening Warwick:

Sayle how thou canst,  
Have Winde and Tyde thy friend,  
This Hand, fast wound about thy coale-blacke hayre,  
Shall, whiles thy Head is warme, and new cut off,  
Write in the dust this Sentence with thy blood,  
Wind-changing Warwicke now can change no more.

(8) Warwick, dying, imagines himself as a cedar tree which

. . . kept low Shrubs from Winters pow'rfull Winde.

(9) Margaret, addressing her army,

We will not from the Helme, to sit and weepe,  
But keepe our Course (though the rough Winde say no)  
From Shelves and rocks, that threaten us with Wrack . . .

Of course, if we follow the narratives of memorial reconstruction championed by the Oxford editors, these iterated images could have been first inscribed in a manuscript drafted by Shakespeare which served as the basis for the text printed in the Folio and then were subsequently cut out by him and so did not appear in the 1594-5 versions, or they could have been cut out by some censor or book keeper. Or as many have argued, they were all memorially excised by actors, or intentionally excised by a timid acting company afraid of offending someone high in the local political-economy of windiness.

But to my vulgar sense of how human beings function today when they write, revise, edit, or otherwise cut literary writings, I am happier imagining that Shakespeare was responsible for the versions underlying the first-printed texts and that he intentionally added these two patterned clusters as he worked through the earlier manuscripts along his merry way to crafting the versions underlying the Folio texts.

Theatrical authors inscribe writings so that actors will say their words on a stage with actions appropriate to making the audiences believe the fictional creatures behave like the "real" people standing around them in the theatre. I can't believe that anyone other than Shakespeare generated the intentions we find coded in the earliest printed versions and the different intentions found in the later printed texts. Nor can I believe that other folks stripped out the wind images, or the inexpressibility imagery.

Like my friend Lemuel Gulliver, in print and in discussions I've laid out these

ideas and evidence to support them. Like Brother Lemuel, I am dismayed that current belief and practice does not yet reflect the bright light I've shone on the problem.

But then I gather up my quartos and folios, find a few more signs of hope, and I press on. Evidence, like exuberance, is beauty.

Presentist and Proud! Intensely Intentionalist! Vaingloriously Vulgar!

Urquartowitz of the Bronx

[2]-----

From: Duncan Salkeld <D.Salkeld@chi.ac.uk>

Date: Friday, 30 May 2008 17:18:51 +0000 (GMT)

Subject: 19.0321 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Comment: Re: SHK 19.0321 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Alan Horn very kindly credits me with 'an important point' in my RT contribution but goes on to propose that the 'Indian/Iudean' crux in Othello (5.2.346) offers an example of intentionless meaning. He writes that 'one of the two alternate meanings of this part of Othello's penultimate speech not only does not reflect Shakespeare's intentions, but reflects no human intentions at all.' For this to be true, the marks that make up these possibilities would have had to find their way into the early texts without any human agency involved. But since the example is probably a case of compositorial 'turned letter' ('lu' for 'In') or perhaps a scribal/printing house misreading (see Michael Neill 's 2006 Oxford edition, pp. 464-5), it is hard to see how 'no human intentions at all' lie behind it. Indeed such a suggestion seems incomprehensible. The most one could claim in this and similar instances is that one of the alternatives was not Shakespeare's intention.

He is right to see a certain circularity in Knapp and Michaels' argument that meaning is always "the author's intended meaning." But this is the circularity of an axiom or first-base assumption. K & M don't so much argue for this assumption (because they assume it) as argue against attempts at rejecting it -- hence their example of the 'wave poem'. They hold that an apparent poem, produced in the sand accidentally by a wave, would not even constitute language, since language (as Wittgenstein, Rush Rhys, Donald Davidson and others have argued) is fundamentally interpersonal and shared.

Martin Mueller helpfully recommends working from 'obvious' rather than 'hard' cases. But because intentions are often habitual, many of them are just too obvious to be worth spelling out. When I cycle to work, I intend to continue riding until I arrive at my destination. Along the way, I intend to give

appropriate signals to other vehicles and stop at traffic lights. But mentioning these intentions is by and large worthless so long as it is understood that I am a competent cyclist and in relative possession of my senses. We often know (or presuppose) Shakespeare's intentions in a similarly trivial way. Writing *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare intended to compose a play (in the dramatic genre as he understood it); he intended to adapt a poetic source; and, among so many other aims, he intended, as usual, to convey conflicts of attitude, desire, belief and action and entertain an audience. But knowing these very basic intentions adds little to our understanding of the way in which he carried them out.

Mueller also sensibly regards authorial intention as belonging in the realms of the probable, plausible and 'underspecified' (a useful category, as Alan Dessen observes). Donald Davidson has done more than any other contemporary philosopher to show why Mueller's claim about 'the very large body of agreement that makes interesting disagreement possible in the first place' is essential. My concluding comments were intended to make a very similar point. As Davidson also shows, we only understand failures of communication such as malapropisms against a general backdrop of shared understanding or successful communicability.

Duncan Salkeld

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0333.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0328 Tuesday, 3 June 2008

From: Cary DiPietro <cary.dipietro@utoronto.ca>  
Date: Tuesday, 3 Jun 2008 07:57:36 -0400  
Subject: SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

The Roundtable digest this week includes an impressive twelve contributions, many of them very substantial, and all showing a diverse range of approach. Given the length of the digest below, I'll keep my prefatory comments as brief as possible.

The leading contribution comes this week from David Schalkwyk, who writes on the topic, "Giving Intention Its Due." I withheld his name in the last digest to spare him the pressure of public commitment: he's currently in the middle of a superhuman travel and work itinerary, and in the few spare minutes he's had, he's managed to eke out this remarkable essay. In the same manner as Duncan Salkeld in his essay in the last digest, Schalkwyk draws on his wide knowledge of contemporary theory, including that of figures as diverse as Ludwig Wittgenstein, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Joseph Margolis, among

others; Schalkwyk also responds to arguments made by John R. Searle, and Steven Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels, invoked previously by Salkeld. Although they come from very different sides of the debate, both Schalkwyk and Salkeld provide us with navigable points of entry into this large body of sophisticated, often intimidating, debate that already exists on the topic of intention; their contributions, combined with thoughtful responses to Salkeld by Alan Horn, are also beginning to generate a wider sense of dialogue between contributions that I see as also advancing that debate.

Don't be fooled by his title: even though he promises to "give intention its due," Schalkwyk is only interested in retaining discussion of intention as a purely heuristic category. His position is something closer to an anti-intentionalist (though not quite). There are two claims in his essay, in particular, that stand out for me, and they are indeed the main ones: the first is "the fundamental philosophical argument that meanings or intentions are not things that go on in anyone's heads," and that, therefore, we must dispense with the notion of authorial psychology as an arbiter of textual meaning; the second is that, if we recognize that authorial intention is not a latent condition in the text, but a category imposed by and giving authority to the interpreter, then the question of what we choose to do with literary texts becomes a "matter of institutional debate, politics, and power."

I would like to respond to these two points, and I'll do so in the final digest. Originally, however, I had imagined two leading contributions to address two issues related to Schalkwyk's points above. I've been unsuccessful in soliciting interest in them so far, so I'll advertise them here. I'd like one leading contributor to interrogate psychoanalytic or psycholinguistic models of intention. Schalkwyk's argument that textual meaning is not something "in the head" (quoting Putnam) begs a response from someone willing to credit or invest in the psychology of the writer, and the questions that raises: if a symbolic structure emanates from the "unconscious," for example, is it intentional? Is the appeal of literature for us on some level a psychological one? How does the social-psychological experience of, for example, theatre correspond or potentially relate to the psychology of the writer? I'd like another leading contributor to address the use of "intention" in the postsecondary classroom: how do we teach the meaning of texts without recourse to the intentions of their authors? Is there such a thing as an anti-intentionalist or presentist pedagogy, and, if so, what does it entail? How does teaching as an institutional practice inform, or how is it informed by, debates about intention? If you think you might be interested in writing a leading essay for the Roundtable, or, alternatively, if you know of a member of the SHAKSPER community who fits the bill, then please let me know off list.

All of the remaining eleven contributions, but one, have already been published

to the Roundtable. As Hardy mentioned in an earlier message, we were hoping that adjusting the publication format from a weekly to a daily digest (with a weekly "omnibus" digest) would lead to greater activity, and whether this format change has been the cause, or one cause among many, for the considerable increase in contributions over the last week or so, we both agree that the new format is working well for this Roundtable. I have, however, regrouped the messages, taking them out of the order in which they were posted to the list (you can see the date signatures at the top of each message) to put them in a dialogic order.

Two main contributions appear first. Steve "Urquartowitz" and Martin Mueller both navigate their own way into the topic. Urkowitz revisits arguments about textual variants from his 1980 book *Shakespeare's Revision of \*King Lear\**, and the mixed reception they received; Urkowitz's unwavering conviction that textual evidence shows an intending author revising the play compels him to "keep on writing." I haven't included his message in the digest, but Jim Carroll (jcarroll99@aol.com) writes in response: "You should. Otherwise, 400 years from now, who's going to know?" Martin Mueller begins by apologizing for his "puzzled and not very well thought-through response." One wishes he would unpuzzle and think it through, then, because he's clearly hit a chord with both David Evett and Alan Dessen who respond positively below. I've also reproduced a qualification made by Larry Weiss on Mueller's use of the term "hard cases" that was diverted into a "spin-off" thread earlier this week; no subsequent responses were received, and Weiss's is a contained and useful terminological clarification.

There is a further series of exchanges between Alan Horn and Duncan Salkeld arising out of Salkeld's leading contribution last week. Their discussion circles around the three writers isolated from Salkeld's writing by Schalkwyk (Knapp and Michaels, Searle), and I look forward to seeing how this discussion develops in the wake of Schalkwyk's essay. Finally, there are contributions from Kenneth Chan, who begins by responding to Terence Hawkes, a longer one from Alan Dessen who responds to questions and comments by David Evett, Tom Reedy and John Drakakis, and one from Larry Weiss on the continuing discussion of "implied stage directions." I invite SHAKSPEREans to respond to any of these thoughtful contributions below. I should note, however, that David Schalkwyk will be intermittently out of email contact over the next few weeks, so questions or comments directed to him may go unanswered.

Next week, we return to the idea of intention and theatre practice with a leading contribution from Cary Mazer (whose article "The Intentional-Fallacy Fallacy" has already been invoked by Dessen). Mazer wins the award for best title so far: "Two Cheers for the Intentional Fallacy: Intention, Theatre Practice, and Performance History."

---

## "Giving Intention Its Due"

Warning: here there be dragons! While I have enjoyed the discussion on intention rooted in theatre history and editing so far, I must admit that my own scholarly ignorance in the matter commits me to strike out instead into the terra incognita of which Alan Dessen is rightly wary. I shall do no more than attempt some modest conceptual clarification on the issue of "giving intention its due" in the hope that it may be of some help to members of SHAKSPER in determining their bearings in relation to each other and the topic at hand.

When my son was about four or five, we were driving through town together when I heard a cry of frustration from the back seat: "Dad, I can't stop reading the signs!" Andrew had discovered, one might say, the grip of intentionality. He had passed from an age of illiterate innocence to the anguish of a peculiar kind of experience, in which no matter how hard he tried-how much of his *\*will\** he imposed upon the world-he could not stop the marks on the signs we were passing from resolving themselves into words. Only some of these words had "meanings" for him: he could recognize the name of our road ("Silverlea"), but I doubt whether he knew what it meant, whereas others like "Garden" or "Hilltop" did signify something in his childish lexicon.

What should we make of this anecdote in relation to Shakespeare and intention? I want to use it as a base position for the discussion that follows: as an indication of some minimal conditions of intentionality. First, Andrew found that reading was an intentional but involuntary act. No matter how much he willed it to be otherwise, he could not choose NOT to read. Second, the words he was reading did not reflect in any but the remotest sense anyone's intentions. They were not the manifestation of anything that went on in anyone's mind at any point, nor could their meanings be traced back to any single person.

So we have two curious aspects of intentionality at work here: the intentionality of the reading process was not the product of Andrew's will; but nor was the intentionality of the "writing" process the product of the writer's will; in fact, it's difficult to find a single agency in this writing process.

One could, of course, argue that the naming of streets and the putting up of street signs are intentional acts in a fuller sense of the word: *\*someone\** intended the streets of Cape Town to bear names, *\*someone\** gave instructions to have signs made bearing those names, *\*someone\** made those signs, and *\*someone\** put them up. There is a chain of action here, an embodiment all along the line, of human agency. But such agency is distributed across a large number of people at very different times (what is the relation between a settler in 1700 giving

the name "Silverlea" to a particular street, the cartographer who registers it in 1850, the factory that makes the sign in 2005 and the worker who erects it in 2008?). Nor is it at all clear what relation the different agents bear to what we might call the meaning of the signs. (There is a philosophical argument that proper names designate but do not mean anything [Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* and Putnam, "The Meaning of 'Meaning'"], but let's leave that aside for the moment and try to work out how the two kinds of intentionality isolated from this anecdote bear on the problem of reading a Shakespeare sonnet).

I hope that this story will have cast some light on two general claims: "there is no intentionless meaning" (Knapp and Michaels) and "there's no getting away from intentionality" (Searle, 202). We should be able to see how both of these are at one level incontestable, even if they don't quite mean the same thing. I prefer Searle's claim, which, ironically perhaps, is close to Derrida's statement, quoted earlier by Duncan Salkeld, that "the category of intention will not disappear; it will have its place, but from this place it will no longer govern the entire scene and system of utterance" (Derrida 326). (Seldom have three people talked past each other to such a degree as is manifest in the non-conversation between Derrida and Searle, with poor old Austin, contested father-figure, in the middle.)

The problem with claims of the generality of "there's no getting away from intentionality" and "there is no intentionless meaning" is precisely their generality: the meaning of "intention" or "intentionality" is so unspecified that they could be, as Salkeld observes, either irrefutable or grossly erroneous. In the debate between intentionalist and anti-intentionalists virtually no-one any longer subscribes to intention as a series of mental events that cause, precede or accompany writing or speaking. Hirsch (*The Aims of Interpretation*) comes close to this when he argues that the intention of the author is what he or she willed an otherwise indeterminate sentence to mean. But he concedes in the rest of his argument that such "willing" can be given only inferentially, by factors extrinsic to the mental life of the author. Ludwig Wittgenstein can be credited with offering the most powerful arguments against intention as mental event (see especially, *Philosophical Investigations* paras. 631-93 and pp.174-86). Wittgenstein makes two points: one can intend something only within a context and a history constitutive of such intention, and to mean something is different from thinking or imagining something. Intention or meaning is not something "in the head" (see Putnam, "Meaning of 'Meaning'", p. 227). It is embodied in a variety of differently related conditions that are public rather than private: the equally enabling and constraining structure of language and its various language-games, taken together with the manifold of what Searle calls the "background conditions" ("Reiterating the Differences") and expectations that go into making sense of any utterance.

If this is so, then why do we need the appeal to intention at all? Why not simply make do with the utterance and the conditions that allow it to make sense? This is precisely the strong anti-intentionalist position, and I must admit that there are times when it has a very strong appeal to me. Get rid of the appeal to the intention of the author and just get on with our business of construing the sense of texts as best we can with the materials at hand and the governing protocols that our institutional culture allows. We can even concede that there is indeed no intentionless meaning, if all that that means is that all texts require readers to make sense of them, and that whatever can be seen to be embodied in the text is the intention of the author.

In this sense of intention, then, intention does not precede or generate the meaning of the text, but is rather retroactively or retrospectively posited as the purposeful structure of significance of the text. I suspect that this is what we actually do all the time, even in ordinary talk. We invoke intention in ordinary discourse whenever we wish to clear up ambiguities, mistakes, uncertainties, or express dissent or surprise. "What did you mean by that?" we ask someone. And we don't accept the explanation naively. We won't accept an answer just because the person asked is somehow "closer" to his or her intentions or meanings than we are. We apply the same sorts of contextual (in the very broadest sense) criteria that we do in trying to figure out what the intention of Sonnet 46 might be. Furthermore, the person interrogated often figures out their intentions retrospectively, too. "Teach the children a game," I say to someone, who proceeds to teach them poker. "I didn't mean that game!" I cry. "How do you know?" Wittgenstein asks, "did poker hover in your mind, crossed out, so to speak, when you made the request? Along with all the other games you didn't mean? Certainly, you didn't intend the children to be taught poker, but HOW EXACTLY did you intend this?"

Let's return to Andrew. I'm happy to say that Andrew graduates from Harvard this week, having learnt to read Nietzsche and Freud, Weber and Hume (though not Shakespeare, alas. It's an interesting question to what extent learning to read those authors enables him to make sense of Shakespeare). He has presumably moved over the course of some sixteen years from having reading as a phenomenological experience forced upon him, to being able to some extent to produce readings as voluntary acts. His readings will to some degree be products of the will; and he will have learnt to speak of such readings as to some degree attempts to make sense of acts that are themselves willed or purposive artefacts. The important thing is that he will have had to learn to do these things gradually and with some effort and difficulty: intention and intentionality will have become evident with the gradual learning of techniques and practices. In other words, intention takes shape after the acquisition of technique and practice; willing becomes possible after structure. They do not precede and control them. It would make sense to hold that we cannot speak of intention outside an extraordinarily

complex, varied, acquired set of social, personal, and historical circumstances. This may give us a reason to retain the notion or goal of intention in our practice of reading, because it is a short-hand way of referring to that rich set of practices-the community and history that goes into both the writing of the text and its reading. It does NOT refer to what might have gone on in someone's head at any time.

Here are two reasons why we might want to retain the term "intention" as a hypothetical or heuristic kind of short-hand:

First, because it allows us to negotiate situations where there has been a "misfire": where it is not clear what might have been meant in a text. Here it is useful to posit an informing, purposive agency as a device for producing coherence where it has broken down. We have seen countless examples from theatre history and the problem of textual editing in the discussion so far.

The other is more deeply related to the fact that we tend to see texts as themselves purposive acts-as bearers of the intentionality that, according to Searle, we cannot get away from. Here is Joseph Margolis: "Broadly speaking, \*the Intentional\* = \*the cultural\*; it is characteristically articulated intensionally [sic] in phenomena or activities that implicate the intentional. It belongs primarily to the collective life of historical societies, and it appears as an ingredient in the properties of artworks, texts, institutions, traditions, actions, histories, theories, personal careers, linguistic utterances, customs, practices and the like" (14). In other words, we do not have to posit a single informing consciousness to engage with intentionality in Shakespeare's works, or his theatre, or the practice and convention of Petrarchan verse, or that of printing. These are all -- text, practice, institution, or tradition -- intentional things.

On this interpretation there is nothing to fear from Knapp and Michaels's claim, though it's not, I assume, what they intend to say by it. I infer this from their general argument. Knapp and Michaels hold two, related positions: 1) that there is no need to bridge the gap between intention and meaning (as E. D. Hirsch tries to do with his argument that because every sentence is indeterminate with regard to meaning, we need to fix it by appealing to what its author \*willed\* it to mean) because intention and meaning are identical, and 2) no marks can bear any meaning unless we can posit an intentional being that has produced them. So, if we came across marks identical to Shakespeare's sonnet 116 revealed in the sand when a wave withdraws on a beach, we would count it as meaningless if we could offer no explanation that it was produced by an intentional creature. They offer no argument to this effect, merely a bald retort "Clearly not" to the question, "Would we count these marks as meaningful?" It's not clear at all. In terms of the first claim, if one asked a

friend whether they'd like to play tennis and they replied "I have work to do", and it turned out that she derived special pleasure from playing tennis when she is expected to be beavering away at the office, Knapp and Michaels would say that in that case "I have work to do" actually means "Yes, I'd love to", because that's what the friend \*intended\* to say. Hmm, I say. This is close to answering "yes" to Wittgenstein's rhetorical question "Can I say bububu, and mean 'If it doesn't rain I shall go for a walk?'" Only the most intractable mentalist would assume this Humpty-Dumpty position, and intractable mentalism is mistaken. Knapp and Michaels would be on firmer ground if they conceded that the intention expressed is no more (and no less) than a retroactive determination derived from complex social actions and interactions rather than what might have been going on in the mind of the work-shy tennis player. Note that once we've figured out the intention of "I have work to do" in this particular case, we could respond automatically and unthinkingly in all future cases without having to infer anything when our friend said "I have work to do" to a tennis invitation. But then the questions arises: what would they say if they REALLY had work to do?

What are the problems with retaining talk about intention? They are indicated very clearly by John Drakakis when he warns us that we should not talk about the AGENCY that produced a text as if it were an AUTHORITY for what that text means or could mean. Many intentionalists argue that because strings of words are intrinsically indeterminate with regard to their meaning, we need to fix that meaning via the author's intention if we are not to have chaos, or utter indeterminacy, or total free play. But if the author's intention is not the things that were going on in his or her head at the time of writing, what is that intention other than the best hypothesis that we can give, from all the "external" factors at our disposal and generally agreed protocols of procedure and evidence, for what the text (and therefore the author) COULD have meant? The appeal to the author's intention under such circumstances (what he or she MUST have meant?) is really just a stalking horse by which we seek to impose OUR authority on the text under the guise of that of the author. Argue about authority by all means, but don't pretend that your authority as reader is that of the author, would be the response of the anti-intentionalist. By appealing to the agent of the text as its ultimate authority, you are really trying to impose the reading that you have gleaned by paying attention to a selection of privileged EXTERNAL factors as that of a now-privileged author(izer) of the text. (I'm not going to go into the respective arguments here for a single, "true" interpretation of a text [Hirsch], as opposed to a plural "unicity" [Margolis], or intertextual "free play" in the reader as the repository of all possible meanings a text could have [Barthes]. These are institutional battles, not metaphysical ones).

We have reached the main point of my contribution: if we accept the fundamental

philosophical argument that meanings or intentions are not things that go on in anyone's heads, either accompanying or generating mere words, then this is where philosophy or theory stops in arguments about Shakespeare's (or any other writer's) intentions. This is what Derrida is saying when he writes that "intention as a category will not disappear," but that it will have been deprived of the authority to govern or control either the system that makes it possible or the contextual manifold that renders it apparent. After we have determined that "meanings just ain't in the head," the argument about what kinds of things we want to do as institutionalized beings (professional scholars, critics, historians, and so on) is a matter of institutional debate, politics, and power. No analysis of intention is going to provide a knock-down argument for how one should put together an edition of *Much Ado About Nothing*, or whether Petruchio should kiss Katherine either as a performative example of what would be well between them or else as a commendation of her acquiescence. The role of intention (and its implicit appeals to certain kinds of authority) is at stake in the debate about authoritative critical discourse, it can't be used to settle it. There's absolutely no harm in giving intention its due; but let's not give it any more than is due, for then we will be supporting a local grasp for authority under the guise of an incontestable, natural given.

Let me end by putting in a plea for the author. In his careful analysis of the role that the author as proper name plays in critical discourse and its fundamental difference from the way in which we use proper names elsewhere, Foucault ("What is an Author?") illustrates his distinction by saying that whereas it would make no difference to the role of Shakespeare as a name that indicates the contours of a certain body of texts to discover that he did not marry Ann Hathaway, or did not grow up in Stratford, it would indeed make a difference if we were to discover that he did not write SHAKES-PEARES SONNETS (Hardy, this is not an authorship debate, I promise!) This seems to make sense. But what if we discovered that Shakespeare was never a member of any theatrical company -- that, in fact, he had nothing to do with the stage? Would that not make a radical difference to the way we talk about Shakespeare's texts (and by implication, their intentions)? But what kind of fact is this? The former, allowed by Foucault; or the latter, excluded from logical relevance? It's both. Since its inception in the 1940s (its classic statement being Wimsatt and Beardsley's "The Intentional Fallacy") anti-intentionalism has been implacably opposed to the admissibility of biographical considerations. Since its target was an excessive concern with the text as a window to the author's soul, this is understandable. But the alignment of anti-intentionalism (in psychological terms) with the opposition to biography is a category mistake.

We have seen that a concern with intention as the public embodiment of agency need appeal to no arcane mental events or psychological accompaniments. I have argued that the pursuit of embodied intention (another word for meaning) in a

text needs to pay attention to it as the incarnation of complex social actions. These unfold over time within the constraints of a particular period, and encompass the manifold of contextual conditions, assumptions, and relations, that make it possible to mean and understand anything in a particular place at a particular time, including collaborative procedures and the distribution of agencies that is exemplified by Shakespeare's practice. Jerrold Levinson puts this well: "We are in the last analysis entitled and empowered to rationally reconstruct an author as meaning, in a work, something different from what he or she did, in private and truth, mean, as long as we put ourselves in the best position for receiving the utterance of this particular, historically and culturally embedded, author" (251).

Is it not arbitrary, not to say perverse, to exclude from consideration the figure of its author from our multiple considerations of the public constitution of the text? As long as we don't privilege what might have gone on in Shakespeare's mind as the determining and authoritative cause of what's going on in his texts, there seems to me to be no compelling reason to exclude any other fact of his life, especially in its relation to others, from our consideration. We may even allow ourselves a whimsical thought-experiment, whereby our Will, seeing "Come, kiss me Kate" played now one way, now the other, might say softly to himself, "Ah, so THAT'S what I meant!"

David Schalkwyk

[1]-----

From: Steve Urkowitz <surkowitz@aol.com>  
Date: Thursday, 29 May 2008 10:49 am  
Subject: Re: SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Time for me to step in to swing wildly at various pitches being thrown around this Intentionality ball-field.

First, in my vulgar Bronx way, many years ago I argued that Shakespeare intended to write what we find in Q1 KING LEAR and that he also intended to write what we see in the F version of that play. My book, SHAKESPEARE'S REVISION OF KING LEAR and subsequent articles and presentations on HAMLET, ROMEO AND JULIET, THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR, HENRY V, RICHARD III, and HENRY VI PARTS 2 AND 3, present intentional arguments that run something like this: "Here are five (or maybe fifteen) examples of a kind of textual variant between Q1 and F LEAR or Q1 and Q2 and F HAMLET etc., that would produce noticeable blips on an alert theatrical observer's radar if the versions were to be played one after the other on a stage. Although any one or two of such blipping variants might be generated accidentally or by other agents, the "so-muchness" or "so-many-ness" and

especially the "so-goodness" of the patterns of variants lead me to conclude that they result from an author's intervention in his composition.

When SHAKESPEARE'S REVISION OF KING LEAR came out, almost all reviewers found that the marshaling of lots of evidence and my arguments were indeed convincing. Some critics felt, however, that specific instances of patterns I cited were instead more likely to have resulted from non-authorial interventions or accidents. The passage most often cited by those critics is the dialog between Kent and a Gentleman in LEAR 3.1. which I show is one of many "interrupted speeches" that appear in the Folio but not found in the Q1 version. I feel the strength of my argument is that (at least in my part of the Bronx) purposeful patterns of repeated variation in elegant linguistic designs really do signal some kind of intention. Shakespeare's intention. Since then, though, my basic claims and especially my citation of what I see as authorially-introduced and intended \_patterns\_ have been dismissed or ignored. Or most often a particular instance of a general pattern might be noted while the generality is passed over silently. Ah, well. I keep on writing.

Let me bring to this roundtable discussion two of what I feel are interesting sets of textual variants that lead me to believe that Shakespeare himself intentionally altered the early printed versions of HENRY VI PARTS 2 AND 3 to generate what we see in the Folio text of those plays. (Other similar patterns of intentional authorial revision may be found in my essays "'If I Mistake in Those Foundations Which I Build Upon': Peter Alexander's Textual Analysis of HENRY VI PARTS 2 AND 3," ELR 18 [1988], 230-56, and "'Brother, can you spare a paradigm?' Textual Generosity and the Printing of Shakespeare's Multiple-Text Plays by Contemporary Editors," CRITICAL SURVEY 7 (1995) 292-8.)

When Richard of Gloucester learns of the death of his father Richard of York, in the 1595 version of 3H6 a six-line passage gives the actor playing Richard of Gloucester a vivid action and strong emotions to play:

I cannot weepe, for all my breasts moisture  
Scarse serves to quench my furnace burning hart:  
I cannot joie till this white rose be dide  
Even in the hart bloud of the house of Lancaster.  
Richard, I bare thy name, and Ile revenge thy death,  
Or die my selfe in seeking of revenge.

As a dramatic script, we should assume that the author's intention behind the words "this white rose" was for the actor to hold up or point to a physical object. And when the actor says "Richard, I bare thy name, and I'll revenge . . . " the author intended that the actor address the imagined soul or offstage dead body of his father while verbally and likely with a robust gesture swearing

himself to enact some later revenge.

The later-printed version does not have the lines about the rose. Instead of "this white rose" and the actions attendant on indicating it, the later-printed Folio text contains lines which hold two patterns of iterated imagery found only in a number of other passages also unique to the Folio versions of both HENRY VI PART 2 and PART 3. The F-only lines are indicated by capitals.

I cannot weepe: for all my bodies moysture  
Scarse serves to quench my Furnace-burning hart:  
NOR CAN MY TONGUE UNLOADE MY HEARTS GREAT BURTHEN,  
FOR SELFE-SAME WINDE THAT I WOULD SPEAKE WITHALL,  
IS KINDLING COALES THAT FIRES ALL MY BREST,  
AND BURNES ME UP WITH FLAMES, THAT TEARS WOULD QUENCH,  
TO'WEEPE, IS TO MAKE LESSE THE DEPTH OF GREEFE:  
TEARES THEN FOR BABES; BLOWES, AND REVENGE FOR MEE.  
Richard, I beare thy name, Ile venge thy death,  
Or dye renowned by attempting it.

Here the instruction to the actor is first to enact a kind of "inexpressibility topos" about his inner feelings, and then to vow to take revenge. In this version, first he directs attention to his inner self rather than to the physical rose and then, as in the earlier-printed text, he addresses his father's spirit. The portrayal of Richard of Gloucester being unable or unwilling to reveal what he feels or thinks appears earlier in 2H6, (TLN 2111) as an aside undercutting his surface-allegiance to his brother: "I heare, yet say not much, but thinke the more." And similarly a speech unique to the Folio has Richard report his inner thoughts at TLN 2157-9.

The capitalized passage also offers one of the many (ten or a dozen) images of "wind" as a destructive or unpredictable force found in these plays, all unique to the Folio. For these iterated imagistic patterns to appear in only one or the other version indicates either that some agent put them in on purpose or took 'em out, equally on purpose. The wind images appear in a variety of characters' roles:

(1) Richard of York: "all my followers to the eager foe / Turne back, and flye, like Ships before the Winde (TLN 461-2).

(2) King Henry:

. . . like a Mighty Sea,  
Forc'd by the Tide, to combat with the Winde:  
Now swayes it that was, like the selfe-same Sea,

Forc'd to retyre by furie of the Winde.  
Sometime, the Flood Prevailes; and than the Winde:

(3) the father who has killed his son in battle:

. . . see, see, what showres arise,  
Blowne with the windie Tempest of my heart,  
Upon thy wounds, that killes mine Eye, and Heart.

(4) King Henry:

. . . Looke, as I blow this Feather from my Face,  
And as the Ayre blowes it to me againe,  
Obeying with my winde when I do blow,  
And yeelding to another, when it blowes,  
Colmmanded alwayes by the greater gust:  
Such is the lightnesse of you, common men.

(4) The King of France:

Renowned Queene,  
With patience calme the Storme,  
While we bethinke a meanes to breake it off.

(5) Queen Margaret, referring to Warwick,

. . . now begins a second Storme to rise,  
For this is hee that moves both Winde and Tyde.

(6) Edward, when captured by Warwick,

What Fates impose, that men must needs abide;  
It boots not to resist both winde and tide.

(7) Edward, threatening Warwick:

Sayle how thou canst,  
Have Winde and Tyde thy friend,  
This Hand, fast wound about thy coale-blacke hayre,  
Shall, whiles thy Head is warme, and new cut off,  
Write in the dust this Sentence with thy blood,  
Wind-changing Warwicke now can change no more.

(8) Warwick, dying, imagines himself as a cedar tree which

. . . kept low Shrubs from Winters pow'rfull Winde.

(9) Margaret, addressing her army,

We will not from the Helme, to sit and weepe,  
But keepe our Course (though the rough Winde say no)  
From Shelves and rocks, that threaten us with Wrack . . .

Of course, if we follow the narratives of memorial reconstruction championed by the Oxford editors, these iterated images could have been first inscribed in a manuscript drafted by Shakespeare which served as the basis for the text printed in the Folio and then were subsequently cut out by him and so did not appear in the 1594-5 versions, or they could have been cut out by some censor or book keeper. Or as many have argued, they were all memorially excised by actors, or intentionally excised by a timid acting company afraid of offending someone high in the local political-economy of windiness.

But to my vulgar sense of how human beings function today when they write, revise, edit, or otherwise cut literary writings, I am happier imagining that Shakespeare was responsible for the versions underlying the first-printed texts and that he intentionally added these two patterned clusters as he worked through the earlier manuscripts along his merry way to crafting the versions underlying the Folio texts.

Theatrical authors inscribe writings so that actors will say their words on a stage with actions appropriate to making the audiences believe the fictional creatures behave like the "real" people standing around them in the theatre. I can't believe that anyone other than Shakespeare generated the intentions we find coded in the earliest printed versions and the different intentions found in the later printed texts. Nor can I believe that other folks stripped out the wind images, or the inexpressibility imagery.

Like my friend Lemuel Gulliver, in print and in discussions I've laid out these ideas and evidence to support them. Like Brother Lemuel, I am dismayed that current belief and practice does not yet reflect the bright light I've shone on the problem.

But then I gather up my quartos and folios, find a few more signs of hope, and I press on. Evidence, like exuberance, is beauty.

Presentist and Proud! Intensely Intentionalist! Vaingloriously Vulgar!

Urquartowitz of the Bronx

[2]-----

From: Martin Mueller <martinmueller@northwestern.edu>

Date: Monday, 26 May 2008 20:24:29 -0500

Subject: 19.0315 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Comment: Re: SHK 19.0315 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

This is a puzzled and not very well thought-through response to the thread about Shakespeare's intentions. One of the problems in that phrase is "Shakespeare's." How different is he from "us," whoever we are? And if he was spectacularly good at what he did -- which I'm inclined to agree was the case in many cases -- does that make any difference to what "he means" or what "we mean by him." My answer to that question is that it doesn't, and that we shouldn't talk about "Shakespeare's" intentions unless we are prepared to think of it as a particular (and not necessarily special) case of what anybody means by anything.

But if we start thinking about what anybody means by anything and whether anybody ever understands anything that anybody else says we are in a largely probabilistic universe. Good enough uptake happens all the time. Misunderstandings happen all the time. Some misunderstandings get transformed into good enough uptake after clarification (both of us now think, rightly or wrongly that my uptake of what you said corresponds to what you meant to say). There are less comMonday, and highly telling, instances of one person understanding another person "all too well," which the other person may or may not get.

Another variable is the degree of semantic specification. When Polonius says "Take this from this if this be otherwise" (Hamlet, 2.2.156) there is a high probability that he means something like "cut off my head" or perhaps "take away my staff of office." When Cornwall says: "Regan, I bleed apace, / Untimely comes this hurt. Give me your arm" (3.7.97-8), there is an equally high probability that Cornwall is asking for Regan's arm (and that the author meant for Cornwall to have this intention). It is much harder to judge whether Shakespeare "meant" for Regan to lend her arm to Cornwall and whether a modern director would be inside or outside the playwright's intention in making Regan conspicuously ignore this clearly intended call for help. It might be best to say that we are in an underspecified situation.

At some level, we are always in underspecified situation. Good-enough uptake is never or almost never the only possible response to an unambiguous signal. But perhaps the whole business of intention should not start from difficult cases, where people have good reason to argue this way or that way. They should argue from obvious cases and figure out why (by and large) we don't say things like

Cordelia is the mother of Lear

Ophelia is actually the daughter of Claudius

In the closet scene, Gertrude and Hamlet shared amicable reminiscences about a recent trip to the Hebrides

Instead we argue most of the time about what the lawyers call the "hard cases" that make for poor law and we ignore the very large body of agreement that makes interesting disagreement possible in the first place. At what point do disagreements about the blindingly obvious begin to break down? And when we begin to argue, do we argue about the last or first five percent?

[3]-----

From: Larry Weiss <larry@lweiss.net>  
Date: Wednesday, 28 May 2008 12:49:47 -0400  
Subject: Hard Cases

>we argue most of the time about what the lawyers call  
>the "hard cases" that make for poor law and we ignore  
>the very large body of agreement that makes interesting  
>disagreement possible in the first place.

Actually, the word "hard" in this cliché does not mean "difficult"; it means "causing hardship." The idea is that when judges are faced with the alternative of following established law or altering it to avoid inflicting a hardship, they may well commit an error. Apropos of the "intention" discussion, this notion is what Portia \*seems to mean\* when she tells the Duke not to "wrest the law to [his] authority | To do a great right do a little wrong" as "'Twill be recorded for a precedent | And many an error, by the same example, | Will rush into the state."

[4]-----

From: David Evett <d.evett@csuohio.edu>  
Date: Wednesday, 28 May 2008 20:43:43 -0400  
Subject: 19.0318 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0318 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Thanks to Martin Mueller for his splendidly clear and provocative statement of the Intentional Problem-though it leaves a little understated the imperative need we have in both ordinary and extraordinary moments of practical life to seek for intention in the utterances and actions of others.

Intentionally?

David Evett

[5]-----  
From: Alan Dessen <acdesse@email.unc.edu>  
Date: Thursday, 29 May 2008 15:21:33 -0500  
Subject: Intentions again

Martin Mueller's assessment of "a largely probabilistic universe" with respect to authorial "intentions" makes excellent sense to me, as does his category of the "underspecified situation" (e.g., when considering Regan's response to Cornwall's "Give me your arm"). "Doing" theatre history means repeatedly dealing with the probable and the possible -- hence my invocation of Cary Mazer's "craftsmanship" and "strategy" as opposed to authorial meaning or meanings -- and the term "underspecified" fits neatly with a wealth of evidence I have collected about so-called "permissive" or "open" stage directions (see our dictionary entry for "permissive," as with an entrance that includes "as many as may be").

At the risk of muddying the waters, I would like to cite a comparable set of distinctions. Along with "intentions," another much debated term (particularly when dealing with the script to stage process) is "authenticity." These days few scholars have kind things to say about this term (and I studiously avoid using it in my own work), but in his essay "In Defense of Authenticity" Michael Friedman provides some distinctions that further develop what is specified and underspecified in Mueller's terms. Reacting to the "rhetoric of slavery and emancipation" that underlies many of the attacks on "authenticity," Friedman reexamines "the extent to which a Shakespearean text limits the performative options of an authentic production." He posits "the existence of five different categories of regulation: the text either forbids, discourages, allows, encourages, or demands any specific performance choice" (pp. 46-7 -- and he credits Megan Lloyd for this configuration). He then uses a sequence from Much Ado, 4.1 to illustrate his categories. Friedman notes that "By far the largest percentage of performance choices may be classified as those which the text allows." For example, "We may presume, for instance, that all of the characters on stage wear costumes, and that those costumes often convey significant information to an audience, but the text rarely specifies a particular character's attire, and when it does, it seldom offers more than one detail about it" (48). In his formulation, "a production approaches authenticity to the degree that it abides by what the text demands or encourages and avoids what the text discourages or forbids" (50).

My summary does not do justice to this section of the essay, so interested

readers should check it out for themselves.

I also see the point in Mueller's warning not to build upon what lawyers term "hard cases," though in such oddities or stretches, I confess, I have found some of my most telling examples of the gap between then and now. Again and again my playgoing in Ashland, Oregon, in the 1970s (starting with a 1974 *Titus Andronicus*) led me to moments that were demanded or encouraged for Elizabethan or early Jacobean performance but were resisted by today's theatrical professionals. Two of my pet examples are the juxtaposition of Kent in the stocks with Edgar in flight; and the onstage presence of Duke Senior's "banquet" with Orlando and Adam complaining of starving. For me such anomalies have provided revealing windows into the past, though what works for my theatre history project certainly does not rule out Mueller's cautionary suggestion.

Alan Dessen

[6]-----

From: Alan Horn <alanshorn@gmail.com>

Date: Thursday, 29 May 2008 08:38:41 -0400

Subject: 19.0310 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Comment: Re: SHK 19.0310 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Duncan Salkeld makes what I consider an important point in his Roundtable contribution. He argues that just because we may never understand an author's intentions with perfect clarity or perfect certainty does not mean we can't or shouldn't allow consideration of these intentions to constrain our reading. One could make a similar point against the similar all-or-nothing logic of presentism.

However, I was surprised to see Salkeld endorse the view of Knapp and Michaels that meaning and intention are one and the same. I can certainly think of ways in which meanings with no intentions behind them can arise in literary works.

To take a crude example, some of the famous cruxes in Shakespeare may well be the consequence of arbitrary typographical substitutions. Let's say this is the case for "Indian"/"Iudean." If so, one of the two alternate meanings of this part of Othello's penultimate speech not only does not reflect Shakespeare's intentions, but reflects no human intentions at all. Knapp and Michaels, who argue in a hypothetical example that a poem inscribed on the shore by the chance mechanical action of the surf would necessarily be meaningless, would have to say the same thing about one of the two textual possibilities here. Yet the meaning of each has been grasped and described by any number of competent readers.

Maybe "meaning" is being specially defined here as "the author's intended meaning." In this case, the argument is indeed "irrefutable," as Salkeld

proposes, but only because it's circular.

Alan Horn

[7]-----  
From: Duncan Salkeld <D.Salkeld@chi.ac.uk>  
Date: Friday, 30 May 2008 17:18:51 +0000 (GMT)  
Subject: 19.0321 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0321 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Alan Horn very kindly credits me with 'an important point' in my RT contribution but goes on to propose that the 'Indian/Iudean' crux in Othello (5.2.346) offers an example of intentionless meaning. He writes that 'one of the two alternate meanings of this part of Othello's penultimate speech not only does not reflect Shakespeare's intentions, but reflects no human intentions at all.' For this to be true, the marks that make up these possibilities would have had to find their way into the early texts without any human agency involved. But since the example is probably a case of compositorial 'turned letter' ('lu' for 'In') or perhaps a scribal/printing house misreading (see Michael Neill 's 2006 Oxford edition, pp. 464-5), it is hard to see how 'no human intentions at all' lie behind it. Indeed such a suggestion seems incomprehensible. The most one could claim in this and similar instances is that one of the alternatives was not Shakespeare's intention.

He is right to see a certain circularity in Knapp and Michaels' argument that meaning is always "the author's intended meaning." But this is the circularity of an axiom or first-base assumption. K & M don't so much argue for this assumption (because they assume it) as argue against attempts at rejecting it -- hence their example of the 'wave poem'. They hold that an apparent poem, produced in the sand accidentally by a wave, would not even constitute language, since language (as Wittgenstein, Rush Rhys, Donald Davidson and others have argued) is fundamentally interpersonal and shared.

Martin Mueller helpfully recommends working from 'obvious' rather than 'hard' cases. But because intentions are often habitual, many of them are just too obvious to be worth spelling out. When I cycle to work, I intend to continue riding until I arrive at my destination. Along the way, I intend to give appropriate signals to other vehicles and stop at traffic lights. But mentioning these intentions is by and large worthless so long as it is understood that I am a competent cyclist and in relative possession of my senses. We often know (or presuppose) Shakespeare's intentions in a similarly trivial way. Writing Romeo and Juliet, Shakespeare intended to compose a play (in the dramatic genre as he understood it); he intended to adapt a poetic source; and, among so many other aims, he intended, as usual, to convey conflicts of attitude, desire, belief and

action and entertain an audience. But knowing these very basic intentions adds little to our understanding of the way in which he carried them out.

Mueller also sensibly regards authorial intention as belonging in the realms of the probable, plausible and 'underspecified' (a useful category, as Alan Dessen observes). Donald Davidson has done more than any other contemporary philosopher to show why Mueller's claim about 'the very large body of agreement that makes interesting disagreement possible in the first place' is essential. My concluding comments were intended to make a very similar point. As Davidson also shows, we only understand failures of communication such as malapropisms against a general backdrop of shared understanding or successful communicability.

Duncan Salkeld

[8]-----  
From: alan horn alanshorn@gmail.com  
Date: Monday, 2 Jun 2008 07:24:37 -Subject:  
Re: SHK 19.0323 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Duncan Salkeld ironically interprets my suggestion that the "Indian"/"Iudean" crux may well have been produced with "no human intentions at all" in a way that is quite contrary to my intended meaning. No doubt there were any number of intentional acts involved in the preparation and printing of the line in question. But if the textual variation appeared, as Salkeld puts it and as I supposed, due to a "compositorial 'turned letter' ('lu' for 'In') or perhaps a scribal/printing house misreading" -- that is to say, by accident -- then no one intended to introduce it. You could argue that if it was based on a misreading rather than a typographic mishap its appearance would entail certain intentions relevant to the meaning of the text (such as that of making the best sense of an unclear original). That is why I specified that for the sake of argument I was assuming the accident was purely mechanical. It doesn't matter if this is true, only that it could be. Because if so, here is an example of a meaning coming into being without any intentions relevant to its production behind it.

Or is it a meaning? Knapp and Michaels would argue no. (Or rather, as Salkeld explains, they "don't so much argue for this assumption (because they assume it) as argue against attempts at rejecting it," which is an interesting distinction.) But to say that either reading of the passage in question is meaningless is obviously false. The meaning of each has not only been apprehended but exhaustively discussed by expert readers.

Unless Knapp and Michaels are simply using the word "meaning" in a special sense. Salkeld concedes that "in Knapp and Michaels' argument [...] meaning is always 'the author's intended meaning.'" I think we can all agree that the

author's intended meaning is the author's intended meaning, but this does not amount to a theoretical (or anti-theoretical) discovery. It is not even relevant to the question at hand.

That language is "fundamentally transpersonal and shared" is precisely the reason that a word produced by accident can be read and understood by any competent individual, and therefore has "meaning" as commonly defined. And what gives language this transpersonal and shared quality is precisely the fact that the meaning of a given word is purely conventional and does not depend on the will of any particular person, not even that of its author (if any).

I would like to recommend to anyone following this exchange the article by John Searle cited by Salkeld in his original contribution ("Literary Theory and Its Discontents," *New Literary History* 25.3 (Summer, 1994): 637-667). I read it only last night and was glad to find it supported everything I had said in my initial response. If Salkeld thinks that Knapp and Michaels's argument is not "demonstrably refuted" by it I would like to know why.

Let me also recommend a piece by Frank Kermode along the same lines called "The Single Correct Interpretation," a review of an essay by P.D. Juhl which (although they deny it) closely anticipated Knapp and Michaels's arguments. It is reprinted in Kermode's *The Art of Telling* (Harvard UP, 1983: 201-220).

By the way, I have an electronic version of the Searle article if anyone needs a copy.

Alan Horn

[9]-----

From: Kenneth Chan <kckc@pacific.net.sg>  
Date: Sunday, 25 May 2008 10:38:13 +0800  
Subject: 19.0310 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0310 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

An interesting point is highlighted by Terence Hawkes's contribution "Sans Everything." Although Shakespeare's actual words constitute the most crucial aspect of his works, there is nonetheless more to a Shakespearean play than the language in his text. This probably explains why a Shakespearean play may retain much of its impact even when the original language is translated. And even if we remove all the words (as in the "wordless" *Macbeth*), it is still not "sans everything."

This may be a relevant point in the debate on intention. Let us look again at the quote from the 2002 volume, *Shakespeare in the Present*: "We choose the

facts. We choose the texts. We do the inserting. We do the perceiving. Facts and texts, that is to say, don't simply speak, don't merely mean. We speak, we mean, by them"

This quote would be largely true if it refers to the language in the text. A play, however, is more than just the language in the text. It also has structure and plot content (by "plot content," I mean the action or "what is actually happening" in the scenes).

While much of the debate on intention is focused on the author's words, these other aspects of Shakespeare's plays should perhaps also be considered together with the words. Clues as to the author's possible intention may also be found in the structure of the play and in its plot content -- i.e., those aspects of the play that are not altered by a translation of its language.

Here is an example of how a play's structure and plot content may be relevant to the debate on intention. In many Shakespearean plays, certain key motifs are echoed repeatedly throughout the play, from start to finish. Significantly, these repeating motifs are different for different plays. For instance, no other Shakespearean play comes even remotely close to Hamlet in the number of references to death and its inevitability. This would suggest authorial intention. And a translation of Hamlet into another language would not alter this fact.

Thus, with regards to the debate on intention, I believe it is reasonable that we also consider the structure and the plot content of the play together with the words in the text. We will, at least, then have the benefit of a more complete picture.

Kenneth Chan

[10]-----

From: Alan Dessen <acdessen@email.unc.edu>

Date: Monday, 26 May 2008 18:37:58 -0400

Subject: "Intentions" Roundtable

I enjoyed David Evett's comment with reference to my speculations about the practice of playreading to assembled company members: that stage directions are sometimes read aloud during an initial read-through in today's rehearsal hall. I have no such rehearsal room experience, but I have seen at least one Mike Alfreds production (the 2001 London Globe *Cymbeline*), done with six actors and two percussionists, where for added clarity Alfreds had his cast speak aloud various stage directions ("Enter Cloten, the Queen's son"; "Enter Imogen dressed as a boy"; "Enter Caius Lucius, Soothsayer, Roman Captain") or place indicators

(Rome, Cymbeline's court, Imogen's bed chamber, A cave in the Welsh mountains).

In response to Tom Reedy's citation of the Johannes Rhenanus comment -- that in England actors "are daily instructed, as it were in a school, so that even the most eminent actors have to allow themselves to be taught their places by the Dramatists" -- that passage has indeed been invoked for various purposes. For example, first Alfred Hart (in 1941) and later David Klein (in 1962) in articles with the same title in *Modern Language Review* ("Did Shakespeare Produce His Own Plays?") cited Rhenanus on different sides of the question (Hart argued no, Klein yes). In her rehearsal book Tiffany Stern observes that "Rhenanus" passage is often quoted as a description of rehearsals in the Elizabethan public theatre, but it occurs in the introduction to *Speculum Aestheticum* (1613), a translation of Thomas Tomkis' Trinity College, Cambridge, play *Lingua*. Stern concludes: "Almost certainly Rhenanus is writing about academic productions . . . and he is probably making a direct reference to the preparation of *Lingua* itself" (p. 40). For a more recent summary of her argument in behalf of one-on-one "Instruction" (as opposed to group rehearsals), occasionally by the playwright but more commonly by senior actors, see *Shakespeare in Parts* (co-authored with Simon Palfrey), pp. 66-70. As I noted in my original post, a playwright attached to a given company (as was Shakespeare) may have played a significant role in the script to stage process, but the fragmentary nature of the evidence forestalls any firm conclusions. Meanwhile, for me the work of G. E. Bentley, although not the final word, remains a model of scholarship that I have learned to trust, hence my reference to "the standard view."

Finally, as to John Drakakis' query, I'm not sure I understand the distinctions he is invoking, but I do have major problems with so-called "implied" stage directions as evidence. Again, for me here there be dragons. As he rightly notes many onstage actions can be inferred from dialogue (e.g., kisses, embraces, kneelings), but such inferences are subject to a range of transhistorical assumptions and reflexes (what I term "theatrical essentialism") that can lead to questionable conclusions. For the sake of brevity, I will limit myself to three examples.

First is the question of timing. My pet example is the final bit of the penultimate scene in *Taming of the Shrew* where Petruchio gets Kate, after some initial resistance, to kiss him in public. The Wells-Taylor Oxford edition provides "They kiss" at 5.1.139 (and that inserted signal is not placed within square brackets). Does indeed the kiss come here (so she kisses him, he reacts "Is not this well?") or does he say "Is not this well?" (to the playgoer? in response to her verbal acquiescence?) and then kisses her. In a production, this kiss can be a major and memorable moment, but that moment can be defined or understood differently depending upon its timing and how a playgoer understands "is not this well?" Yes, a kiss is implied and does take place; yes, an editor

is entitled to choose a placement (that's what editors do); but the placement of the action is not self-evident.

A second example is provided by one of the many lessons I have learned from the choices of actors and directors. After the blinding of Gloucester, Cornwall says: "Regan, I bleed apace, / Untimely comes this hurt. Give me your arm" (3.7.97-8), and the Riverside is typical in providing: "Exit [led by Regan]." I have lost count of the number of *King Lear* productions I have seen (by now close to fifty), but more than a few have produced a very strong effect by having Regan ignore her husband's outstretched arm and stride offstage. What kind of evidence is provided by "Give me your arm"?

Finally, consider the tricky question of what should and should not be designated an "aside." As noted in our dictionary entry, many asides are specified in the original manuscripts and early printed texts (e.g., twenty-five in *The Jew of Malta*), but more often such signals are provided by today's editor. E. A. J. Honigmann notes that by inserting "aside" an editor "often implies that the speaker would not have dared to utter the same words openly," but "if the situation includes an impudent speaker or an inattentive listener the case for an aside is weakened." For Honigmann, Hamlet's "A little more than kin, and less than kind" (1.2.65 - designated [Aside.] in the Riverside) "expresses the riddling impudence that is characteristic of all of his exchanges with Claudius before Act V"; why then "assume that he would not have dared to speak out loud, and that the only alternative is an aside?" Another alternative is "that Hamlet, the arch-soliloquiser, not infrequently mutters to himself and cares not a rap whether or not others catch his words," but "Such opportunities are lost if the editor prints 'Aside'" (176-78).

My own pet example is found at the end of the caldron scene where Macbeth, although onstage with Lennox, devotes 12 lines (4.1.144-55 - also labeled [Aside.] in the Riverside) to his plans against the Macduffs and his innermost thoughts. Most editors treat this passage as an aside and have Macbeth address Lennox again only in the final line and a half of the scene, a choice that can work effectively in today's productions. But, like Honigmann's Hamlet, Macbeth by this point may not care who knows what he is thinking or planning or, as an alternative, may be so rapt in his little world of man (as in 1.3) that he is momentarily unaware of Lennox's presence. As with Honigmann's examples, to mark this speech as an aside is to enforce upon the unsuspecting reader one choice at the expense of other equally interesting options. For example, in his 1987 Oregon Shakespeare Festival production director Jim Edmondson provided a rationale for the appearance of the "messenger" who, after the departure of Rosse, appears with a warning for Lady Macduff (4.2.65-73) by having that figure overhear Macbeth's "The castle of Macduff I will surprise" comment (4.1.150-53).

In these comments on "implied" s.d.s I have drifted away from John's query and the focus on intentions but I remain faithful (or so I think) to my paradigm of a conversation started by the playwright that resulted in a production now lost to us, the eavesdroppers.

Alan Dessen

[11]-----

From: Larry Weiss <larry@lweiss.net>  
Date: Tuesday, 27 May 2008 01:08:01 -0400  
Subject: 19.0315 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0315 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Alan Dessen's observations about the slipperiness of "implied stage directions" calls to mind a s.d. interpolated by the Oxford editors (Taylor with Wells) in Act III scene i of T&C. In that scene, Pandarus encounters Paris and Helen and attempts to deliver a message to Paris from Troilus but is repeatedly interrupted by jokingly flirtatious behavior by Helen. At one point, after Helen's line "O sir" (addressed to Pandarus), Oxford adds the stage direction: "[She tickles him]." The Textual Companion explains the emendation as "necessary" to explain the word "fits" in the ensuing line and as being "supported" by an earlier (I.ii) account of Helen ticking Troilus, Pandarus's use of the word "ticles" in his song later in the scene and Helen's touching him later in the scene. The last is another additional s.d. by the Oxford editors ("[She strokes his fore-head]"). These stage directions may be correct, but it strikes me that the choice is better left to directorial than editorial discretion.

Works Cited:

Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author." *Image, Music, Text*. Trans. Stephen Heath. London: Fontana, 1977. 142-48.

Derrida, Jacques. "Signature, Event, Context." In *\_Margins of Philosophy\_*. Translation with notes by Alan Bass. New York and London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1982.

Foucault, Michel. "What is an Author?" In *\_Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism\_*. Ed. Josue V. Harari. London: Methuen, 1979. 141-60.

Friedman, Michael D. "In Defense of Authenticity." *\_Studies in Philology\_* 94 (2002): 33-56.

Hart, Alfred. "Did Shakespeare Produce His Own Plays?" *\_ Modern Language Review\_*

36 (1941): 173-83.

Hirsch, J.D. *The Aims of Interpretation*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1976.

Honigmann, E. A. J. *Myriad-minded Shakespeare*. Second Edition. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.

Klein, David. "Did Shakespeare Produce His Own Plays?" *Modern Language Review* 57 (1962): 556-60.

Knapp, Steven and Walter Benn Michaels. "Against Theory." *Critical Inquiry* 8.4 (Summer, 1982): 723-742.

Kripke, Saul. *Naming and Necessity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980.

Levinson, Jerrold. "Intention and Interpretation: A Last Look." In *Intention and Interpretation*. Ed. Gary Iseminger. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1992.

Margolis, Joseph, *Interpretation Radical but not Unruly: The New Puzzle of the Arts and History*. U of California P, 1995.

Palfrey, Simon and Tiffany Stern. *Shakespeare in Parts*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007.

Putnam, Hilary. "The Meaning of 'Meaning'." *In Mind, Language and Reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1975. 215-271.

Searle, John R. "Reiterating the Differences: a Reply to Derrida." *Glyph #2: Johns Hopkins Textual Studies* 7 (1977): 198-208.

Stern, Tiffany. *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000.

Urkowitz, Steven. *Shakespeare's Revision of "King Lear"*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1980.

Wimsatt, William K. and Monroe C. Beardsley. "The Intentional Fallacy." *Sewanee Review* 54 (1946): 468-488. Revised and republished in *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry*. U of Kentucky P, 1954. 3-18.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Philosophical Investigations*.

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0337.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0332 Wednesday, 4 June 2008

[1] From: Gabriel Egan <mail@GabrielEgan.com>  
Date: Tuesday, 3 Jun 2008 19:53:42 +0100  
Subj: Re: SHK 19.0328 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[2] From: Duncan Salkeld <D.Salkeld@chi.ac.uk>  
Date: Tuesday, 03 Jun 2008 20:10:29 +0000 (GMT)  
Subj: Re: SHK 19.0328 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[3] From: Larry Weiss <larry@lweiss.net>  
Date: Wednesday, 04 Jun 2008 00:41:36 -0400  
Subj: Re: SHK 19.0328 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[4] From: Terence Hawkes <terence.hawkes@btinternet.com>  
Date: Wednesday, 4 Jun 2008 12:39:27 +0100  
Subj: SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[1]-----

From: Gabriel Egan <mail@GabrielEgan.com>  
Date: Tuesday, 3 Jun 2008 19:53:42 +0100  
Subject: 19.0328 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0328 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

It would be helpful to the debate on intentions if Hardy were to introduce a random corruption into the postings, say every 500th alphanumeric character being picked by random selection. (A script to do this automatically wouldn't be hard to write.) This would allow readers of the postings to see how authors of philosophically and theoretically complex arguments react when their own words are mangled.

Since what is sauce for the authorial goose ought to remain sauce for the critical gander, this procedure ought to help separate the intellectually coherent arguments (those requiring no special pleading about one's own intentions as distinct from literary author's intentions) from the arguments that cannot be self-reflexively applied and hence ought not to command our attention.

Gabriel Egan

[2]-----

From: Duncan Salkeld <D.Salkeld@chi.ac.uk>  
Date: Tuesday, 03 Jun 2008 20:10:29 +0000 (GMT)  
Subject: 19.0328 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0328 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

I do genuinely take Alan Horn's point about inadvertent meaning, and it is one raised at length by Hershel Parker in his response to Knapp and Michaels (see Mitchell, 1985, 72-9). Knapp and Michaels might well reply (though I will not speak for them) that one could not begin to interpret the 'Indian/Iudean' crux as constituting 'alternatives' without, as they put it, 'interpreting it as what we believe its author meant' (p. 102). In any case, they would hold, I think, that unintended acts are not non-intended acts. Alan Horn seems to agree and so re-phrases his point: 'here is an example of a meaning coming into being without any intentions relevant to its production behind it'. He means, I think, that either 'Indian' or 'Iudean' was not what the author intended, nor what the compositor intended though we know what both mean. But for Knapp and Michaels, intentionality is always 'relevant' (they might say 'simply necessary') even in cases of inadvertent meaning. For them, the fact that someone wrote or set 'Iudean' when they intended to write or set 'Indian' does not nullify their intention. I recommend the replies to Knapp and Michaels, and their replies, collected in Mitchell's small book to interested parties. I grant that Searle (1995) certainly intends his criticism of Knapp and Michaels as a demonstrable refutation of their position.

Steve Urkowitz makes an intriguing suggestion -- that someone (i.e. Shakespeare) intentionally re-worked 'windy' moments into the later (Folio) versions of his early histories. Discussing an example from 3H6 (2.1.79-88, Randall ed.), he comments 'The later-printed version does not have the lines about the rose'. Looking the example up, I noticed that the later version does have lines closely approximating those allegedly lost in the later version. In 1.2.32-4, Richard declares, 'I cannot rest / Vntill the White Rose that I weare, be dy'de / Euen in the luke-warme blood of Henries heart'. These lines have apparently been transposed in the early imprint from one point in 1.2 to a later point in the same scene, and such transpositions are, in my view, most plausibly a sign of lapsed memory. This doesn't alter the very interesting nature of the Folio pattern to which he draws attention.

A last observation: David Schalkwyk finishes by suggesting that intention is no problem so long as it's not 'privileged' as 'the determining and authoritative cause of what's going on in his texts'. This leaves open the possibility that, on the odd occasion, we might privilege (after all, something has to be 'privileged' at any one time) intention as 'a determining and authoritative cause'.

Duncan Salkeld

[3]-----

From: Larry Weiss <larry@lweiss.net>

Date: Wednesday, 04 Jun 2008 00:41:36 -0400

Subject: 19.0328 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Comment: Re: SHK 19.0328 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Our distinguished moderator's lead note this week requests knowledgeable SHAKSPEReans to address the intention question from the point of view of (1) modern psychology, which is much concerned with issues of whether and to what extent people may be said to "intend" their conduct and how we can tell if they do, and (2) pedagogy when faced with the difficulty of teaching literature without reference to the author's intentions (and perhaps even without regarding the language as having intrinsic meaning). I second that request as I have long shared the impression that both the disciplines of clinical psychology and practical pedagogy can offer useful insights that could helpfully inform the theoretical discussion. Since "intent" is a recurrent issue in legal disputes, especially criminal prosecutions and questions of contract and statutory interpretation (which bear some analogs to literary criticism), the lawyers among us might also have something to contribute. But it is not the purpose of this present note to suggest such an expansion of the inquiry.

Rather, I suggest that a refinement, narrowing or bifurcation of the question may be in order. Some of the Roundtable posts to date have focused on "intention" as it affects critical issues and others as it relates to textual matters. It seems to me that these are very different inquiries, and observations pertinent to one of them may have little or no relevance to the other. In critical matters, we may ask what the author "intended" by his words; that is, what he expected the audience or readers to understand from them, or, on an even grander scale, how he wanted them to feel or react in response to them. The patent difficulty of providing sure answers to such questions in all but the most obvious cases (that is, in all cases in which the question is interesting) is daunting; and it is not unreasonable to suggest that it is not a legitimate or useful exercise to make the attempt.

In textual matters, however, the question is not what the author intended by his words, but what words he intended. An editor cannot evade this question and still call herself an editor rather than, say, a reviser or adapter. (A helpful and readable discussion of some of an editor's problems can be found in Stanley Wells's little book "Re-editing Shakespeare for the Modern Reader" [Clarendon 1984].) For example, an editor must choose either "Indian" or "Judean"; she cannot evade that issue by leaving a blank space or substituting some other trisyllabic word that encompasses both concepts (say "alien").

The editor must make a textual choice every time she is faced with variant versions and cruces, and sometimes just when the text contains odd terminology that doesn't sound right. To the extent that the editor relies on bibliographical evidence, such as apparent eyeskips, font confusion, slug shortages, tendencies of the compositors, etc., the inquiry does not involve authorial intention. But editors frequently resort to other guides which do involve conclusions or assumptions about the author's intent. The maxim "difficilior lectio," for example, presumes that an author prefers to use the less immediately comprehensible choice of language, hardly an intuitive conclusion. Other guides also make assumptions about the author's likely intention as to the choice of words. Resort may be had to metrical considerations -- for example, "Judean" fits the iambic meter while "Indian" does not -- but this assumes that Shakespeare wanted to be metrically pure at this point in the play although he did not at other points. Resort to frequency of word usage, stylistic habits, consistency of the language with other speeches by the same character, context and even conclusions as to which language better sorts with what the author was trying to get across, increasingly import authorial intention into the textual issue. These types of guides may be referred to as "critical contamination" of the textual inquiry, which converts it from a pure bibliographical exercise to a hybrid of textual study and critical analysis.

Critical contamination is inevitable whenever an editor makes a choice, even if the choice is to retain an apparently incorrect copytext reading, except when the choice is based on purely bibliographical considerations. And, as I have already noted, an editor does not have the freedom to evade making a choice as a critical analyst does. Unless the editor abdicates her role entirely and reproduces a diplomatic copy of the copytext, the author's intention as to what words he used (if not as to what the words mean) are consulted, however indirectly. To take the example from the Taming of the Shrew which I cited in an earlier post to this Roundtable: F1 has Grumio say: "Help, mistris, help, my master is mad." Theobald emended "mistris" to "masters" evidently because it made no sense to him as there are no female characters on the main stage. I propose to restore the copytext because I believe the speech makes sense as a plea to the page in the induction who has been dressed as a lady to deceive Sly. However, it is not necessary to reach that conclusion to opt for retention of the copytext. It is possible, although to my mind less likely, that Grumio is addressing one of the male characters in the main action, just as Petruchio later persuades Kate to address old Vincentio as "young budding virgin." Or maybe Grumio was calling for the aid of a protector saint; or maybe there is some other answer. Bate and Rasmussen retained F1 in the RSC edition probably because they almost always followed F1; and they do not comment on the crux. Paul Werstine and Barbara Mowat also did not adopt Theobald's emendation for the

Folger paperback, and I am under the impression that they did not really consider the question (it is not noted in the facing page commentary) and one of those editors could not recall the matter when I asked about it. In other words, while any solution other than slavish following of the copytext, involves some explicit or implicit conclusion about what language the author intended to write, it is not necessary to draw a conclusion as to what the author expected the audience to understand by that language.

[4]-----  
From: Terence Hawkes <terence.hawkes@btinternet.com>  
Date: Wednesday, 4 Jun 2008 12:39:27 +0100  
Subject: SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

The trouble with certain arguments concerning Shakespeare Intentions is that they sometimes take place in a vacuum: an air-less, friction-free environment in which a scholar confronts a play's words in a void, all empty of space and time. But, of course, this never happens. All encounters with Shakespeare's words occur between human beings in history. They occupy a particular place and they happen at a specific time. It cannot be otherwise. Duncan Salkeld's notion that 'Shakespeare's intentions can sometimes be known, if hazily' may seem offer some consolation, but as David Schalkwyk argues, it pins down more than it liberates. In effect it genuinely deprives the encounter with Shakespeare because it empties it of wider and more serious considerations. The plays still represent much larger issues with which Shakespeare's own intentions could hardly engage.

Let me refer once again to the British Council production of 'Love's Labour's Lost', set in Afghanistan and translated into the Dari language. This played to packed audiences in war-time Kabul in 2005. The plot was recast to feature Afghan characters. The local provisions of Muslim patterns of behavior scarcely applied. The feminine actors didn't use veils or the burqua and they flirted roundly with their colleagues. Some of the intentions of this production aren't hard to discern. It says 'mimic our civilization'. I think of a wonderful painting by the 19th century Thomas Jones Barker, who depicted Queen Victoria in full fig in the Audience Chamber at Windsor Castle, presenting a Bible to an admiring, goggle-eyed black dignitary, with the title 'The Secret of England's Greatness'.

Let's be clear. The agency which generated the secret of English-speaking Greatness nowadays includes Shakespeare. Its larger message, even in the case of 'Love's Labour's Lost', is clear. Sadly, it's part of Shakespeare, and it doesn't help to ignore it.

Terence Hawkes

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0349.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0344 Wednesday, 11 June 2008

From: Cary DiPietro <cary.dipietro@utoronto.ca>  
Date: Wednesday, 11 Jun 2008 19:33:09 -0400  
Subject: SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

This week's leading essay comes from Cary Mazer who revisits the question of authorial intention in theatrical production, turning from Alan Dessen's discussion of original staging in the Elizabethan/Jacobean theatre to address subsequent performances. Mazer brings his particular interest in twentieth-century and contemporary theatre, as well as his wide experience as a dramaturg and theatre historian, to bear upon his discussion of the relationship between intention, theatre practice and the writing of performance history. I'm particularly pleased by the result; Mazer's earlier work on the Edwardian theatre and such figures as Herbert Beerbohm Tree, William Poel and Harley Granville-Barker (see *Shakespeare Refashioned*, 1981) was among those that sparked my first interest in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century theatre. The use of Tree, in particular, is both warmly familiar and compelling; as Mazer notes, Tree is a figure whose writing on the theatre seems especially antiquated, even though his claims to authorial intention are not dissimilar to those of more contemporary theatre figures. Mazer's argument that such claims by theatre practitioners should be regarded as "gifts from the gods of theatre history" is a wonderfully productive utilization of the "practical intentionalism" we find commonly expressed on SHAKSPER by theatre practitioners and Shakespeare enthusiasts. We might agree with David Schalkwyk, writing in the last digest, that by "appealing to the agent of the text as its ultimate authority, you are really trying to impose the reading that you have gleaned by paying attention to a selection of privileged EXTERNAL factors as that of a now-privileged author(izer) of the text." How easily this view might be applied to figures such as Tree, marketing his large-scale productions of Shakespeare to an increasingly diverse, cosmopolitan audience at the turn of the twentieth century. Mazer retains this argument, invoking Terence Hawkes as well, but takes it one step further to show how such claims to intention are evidence of shifting aesthetic paradigms, and rather than adopt a condescending attitude towards them, we can productively harness them as historians of performance.

The remainder of the digest for this installment of the Roundtable is comparatively shorter than the last, with only four further contributions. Both Duncan Salkeld and Terence Hawkes continue to develop points raised in and by

their earlier leading essays. In his contribution, Larry Weiss suggests the need for a qualitative distinction between critical and textual intention: he notes the difference between what an author intended by his words and what words an author intended to write. I'm disappointed to see that no one has responded to this point, either to refute or endorse it, especially given the fact that so much of our discussion of intention has revolved around textual matters. Perhaps the reproduction of his contribution here will provide impetus to potential respondents.

Finally, Gabriel Egan has contributed a general response to the discussion. I have to admit that I'm somewhat baffled by his comments, especially in the second half of his contribution, and I was hoping that by posting his contribution to the Roundtable someone else would be able to shed some light on it. It strikes me as very pointed criticism of the discussion generally, and my involuntary inclination is to read it as a criticism of, in the first instance, my own synoptic writing in these prefaces or, with a little hypothesizing, the writing of another contributor. In private correspondence, Egan has assured me that his response is not directed at anyone in particular, and that it is not particularly critical of any position, but is, rather, a general observation about the application of arguments about intention to one's own writing. My willingness to accept Egan's claim about the intention of his writing, which is otherwise out of joint with the intention I read into it, is further impeded by his use of irony (surely he's not serious about introducing random corruptions), and the tone of sarcasm I inevitably hear in my head as I produce the voice "speaking" his words. Is my own reading here "mangling" (to use Egan's word) or distorting his contribution, or is this an example of a "misfire," a term used by Schalkwyk in the last installment?

It is, clearly enough, a test case in the problem of intention, and not in any facile way. The first assumption of Egan's writing is that there is a correct or un-"mangled" authorial arrangement or formulation of "words" that can be known and ought to be the goal of critical understanding and reflection, precisely because these "words" are the bearers of philosophically and theoretically sophisticated arguments. An observation for Weiss: Egan suggests a random \*textual\* corruption, but he's clearly collapsing the distinction between the arrangement or appearance of words in a text and the \*critical\* meanings they bear (unless, of course, he's drawing an \*analogy\* between textual corruption and critical misunderstanding or misprision, which still collapses the difference, in any case). The second assumption is that Egan understands what those meanings are, and that he has some privileged or unmediated access to those meanings, presumably, as intended by their authors, or else he wouldn't be able to make this critical observation. Though it might be easy to mistake Egan's criticism for arrogance, and that it may be, his writing is nevertheless governed by the conventions of a professional discourse. As professional

scholars -- "critical ganders" to the "authorial goose" as Egan calls us (something should be said here about the troublingly gendered nature of this metaphor) -- and as teachers, our task is to pronounce critically on the work of our peers and our students. "Professing" to know in this way is, obviously enough, a function of authority rather than merely one of an unmediated and objective understanding; and though the implicit power relations of this discursive system of "knowledge" serve inevitably to aggrandize the authority of the individual critic, they are also means to practical scholarly and pedagogic ends. Can we not argue, then, that producing knowledge in this way by claiming with certainty the meaning of an arrangement of "words" has some necessary and obvious practical benefits at an institutional or professional level? And is this not comparable--if not \*identical\*--to claiming to know the intentions of the author? Are these the "odd occasions" of which Salkeld writes below, those instances when, he suggests, "we might privilege . . . intention as 'a determining and authoritative cause'?"

This brings me to the issue of the next installment's topic. We've seen theoretical questions about intention given wide scope in the Roundtable so far, and we've also seen these questions brought to bear upon critical practices such as textual editing and theatre history. We have yet to apply those questions to literary criticism as a profession, beyond invoking Wimsatt and Beardsley's "intentional fallacy," or to the teaching of literature to secondary or post-secondary students. By "literary criticism" I mean the study or criticism of English literature as a unique form of creative expression characterized by distinctive metrical, rhyme and rhetorical patterns, a study distinct from historical contextualization or philosophical, theoretical abstraction. The kind of critical "close-reading" pioneered by the new criticism when English as a discipline was professionalized remains the staple diet of the high school curriculum and competes on undergraduate syllabi with the more fashionable historicist and theoretical approaches to literature; this is the reason for my pairing of literary criticism and pedagogy as coterminous professional practices. Unfortunately, no one has answered my call for a leading contribution on the topic, but it's an important one, and I'm not content to see it pass by unaddressed. So I'm going to try a different approach: rather than soliciting a leading contribution, I invite participants to write shorter, even anecdotal, contributions that address the issue, in one way or another, of Shakespeare's intentions and the professing of English. I'll give it about a week. Hopefully, enough responses will come in and I'll be able to group them into some kind of dialogue. If not, then we'll move on to the final leading essay by Hugh Grady. Let me put it to you as a challenge: can you define or describe a methodological approach to literary criticism (and some definition of or elaboration upon that term seems necessary) that has practical pedagogical applications and does not have some recourse, on some level, to authorial intention? Or, alternatively, can you describe or explain why claims to know or

assumptions about an author's intentions, even discrete ones, are professionally desirable, necessary or inevitable?

---

"Two Cheers for the Intentional Fallacy: Intention, Theatre Practice, and Performance History"

Several contributors to Cary DiPietro's forum have addressed the issue of Shakespeare's intentions in relation to literary theory, textual editing, and original theatrical practice. I wish to sidestep these issues here (though I have my opinions on some of them, which I voice in the essay from which Alan Dessen has so graciously quoted in his contribution to this forum). I am instead interested in how and why working theatre artists invoke authorial intention. And I am even more interested in the uses to which these invocations of authorial intention can be put by historians of Shakespearean "subsequent performance" -i.e. performances after 1660 based on Shakespeare scripts. I start with two exemplary cases.

In his essay "The Living Shakespeare: A Defense of Modern Taste," the Edwardian actor-manager Herbert Beerbohm Tree invokes authorial intentionality in defense of the elaborate scenic pictorialism he employed in staging Shakespeare's plays. William Poel and other advocates of the Elizabethan Revival movement had invoked intentionality as the cornerstone of their principal argument: that the plays should be staged on replicas of Shakespeare's own theatres, using the stage conventions and scenographic language of the time. Tree uses Poel's own argument about intentionality to reach a very different conclusion. "[T]he entire business of the stage," Tree (or his ghost writer) states axiomatically, "is -- Illusion." And that impulse towards theatrical illusion -- the more complete the better -- can be found in Shakespeare's documented intentions:

[. . .] the best means of justifying the modern method of putting Shakespeare upon the stage, and the public's liking of that method, is to demonstrate that in principle at least it departs in no way from the manner in which the dramatist himself indicated that his works should be presented. Let us call Shakespeare himself as a witness on this issue, and show that he not only foresaw, but desired, the system of production that is now in public favour. Surely no complaint can be raised against those who seek, in putting an author's work upon the stage, to carry out the author's wishes in the matter; and it is better to follow those directions than to listen to the critics of three hundred years later, who clamour for a system exactly opposite to the one which the author distinctly advocated. In spite of what has been said to the contrary, I adhere to my reading of the prelude to *Henry V*, and contend that in those most beautiful lines Shakespeare regretted the deficiencies of the stage of his day,

for it is reasonable to suppose that in writing those lines he not mean the opposite of what he said, as we are ingeniously told he did. Here is will be seen what store Shakespeare sets on illusion for the theatre, and how he implores the spectator to supply by means of his imagination the deficiencies of the stage.

Tree then summons more evidence of Shakespeare's intentions in favor of pictorially representational theatre: the elaborate stage directions in *Henry VIII* (and the fact that a stage effect led to the fire that destroyed the theatre); the semiotic function (though of course he doesn't call it that) of costumes and props; and the foolishness of the presentationalism of the working-class actors performing *Pyramus and Thisbe*, which he credits to their failure to be sufficiently illusionistic, rather than their misplaced desire to be so. Tree ends his essay with a fantasy vision: he imagines lingering on the stage of His Majesty's Theatre after a performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the magic of the fairies still permeating the boards, and overhearing an argument between the shades of Samuel Johnson and David Garrick about whether acting and decor improve one's aesthetic pleasure of the plays. The ghost of Shakespeare then appears, and settles the argument by asking Garrick to recite the prologue the *Henry V*.

It is easy to dismiss the logic of Tree's argument, just as it easy to dismiss the aesthetic of over-produced "upholstered" Shakespeare he was championing, with its "accurate" scenic details, crowd scenes, lengthy scene-changes, and extended curtain tableaux. After all, despite his gloating in the "after-thought" he appends to the 1913 reprint of the essay in *Thoughts and After-Thoughts* (in which he claims that the Elizabethanism of Poel and the scenic "Modernism" of Granville Barker have already proven themselves to be little more than passing fads), Tree proved to be on the wrong side of history. And it also abundantly clear what Tree's motivation is for invoking Shakespearean intentionality: he is exploiting the cultural capital of Shakespeare-a claim to what W.B. Worthen has called "authority"-as a weapon in a cultural war about theatre aesthetics that Tree was waging with his contemporaries, being fought on the battlefield of Shakespeare production as much as it was being fought over issues of dramatic repertoire (society comedy and historical romance on the one hand and the Ibsenite "New Drama" on the other). One can, like Ric Knowles, "read" the "material theatre" in Tree's essay, for Tree is not only arguing for a particular aesthetic of performance, but is struggling to reassert the dominance of an entire managerial system in order to protect his market share of theatrical real estate and theatre audiences.

Tree's institutional and commercial motivations for invoking intentionality were, and are, obvious. But here is another case, from much late in the century. Peter Brook does not, on the surface, defend his approach to staging a

particular Shakespeare play by arguing for Shakespearean intentionality. "When I hear a director speaking glibly of serving the author, of letting a place speak for itself," Brook writes, "my suspicions are aroused, because this is the hardest job of all. If you just let a play speak, it may not make a sound. If what you want is for the play to be heard, then you must conjure sound from it." But though Brook is skeptical about merely "serving the author," the sounds he is conjuring are, ostensibly, the author's and not his. He has frequently stated that the goal of actors and directors is to "find" the "hidden" or "secret" play, as though that secret play was there, hidden by the author, waiting to be excavated, rather than something in the play shaped by the sensibilities and perceptions of the prospector doing the excavating. Brook acknowledges that he shaped his productions of *King Lear* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* around Jan Kott's readings of those plays. But even here, he seems to be suggesting that Kott had simply found the universal essence of *King Lear* in identifying the Beckettian sensibility of the play, which has made the play so relevant to a mid-century cold-war world. He doesn't seem to recognize (or at least he doesn't acknowledge) that Kott may have identified this sensibility because he is *reading* the play through the Beckettian eyes of a mid-century eastern European; that the things that make the play compelling to mid-century audiences is not that the world has become a place where its inhabitants can finally recognize the play that Shakespeare wrote, but that we perceive the play the way we do because of we are, inescapably, inhabitants of our world. Brook's ethos as director, and his much-vaunted working methods, depend upon sustaining the belief that directors are not inventors but excavators of authorial intention; and his guru-like status in the company -- much derided, but ultimately lauded, by journalist David Selbourne in his skeptical and oppositional account of the rehearsals for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* -- derives from his tacit definition of the role of the director as the person who can lead his or her collaborators to discover the secret play, hidden by the playwright, waiting to be discovered and theatrically energized.

Worthen has taught us read overt or covert assertions of Shakespearean intentionality as assertions of authority. I see the assertions of authorial intentionality among theatre practitioners as something much more pervasive, not so much an assertion of Shakespearean, and therefore cultural, authority but rather simply a habit of mind. I have recently argued (in the essay that Alan Dessen cites) that theatre artists at work in rehearsal gradually, over the course of rehearsals, grant themselves less and less credit for ingenuity; that what may start as an interpretation slowly takes on a sense of inevitability, as more and more decisions are made, based not on conscious interpretive intervention, but as a result of the cumulative weight of the decisions already made; that the moment by moment "choices" offered by the script don't result in a decision tree with a geometrically increasing number of branches, but fewer and fewer conscious choices, a progressive surrender to the rehearsal process's

own inescapable momentum. It is this sense of inevitability that becomes increasingly identified, over the course of rehearsals, as authorial intention, a sense that the real -- the hidden -- play is being discovered, rather than that the production is only one possible iteration that can be crafted from the playscript. Authorial intention, the attempt to hitch the performance to the authority of Shakespeare, is less a claim being made to audiences and critics than it is a form of self-comforting, a security blanket, a transitional object, as it were, that theatre people use to reassure themselves that their weeks of hard work have yielded something theatrically viable and legitimate, and not a theatrical disaster.

I saw this tendency at work in a conversation I had in 1988 with actor Tony Church, over a light dinner in the pasta bar of Royal Festival Hall between a matinee of *The Winter's Tale* and an evening performance of *The Tempest* at the National Theatre, in which Church was playing Antigonus and Gonzalo. Church loves performance history; he loves talking about different ways of playing certain lines, moments, characterizations, and relationships, in productions he has seen, watched from the wings, or performed in, including different productions in which he has played the same role (as he has as Polonius and Antigonus). And in our conversation he made frequent comparisons between this production of *The Winter's Tale* and others he had been in, seen, or read about. And yet: I commented on a wonderful moment that Tim Pigott-Smith had invented in 2.1, not long after the spider-in-the-cup speech: on "O, I am out!" he glanced at the cup he was holding, was flooded with horror, and dashed the cup to the floor, as though he, in that moment, had actually drunk and seen the spider. "Yes," Church enthused, "that was wonderful. He found it! That had to be what Shakespeare intended!"

It is as easy to ridicule Beerbohm Tree's self-serving misreading of the Chorus to *Henry V* as it is to ridicule his "veritable Hebrews" populating the ghetto scenes in *The Merchant of Venice* or the live rabbits hopping about the woods near Athens in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It is no less easy to ridicule the similar claims to authorial intentionality in Peter Brook, or Tony Church's claim that Pigott-Smith was so in tune with the character charted in the script that he discovered an unscripted piece of stage business that Shakespeare had intended all along. It is equally tempting merely to identify the fallacy of such claims to intentionality, and their attendant claims to "authority," and consequently to dismiss them.

I am suggesting that we eschew condescension and instead celebrate such claims to authorial intentionality as gifts from the gods of theatre history. Several contributors to this forum have cited or quoted Terence Hawkes's formulation: that it is not a matter of what Shakespeare means, but what we mean by Shakespeare. The persistence of the intentional fallacy among theatre

practitioners gives the historian of subsequent performance an opportunity to take this one significant step farther: the goal of the performance historian, I'd like to suggest, is to ask not \*what\* a particular theatre artist, in a particular time and place, \*means\* by Shakespeare, but \*how\* that artist means by Shakespeare, i.e., what the artist understands about how Shakespeare's scripts generate meaning and effect in performance. It is relatively easy to understand, say, why Jan Kott found the meanings he did in *King Lear*, and why Peter Brook could feel that, in following Kott's reading, he had in fact discovered the play that Shakespeare had hidden within his script. It is much more challenging, and more historically valuable, to be able to discern what aesthetic paradigms -- what understandings of character, subjectivity, biography, behavior, motivation, and passion; what understandings about dramatic structure and action; what conventions of theatrical space and fictional place; what definitions of community and society, and understandings about socially and political meaning and how these can be generated; and what understandings about the relation of script to performance -- are at work in the mind and artistic sensibility of a theatre artist, working in a particular time and place.

One would think that artists who proudly announce that their interpretations are departing from the received meanings of the script, and that the theatrical means they are employing are consciously different from the theatrical conventions employed by Shakespeare encoded within the scripts, would make ideal subjects for historic analysis, for their theatrical assumptions are hurled like a gauntlet, for all to see. But I maintain that self-abnegating artists, whose only claim is that they are seeking to discover the playwright's intentions, have much more to reveal to us about the tacit assumptions of the theatre of their day, about both what they meant by Shakespeare, and \*how\* they felt Shakespeare \*means\*. For it is this very confidence that betrays them most, that reveals to us their assumptions about theatre that are decidedly not Shakespearean at all. This is relatively easy to see when an artist is working outside of our paradigm: Tree's claim that Shakespeare would have wanted his plays produced as they were at His Majesty's theatre (and that his ghost would haunt the boards of the theatre to reassure the actor manager about this) is, from our vantage a century later, preposterous. It is much more difficult to understand and to dissect the aesthetic paradigms that are at work of theatre practitioners whose sensibilities are closer to our own. Notwithstanding, that must be our goal, as performance historians.

I close with an example of this, from present day Shakespearean "Original Practices," the more contemporary manifestation of the movement begun by Poel, and one that similarly bases its case on intentionality. In his book on the various branches of the Original Practices movement, Don Weingust describes one of the experimental seasons that Patrick Tucker conducted with his Original Shakespeare Company at the reconstructed (a.k.a. "Shakespeare's") Globe.

Weingust describes how actors in that company, seeking to replicate Shakespearean performance (and therefore intentionality) by reproducing Shakespearean rehearsal processes (or the lack of them), learn their roles from sides without ever having read the whole play, and perform with minimal rehearsal. In a footnote, Weingust reports on his interview with the actor who played Salisbury in *King John* who, at the first performance, was surprised to discover that the King addresses him with the familiar "you" and not the formal "thou." The actor took this as a sign of disrespect, and found that it fueled his anger at the King. It is important to note that the actor—who could have stated his case in early modern characterological terms, i.e. from within a definition of character based on a "self-fashioned" subjectivity based on social rank—instead took it "personally," letting his reaction flow organically from a subject position based on a stable, coherent identity and interiority. The success of the moment in performance, while triggered by early modern performance- and rehearsal-practices, was, for the actor, completely, un-self-consciously, contemporary. The actor relied on an organic, in-the-moment, reaction, more akin to twentieth- and twentieth-century Stanislavskian practices, and William Gillette's proto-Stanislavskian concept of "the illusion of the first time," than to the early modern acting practices that Tucker's company believed that they were rediscovering. In his excitement about having discovered Shakespeare's intentions, the actor revealed something much more interesting about himself, and about the theatre of his time.

What it finally comes down to, then, is less a matter of what we mean by Shakespeare, but what theatrical practitioners mean when they claim that they identified something as "Shakespeare's intentions." Rather than pointing out the fallacy of their claims and mocking them for it, let us instead politely thank them for showing us their cards, even as they blithely continue to play the game.

[1]-----

From: Gabriel Egan <mail@GabrielEgan.com>  
Date: Tuesday, 3 Jun 2008 19:53:42 +0100  
Subject: 19.0328 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0328 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

It would be helpful to the debate on intentions if Hardy were to introduce a random corruption into the postings, say every 500th alphanumeric character being picked by random selection. (A script to do this automatically wouldn't be hard to write.) This would allow readers of the postings to see how authors of philosophically and theoretically complex arguments react when their own words are mangled.

Since what is sauce for the authorial goose ought to remain sauce for the

critical gander, this procedure ought to help separate the intellectually coherent arguments (those requiring no special pleading about one's own intentions as distinct from literary author's intentions) from the arguments that cannot be self-reflexively applied and hence ought not to command our attention.

Gabriel Egan

[2]-----

From: Duncan Salkeld <D.Salkeld@chi.ac.uk>  
Date: Tuesday, 03 Jun 2008 20:10:29 +0000 (GMT)  
Subject: 19.0328 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0328 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

I do genuinely take Alan Horn's point about inadvertent meaning, and it is one raised at length by Hershel Parker in his response to Knapp and Michaels (see Mitchell, 1985, 72-9). Knapp and Michaels might well reply (though I will not speak for them) that one could not begin to interpret the 'Indian/Iudean' crux as constituting 'alternatives' without, as they put it, 'interpreting it as what we believe its author meant' (p. 102). In any case, they would hold, I think, that unintended acts are not non-intended acts. Alan Horn seems to agree and so re-phrases his point: 'here is an example of a meaning coming into being without any intentions relevant to its production behind it'. He means, I think, that either 'Indian' or 'Iudean' was not what the author intended, nor what the compositor intended though we know what both mean. But for Knapp and Michaels, intentionality is always 'relevant' (they might say 'simply necessary') even in cases of inadvertent meaning. For them, the fact that someone wrote or set 'Iudean' when they intended to write or set 'Indian' does not nullify their intention. I recommend the replies to Knapp and Michaels, and their replies, collected in Mitchell's small book to interested parties. I grant that Searle (1995) certainly intends his criticism of Knapp and Michaels as a demonstrable refutation of their position.

Steve Urkowitz makes an intriguing suggestion -- that someone (i.e. Shakespeare) intentionally re-worked 'windy' moments into the later (Folio) versions of his early histories. Discussing an example from 3H6 (2.1.79-88, Randall ed.), he comments 'The later-printed version does not have the lines about the rose'. Looking the example up, I noticed that the later version does have lines closely approximating those allegedly lost in the later version. In 1.2.32-4, Richard declares, 'I cannot rest / Vntill the White Rose that I weare, be dy'de / Euen in the luke-warme blood of Henries heart'. These lines have apparently been transposed in the early imprint from one point in 1.2 to a later point in the same scene, and such transpositions are, in my view, most plausibly a sign of lapsed memory. This doesn't alter the very interesting nature of the Folio

pattern to which he draws attention.

A last observation: David Schalkwyk finishes by suggesting that intention is no problem so long as it's not 'privileged' as 'the determining and authoritative cause of what's going on in his texts'. This leaves open the possibility that, on the odd occasion, we might privilege (after all, something has to be 'privileged' at any one time) intention as 'a determining and authoritative cause'.

Duncan Salkeld

[3]-----

From: Larry Weiss <larry@lweiss.net>

Date: Wednesday, 04 Jun 2008 00:41:36 -0400

Subject: 19.0328 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Comment: Re: SHK 19.0328 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Our distinguished moderator's lead note this week requests knowledgeable SHAKSPEReans to address the intention question from the point of view of (1) modern psychology, which is much concerned with issues of whether and to what extent people may be said to "intend" their conduct and how we can tell if they do, and (2) pedagogy when faced with the difficulty of teaching literature without reference to the author's intentions (and perhaps even without regarding the language as having intrinsic meaning). I second that request as I have long shared the impression that both the disciplines of clinical psychology and practical pedagogy can offer useful insights that could helpfully inform the theoretical discussion. Since "intent" is a recurrent issue in legal disputes, especially criminal prosecutions and questions of contract and statutory interpretation (which bear some analogs to literary criticism), the lawyers among us might also have something to contribute. But it is not the purpose of this present note to suggest such an expansion of the inquiry.

Rather, I suggest that a refinement, narrowing or bifurcation of the question may be in order. Some of the Roundtable posts to date have focused on "intention" as it affects critical issues and others as it relates to textual matters. It seems to me that these are very different inquiries, and observations pertinent to one of them may have little or no relevance to the other. In critical matters, we may ask what the author "intended" by his words; that is, what he expected the audience or readers to understand from them, or, on an even grander scale, how he wanted them to feel or react in response to them. The patent difficulty of providing sure answers to such questions in all but the most obvious cases (that is, in all cases in which the question is interesting) is daunting; and it is not unreasonable to suggest that it is not a legitimate or useful exercise to make the attempt.

In textual matters, however, the question is not what the author intended by his words, but what words he intended. An editor cannot evade this question and still call herself an editor rather than, say, a reviser or adapter. (A helpful and readable discussion of some of an editor's problems can be found in Stanley Wells's little book "Re-editing Shakespeare for the Modern Reader" [Clarendon 1984].) For example, an editor must choose either "Indian" or "Judean"; she cannot evade that issue by leaving a blank space or substituting some other trisyllabic word that encompasses both concepts (say "alien").

The editor must make a textual choice every time she is faced with variant versions and cruces, and sometimes just when the text contains odd terminology that doesn't sound right. To the extent that the editor relies on bibliographical evidence, such as apparent eyeskips, font confusion, slug shortages, tendencies of the compositors, etc., the inquiry does not involve authorial intention. But editors frequently resort to other guides which do involve conclusions or assumptions about the author's intent. The maxim "difficillior lectio," for example, presumes that an author prefers to use the less immediately comprehensible choice of language, hardly an intuitive conclusion. Other guides also make assumptions about the author's likely intention as to the choice of words. Resort may be had to metrical considerations -- for example, "Judean" fits the iambic meter while "Indian" does not -- but this assumes that Shakespeare wanted to be metrically pure at this point in the play although he did not at other points. Resort to frequency of word usage, stylistic habits, consistency of the language with other speeches by the same character, context and even conclusions as to which language better sorts with what the author was trying to get across, increasingly import authorial intention into the textual issue. These types of guides may be referred to as "critical contamination" of the textual inquiry, which converts it from a pure bibliographical exercise to a hybrid of textual study and critical analysis.

Critical contamination is inevitable whenever an editor makes a choice, even if the choice is to retain an apparently incorrect copytext reading, except when the choice is based on purely bibliographical considerations. And, as I have already noted, an editor does not have the freedom to evade making a choice as a critical analyst does. Unless the editor abdicates her role entirely and reproduces a diplomatic copy of the copytext, the author's intention as to what words he used (if not as to what the words mean) are consulted, however indirectly. To take the example from the Taming of the Shrew which I cited in an earlier post to this Roundtable: F1 has Grumio say: "Help, mistris, help, my master is mad." Theobald emended "mistris" to "masters" evidently because it made no sense to him as there are no female characters on the main stage. I propose to restore the copytext because I believe the speech makes sense as a plea to the page in the induction who has been dressed as a lady to deceive Sly.

However, it is not necessary to reach that conclusion to opt for retention of the copytext. It is possible, although to my mind less likely, that Grumio is addressing one of the male characters in the main action, just as Petruchio later persuades Kate to address old Vincentio as "young budding virgin." Or maybe Grumio was calling for the aid of a protector saint; or maybe there is some other answer. Bate and Rasmussen retained F1 in the RSC edition probably because they almost always followed F1; and they do not comment on the crux. Paul Werstine and Barbara Mowat also did not adopt Theobald's emendation for the Folger paperback, and I am under the impression that they did not really consider the question (it is not noted in the facing page commentary) and one of those editors could not recall the matter when I asked about it. In other words, while any solution other than slavish following of the copytext, involves some explicit or implicit conclusion about what language the author intended to write, it is not necessary to draw a conclusion as to what the author expected the audience to understand by that language.

[4]-----  
From: Terence Hawkes <terence.hawkes@btinternet.com>  
Date: Wednesday, 4 Jun 2008 12:39:27 +0100  
Subject: SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

The trouble with certain arguments concerning Shakespeare Intentions is that they sometimes take place in a vacuum: an air-less, friction-free environment in which a scholar confronts a play's words in a void, all empty of space and time. But, of course, this never happens. All encounters with Shakespeare's words occur between human beings in history. They occupy a particular place and they happen at a specific time. It cannot be otherwise. Duncan Salkeld's notion that 'Shakespeare's intentions can sometimes be known, if hazily' may seem offer some consolation, but as David Schalkwyk argues, it pins down more than it liberates. In effect it genuinely deprives the encounter with Shakespeare because it empties it of wider and more serious considerations. The plays still represent much larger issues with which Shakespeare's own intentions could hardly engage.

Let me refer once again to the British Council production of 'Love's Labour's Lost', set in Afghanistan and translated into the Dari language. This played to packed audiences in war-time Kabul in 2005. The plot was recast to feature Afghan characters. The local provisions of Muslim patterns of behavior scarcely applied. The feminine actors didn't use veils or the burqua and they flirted roundly with their colleagues. Some of the intentions of this production aren't hard to discern. It says 'mimic our civilization'. I think of a wonderful painting by the 19th century Thomas Jones Barker, who depicted Queen Victoria in full fig in the Audience Chamber at Windsor Castle, presenting a Bible to an admiring, goggle-eyed black dignitary, with the title 'The Secret of England's

Greatness'.

Let's be clear. The agency which generated the secret of English-speaking Greatness nowadays includes Shakespeare. Its larger message, even in the case of 'Love's Labour's Lost', is clear. Sadly, it's part of Shakespeare, and it doesn't help to ignore it.

Terence Hawkes

#### Works Cited

Brook, Peter. *The Empty Space*. New York: Touchstone, 1996. (Originally published 1968.)

Knowles, Ric. *Reading the Material Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Mazer, Cary. "The Intentional-Fallacy Fallacy," in *Staging Shakespeare: Essays in Honor of Alan C. Dessen*, ed. Lena Cowan Orlin and Miranda Johnson-Haddad (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), pp. 99-113.

Mazer, Cary. *Shakespeare Refashioned: Elizabethan Plays on Edwardian Stages*. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1981.

Tree, Herbert Beerbohm. *Thoughts and After-Thoughts*. London: Cassell, 1913.

Weingust, Don. *Acting from Shakespeare's First Folio: Theory, Text and Performance*. London: Routledge, 2006

Worthen, W.B., *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0356.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0352 Thursday, 12 June 2008

[1] From: Gabriel Egan <mail@GabrielEgan.com>  
Date: Thursday, 12 Jun 2008 13:08:19 +0100  
Subt: Re: SHK 19.0344 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[2] From: Larry Weiss <larry@lweiss.net>  
Date: Thursday, 12 Jun 2008 14:34:59 -0400

Subt: Re: SHK 19.0344 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[3] From: Larry Weiss <larry@lweiss.net>  
Date: Thursday, 12 Jun 2008 16:03:38 -0400  
Subt: Re: SHK 19.0344 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[4] From: Larry Weiss <larry@lweiss.net>  
Date: Thursday, 12 Jun 2008 18:45:12 -0400  
Subt: Re: SHK 19.0344 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[1]-----  
From: Gabriel Egan <mail@GabrielEgan.com>  
Date: Thursday, 12 Jun 2008 13:08:19 +0100  
Subject: 19.0344 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0344 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Cary DiPietro writes:

>The first assumption of Egan's writing is that there is a correct or  
>un-"mangled" authorial arrangement or formulation of "words"  
>that can be known . . .

Indeed, it is, but they are words not "words": there's nothing particularly  
tricky about the concept of a word and no need to mark off this concept as  
though it were something we must handle cautiously, like intellectual gelignite.

Let's at least agree that the devil is in the meanings, not the words. (I  
wonder if anybody else is, at this point, remembering Michael Palin's cod  
literary theorist asking himself "What do I mean by the word 'mean', what do I  
mean by the word 'word'?" )

An example of the assumption that DiPietro objects to: I insist that there's a  
correct and unmangled authorial arrangement or formulation of words that gives a  
title to this debate, and it's "Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions." An  
incorrect and mangled arrangement of the words would be "Roundhead:  
Shakespeares' Intentions".

(I mangled the accidentals there too, deliberately. Some people think you can  
tell who typed or typeset something by whether or not there's a space before  
each colon. D. F. McKenzie's essay "Stretching a point: Or, the case of the  
spaced-out comps" (Studies in Bibliography 37 (1984): 106-21) would make one  
sceptical about this claim. But 10 minutes searching the British Library  
catalogue records for the use of spaces around colons confirms that in some

datasets these habits are indeed regular and that one really can distinguish typing done by professional cataloguers from typing done by non-cataloguers.)

Those who don't accept the above assertion about the relatively unproblematic nature of the concept of words, those for whom the devil is even in the "words" (needing DiPietro's 'scare' quotes), will find themselves unable to hold a meaningful conversation with those who accept the above and think that the problems of meaning and intention lie elsewhere.

DiPietro says that I'm

- >clearly collapsing the distinction between the arrangement
- >or appearance of words in a text and the \*critical\* meanings
- >they bear . . .

Quite the contrary, I'm insisting on that distinction: words aren't the problem, meanings are.

- >As professional scholars -- "critical ganders" to the
- >"authorial goose" as Egan calls us (something should
- >be said here about the troublingly gendered nature
- >of this metaphor) -- and as teachers, our task is to
- >pronounce critically on the work of our peers and
- >our students.

The metaphor is gendered\*, but what's the trouble? The mere fact that it's gendered, or the particular assignment of genders (author = female, critic = male)? How about if we reverse the assignment, as in the familiar metaphor of criticism as 'handmaiden' to the text? If that second one is not troubling and the first is, DiPietro needs to explain why. If both are troubling because they are gendered metaphors-if gendered metaphors are the problem -- then we are left with almost no language in which to hold the discussion. Language is almost all metaphorical and our metaphors appear to inhabit our thoughts and to arise from our gendered bodies. On this point, Derrideans and cognitive scientists find one of their most potentially productive points of contact. Trouble is, they seldom talk. All this nonsense about "words" puts sensible scientists off.

Gabriel Egan

\* Derridean SHAKSPERians will have noticed that the metaphorical expression "what's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander" invokes a metaphor of gender difference precisely in order to erase that difference. That's why I selected it for the point about authors and critics: a coherent theory of intentions must address the fact that we maintain this distinction right up

until the moment we start typing. Once we write our theories we become authors, and readers have every right to apply our theories to our own writings. It's quite a good test of a textual theory to see if it can be applied self-reflexively to a written expression of itself. Hence my proposal for random corruption of postings: those for whom all editorial correction of error in Shakespeare's writings is positivist hubris will have a tough time complaining about what happens to their writing.

[2]-----

From: Larry Weiss <larry@lweiss.net>  
Date: Thursday, 12 Jun 2008 14:34:59 -0400  
Subject: 19.0344 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0344 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Our moderator has invited me to comment on Gabriel Egan's post:

>An observation for Weiss: Egan suggests a random \*textual\* corruption,  
>but he's clearly collapsing the distinction between the arrangement or  
>appearance of words in a text and the \*critical\* meanings they bear  
>(unless, of course, he's drawing an \*analogy\* between textual corruption  
>and critical misunderstanding or misprision, which still collapses the  
>difference, in any case).

Cary is surely correct that it is unscientific to offer to test the hypothesis that we cannot discern what (if anything) an author intended by the words he used with an experiment that alters the words he used.

If I understand Egan's position correctly, it is that the extreme anti-intentionalist argument is absurd, even paradoxical. The refutation of the extreme position lies not in an experiment corrupting an author's text but, rather, in the more-or-less self-evident proposition that if that text had no intended meaning we would be composing gibberish, and if its intended meaning could not reliably be discerned by the reader, exchanges of views such as this one would be impossible. If I have correctly interpreted Gabriel's argument, his confirmation of that will, I suppose, constitute a refutation of the extreme anti-intentionalist argument. This might be somewhat akin to kicking a rock to refute the metaphysical (and quantum physics) notion that matter lacks solidity.

Of course, Egan's use of sarcasm might obscure some of his meaning. Shame on all those who use sarcasm to make a point!

[3]-----

From: Larry Weiss <larry@lweiss.net>  
Date: Thursday, 12 Jun 2008 16:03:38 -0400  
Subject: 19.0344 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Comment: Re: SHK 19.0344 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

The moderator's request for posts about pedagogical techniques that illustrate either the importance or irrelevance of authorial intention, even posts with anecdotal evidence, puts me in mind of an incident that occurred in a college class I took so many years ago I would rather not date it (I think A.C. Bradley was a classmate).

The class was a senior year "crap course" on reading Shakespearean language, which was offered by the Speech and Drama Department. The professor regularly conducted exercises in which he asked every student in turn to read the same lines, noting the variety of possible interpretations that can be placed on the same speech by just altering stresses, beats, inflections and accompanying gestures. I suspect that this exercise is conducted hundreds of times a day in acting schools all over the world.

One incident especially comes to mind. The text was Portia's line in *M/V, IV.i* "Tarry Jew, the law hath yet another hold on you." Student after student read the line in basically the same way, mostly stressing "another"; and all were pronounced wrong by the professor. His position was that the stress had to be placed on "you"; and he had a purely legalistic reason for this: In his view, up until this line the law had not had any "hold" on Shylock, as it served only as a defense to his claim -- as lawyers might put it, the law was a shield not a sword -- and now was the first time a "hold" was to be imposed on Shylock. (This reading, of course, ignores the fact that Portia had shown that the law had no "hold" on Antonio either, so "another" is wrong; but that is a little beside the point.) Finally, in exasperation, one student put a beat after "another" and read the next three words as "-- Hold on you!" as if Shylock were continuing to leave the assembly and Portia used this colloquialism to stop him. Risible as this is, it seems to me that the reading would work in performance.

I suppose that this anecdote can provide fodder for both opposed schools. The traditionalists can argue that it is patent that Shakespeare intended no such thing, pointing to the modernity of the colloquialism and the enormous improbability that the words would have been used in that way in 1596. The anti-intentionalists could argue, "So, what; it's a play not a dictionary."

[4]-----

From: Larry Weiss <larry@lweiss.net>  
Date: Thursday, 12 Jun 2008 18:45:12 -0400  
Subject: 19.0344 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0344 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

I wonder if there is a moral to be drawn when a reader, director, or author

comes to a conclusion about the author's intentions from a completely incorrect, even opposite, understanding of the words:

>In a footnote, Weingust reports on his interview with the actor who  
>played Salisbury in \_King John\_ who, at the first performance, was  
>surprised to discover that the King addresses him with the familiar  
>"you" and not the formal "thou." The actor took this as a sign of  
>disrespect, and found that it fueled his anger at the King.

Of course, this actor got the pronouns reversed -- "thou" is familiar and "you" is polite. Perhaps this supports Cary Mazur's conclusion better than an accurate understanding by the actor and consequent loss of his character's pique:

>What it finally comes down to, then, is less a matter of what we mean  
>by Shakespeare, but what theatrical practitioners mean when they  
>claim that they identified something as "Shakespeare's intentions."  
>Rather than pointing out the fallacy of their claims and mocking them  
>for it, let us instead politely thank them for showing us their cards, even  
>as they blithely continue to play the game.

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0359.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0355 Sunday, 15 June 2008

[1] From: Duncan Salkeld <D.Salkeld@chi.ac.uk>  
Date: Friday, 13 Jun 2008 12:57:24 +0000 (GMT)  
Subt: Re: SHK 19.0352 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[2] From: Donald Bloom <dbloom@asms.net>  
Date: Friday, 13 Jun 2008 09:33:54 -0500  
Subt: RE: SHK 19.0352 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[1]-----  
From: Duncan Salkeld <D.Salkeld@chi.ac.uk>  
Date: Friday, 13 Jun 2008 12:57:24 +0000 (GMT)  
Subject: 19.0352 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0352 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

David Schalkwyk's thoughtful and well-informed contribution merits a more considered response than I have given so far or (I regret) am able to give here. I think there are plenty of areas of agreement between us, and both of us leave

room for manoeuvre in our approaches. I'm not so ready to follow him down Hilary Putnam's road of 'externalism' when we talk about intention but agree that intending is a social practice and not solely a personal, private mental affair. Each of us, I think, sought distance from naive positions on either side of the issue. I accept that Shakespeare's intentions will always be a matter of (belated) inference but suggest there are cases where the 'I-word' just has to be invoked whether we like it or not (by everyone). We might disagree about the wider purposes or implications of Shakespeare's malapropisms (eg. in speeches by Dogberry, Elbow or Mistress Quickly), but we would not even begin to disagree unless we shared an understanding of what literary malapropisms were, that is authorially determined structures. In such cases, the appeal to intention is not just heuristic: it is inescapable. My point is that in working out what Shakespeare's intentions might have been, or were, we make implicit causal assumptions about his choices, or uncertainties - that of all the options available to him he settled on one (or didn't). The 'determining' bit is assumed in the inferring. This is why I think it's helpful (sometimes) to identify intention as 'a determining and authoritative cause' and similarly to regard obscurity as ignorance of such a cause.

No criticism of Hardy implied at all, but when I received my contribution together with Terry's, both were indeed somewhat mangled. Our intentions seem to have come across pretty well despite it.

[2]-----

From: Donald Bloom <dbloom@asms.net>  
Date: Friday, 13 Jun 2008 09:33:54 -0500  
Subject: 19.0352 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: RE: SHK 19.0352 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

With regard to "words," "meanings," "intentions," and other cattle of this color:

In an explanatory note some weeks ago, our long-suffering editor used the title "Resent Digests." I immediately took the first word to be an imperative verb, and also immediately found myself puzzled. I could see no reason why I should resent any of the digests (unless, of course, they had exposed some folly of mine for all the world to see, or said something snide, or whatever). And it was very unlikely that Hardy would use an imperative form in a title.

I quickly re-read the title to "Recent Digests," silently emending what I took to be a typographical error, and assuming that he was offering a collective comment on posts of the past few days.

But I was wrong. What he was talking about were re-sent digests, ones that he had to send out over again because of one of those glitches that periodically

infect the digital world. For some reason the hyphen had dropped out.  
(Alternatively, Hardy may feel that the hyphen is unnecessary.)

In any case, the title was understandable once I clarified what the actual word was, a process that I accomplished by reading the rest of the passage and discarding the two incorrect readings. By acquiring the intended meaning of the whole note, I could figure out the intended meaning of the puzzling word.

I offer this as a parable. Do with it what you will.

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0368.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0364 Wednesday, 25 June 2008

From: Cary DiPietro <cary.dipietro@utoronto.ca>  
Date: Tuesday, 24 Jun 2008 14:58:44 -0400  
Subject: SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

This week's Roundtable comes without a leading essay. I apologize to SHAKSPERians for the long gap between the two digests, but I've been waiting to see whether the discussion would develop in the directions I proposed last time, and it has not. I interpret the lack of responses generally to be a sign that interest in the discussion is waning, and that now is the time to wind down towards a conclusion. I was disappointed in particular to see so few responses to Cary Mazer's wonderful essay, but this is perhaps evidence of the incontrovertible truth of his argument!

The digest below includes nine responses in total, three of which have not been published to SHAKSPER yet. The first of these is a short message from Hugh Grady. I made the mistake in the last digest of anticipating a leading contribution to be written by him without confirming in advance whether he was still able to do so, and regrettably, he was not. He gives us here a small taste of the essay he might have written, and perhaps will write in the future. The second is a longer response from David Schalkwyk to several respondents to his leading essay. The final contribution is my own, on the topic I proposed last time of intention and pedagogical application. It appears at the end partly because it's framed as a response to comments by David Schalkwyk, but largely due to the fact that it's hastily written, under-theorized, and doesn't bear close scrutiny. I thought the topic would elicit a wider response, and the fact that it didn't suggests to me that my questions were leading to my own response, so I provide it here, tentatively.

The next digest will be our last in this edition of the Roundtable. Instead of a leading essay, I'll provide a brief reflection upon the wide-ranging discussion we've seen so far, and I invite members of SHAKSPER to do the same. I also invite SHAKSPERians to reflect and comment upon the format of the Roundtable itself, what worked and what didn't, perhaps with a view to the third Roundtable whose topic and guest-moderator are, I hope, soon to be decided.

[1]-----

From: Gabriel Egan <mail@GabrielEgan.com>  
Date: Thursday, 12 Jun 2008 13:08:19 +0100  
Subject: 19.0344 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0344 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Cary DiPietro writes:

>The first assumption of Egan's writing is that there is a correct or  
>un-"mangled" authorial arrangement or formulation of "words"  
>that can be known . . .

Indeed, it is, but they are words not "words": there's nothing particularly tricky about the concept of a word and no need to mark off this concept as though it were something we must handle cautiously, like intellectual gelignite.

Let's at least agree that the devil is in the meanings, not the words. (I wonder if anybody else is, at this point, remembering Michael Palin's cod literary theorist asking himself "What do I mean by the word 'mean', what do I mean by the word 'word'?"")

An example of the assumption that DiPietro objects to: I insist that there's a correct and unmangled authorial arrangement or formulation of words that gives a title to this debate, and it's "Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions." An incorrect and mangled arrangement of the words would be "Roundhead : Shakespeares' Intentions".

(I mangled the accidentals there too, deliberately. Some people think you can tell who typed or typeset something by whether or not there's a space before each colon. D. F. McKenzie's essay "Stretching a point: Or, the case of the spaced-out comps" (Studies in Bibliography 37 (1984): 106-21) would make one sceptical about this claim. But 10 minutes searching the British Library catalogue records for the use of spaces around colons confirms that in some datasets these habits are indeed regular and that one really can distinguish typing done by professional cataloguers from typing done by non-cataloguers.)

Those who don't accept the above assertion about the relatively unproblematic nature of the concept of words, those for whom the devil is even in the "words" (needing DiPietro's 'scare' quotes), will find themselves unable to hold a meaningful conversation with those who accept the above and think that the problems of meaning and intention lie elsewhere.

DiPietro says that I'm

- >clearly collapsing the distinction between the arrangement
- >or appearance of words in a text and the \*critical\* meanings
- >they bear . . .

Quite the contrary, I'm insisting on that distinction: words aren't the problem, meanings are.

- >As professional scholars -- "critical ganders" to the
- >"authorial goose" as Egan calls us (something should
- >be said here about the troublingly gendered nature
- >of this metaphor) -- and as teachers, our task is to
- >pronounce critically on the work of our peers and
- >our students.

The metaphor is gendered\*, but what's the trouble? The mere fact that it's gendered, or the particular assignment of genders (author = female, critic = male)? How about if we reverse the assignment, as in the familiar metaphor of criticism as 'handmaiden' to the text? If that second one is not troubling and the first is, DiPietro needs to explain why. If both are troubling because they are gendered metaphors-if gendered metaphors are the problem -- then we are left with almost no language in which to hold the discussion. Language is almost all metaphorical and our metaphors appear to inhabit our thoughts and to arise from our gendered bodies. On this point, Derrideans and cognitive scientists find one of their most potentially productive points of contact. Trouble is, they seldom talk. All this nonsense about "words" puts sensible scientists off.

Gabriel Egan

\*Derridean SHAKSPERians will have noticed that the metaphorical expression "what's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander" invokes a metaphor of gender difference precisely in order to erase that difference. That's why I selected it for the point about authors and critics: a coherent theory of intentions must address the fact that we maintain this distinction right up until the moment we start typing. Once we write our theories we become authors, and readers have every right to apply our theories to our own writings. It's quite a good test of a textual theory to see if it can be applied

self-reflexively to a written expression of itself. Hence my proposal for random corruption of postings: those for whom all editorial correction of error in Shakespeare's writings is positivist hubris will have a tough time complaining about what happens to their writing.

[2]-----

From: Larry Weiss <larry@lweiss.net>  
Date: Thursday, 12 Jun 2008 14:34:59 -0400  
Subject: 19.0344 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0344 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Our moderator has invited me to comment on Gabriel Egan's post:

>An observation for Weiss: Egan suggests a random \*textual\* corruption,  
>but he's clearly collapsing the distinction between the arrangement or  
>appearance of words in a text and the \*critical\* meanings they bear  
>(unless, of course, he's drawing an \*analogy\* between textual corruption  
>and critical misunderstanding or misprision, which still collapses the  
>difference, in any case).

Cary is surely correct that it is unscientific to offer to test the hypothesis that we cannot discern what (if anything) an author intended by the words he used with an experiment that alters the words he used. If I understand Egan's position correctly, it is that the extreme anti-intentionalist argument is absurd, even paradoxical. The refutation of the extreme position lies not in an experiment corrupting an author's text but, rather, in the more-or-less self-evident proposition that if that text had no intended meaning we would be composing gibberish, and if its intended meaning could not reliably be discerned by the reader, exchanges of views such as this one would be impossible. If I have correctly interpreted Gabriel's argument, his confirmation of that will, I suppose, constitute a refutation of the extreme anti-intentionalist argument. This might be somewhat akin to kicking a rock to refute the metaphysical (and quantum physics) notion that matter lacks solidity.

Of course, Egan's use of sarcasm might obscure some of his meaning. Shame on all those who use sarcasm to make a point!

[3]-----

From: Larry Weiss <larry@lweiss.net>  
Date: Thursday, 12 Jun 2008 16:03:38 -0400  
Subject: 19.0344 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0344 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

The moderator's request for posts about pedagogical techniques that illustrate either the importance or irrelevance of authorial intention, even posts with anecdotal evidence, puts me in mind of an incident that occurred in a college class I took so many years ago I would rather not date it (I think A.C. Bradley was a classmate).

The class was a senior year "crap course" on reading Shakespearean language, which was offered by the Speech and Drama Department. The professor regularly conducted exercises in which he asked every student in turn to read the same lines, noting the variety of possible interpretations that can be placed on the same speech by just altering stresses, beats, inflections and accompanying gestures. I suspect that this exercise is conducted hundreds of times a day in acting schools all over the world.

One incident especially comes to mind. The text was Portia's line in *M/V, IV.i* "Tarry Jew, the law hath yet another hold on you." Student after student read the line in basically the same way, mostly stressing "another"; and all were pronounced wrong by the professor. His position was that the stress had to be placed on "you"; and he had a purely legalistic reason for this: In his view, up until this line the law had not had any "hold" on Shylock, as it served only as a defense to his claim -- as lawyers might put it, the law was a shield not a sword -- and now was the first time a "hold" was to be imposed on Shylock. (This reading, of course, ignores the fact that Portia had shown that the law had no "hold" on Antonio either, so "another" is wrong; but that is a little beside the point.) Finally, in exasperation, one student put a beat after "another" and read the next three words as "-- Hold on you!" as if Shylock were continuing to leave the assembly and Portia used this colloquialism to stop him. Risible as this is, it seems to me that the reading would work in performance.

I suppose that this anecdote can provide fodder for both opposed schools. The traditionalists can argue that it is patent that Shakespeare intended no such thing, pointing to the modernity of the colloquialism and the enormous improbability that the words would have been used in that way in 1596. The anti-intentionalists could argue, "So, what; it's a play not a dictionary."

[4]-----

From: Larry Weiss <larry@lweiss.net>  
Date: Thursday, 12 Jun 2008 18:45:12 -0400  
Subject: 19.0344 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0344 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

I wonder if there is a moral to be drawn when a reader, director, or author comes to a conclusion about the author's intentions from a completely incorrect, even opposite, understanding of the words:

>In a footnote, Weingust reports on his interview with the actor who  
>played Salisbury in \_King John\_ who, at the first performance, was  
>surprised to discover that the King addresses him with the familiar  
>"you" and not the formal "thou." The actor took this as a sign of  
>disrespect, and found that it fueled his anger at the King.

Of course, this actor got the pronouns reversed -- "thou" is familiar and "you" is polite. Perhaps this supports Cary Mazur's conclusion better than an accurate understanding by the actor and consequent loss of his character's pique:

>What it finally comes down to, then, is less a matter of what we mean  
>by Shakespeare, but what theatrical practitioners mean when they  
>claim that they identified something as "Shakespeare's intentions."  
>Rather than pointing out the fallacy of their claims and mocking them  
>for it, let us instead politely thank them for showing us their cards, even  
>as they blithely continue to play the game.

[5]-----

From: Duncan Salkeld <D.Salkeld@chi.ac.uk>  
Date: Friday, 13 Jun 2008 12:57:24 +0000 (GMT)  
Subject: 19.0352 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0352 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

David Schalkwyk's thoughtful and well-informed contribution merits a more considered response than I have given so far or (I regret) am able to give here. I think there are plenty of areas of agreement between us, and both of us leave room for manoeuvre in our approaches. I'm not so ready to follow him down Hilary Putnam's road of 'externalism' when we talk about intention but agree that intending is a social practice and not solely a personal, private mental affair. Each of us, I think, sought distance from naive positions on either side of the issue. I accept that Shakespeare's intentions will always be a matter of (belated) inference but suggest there are cases where the 'I-word' just has to be invoked whether we like it or not (by everyone). We might disagree about the wider purposes or implications of Shakespeare's malapropisms (eg. in speeches by Dogberry, Elbow or Mistress Quickly), but we would not even begin to disagree unless we shared an understanding of what literary malapropisms were, that is authorially determined structures. In such cases, the appeal to intention is not just heuristic: it is inescapable. My point is that in working out what Shakespeare's intentions might have been, or were, we make implicit causal assumptions about his choices, or uncertainties - that of all the options available to him he settled on one (or didn't). The 'determining' bit is assumed in the inferring. This is why I think it's helpful (sometimes) to identify

intention as 'a determining and authoritative cause' and similarly to regard obscurity as ignorance of such a cause.

No criticism of Hardy implied at all, but when I received my contribution together with Terry's, both were indeed somewhat mangled. Our intentions seem to have come across pretty well despite it.

[6]-----

From: Donald Bloom <dbloom@asms.net>  
Date: Friday, 13 Jun 2008 09:33:54 -0500  
Subject: 19.0352 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: RE: SHK 19.0352 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

With regard to "words," "meanings," "intentions," and other cattle of this color:

In an explanatory note some weeks ago, our long-suffering editor used the title "Resent Digests." I immediately took the first word to be an imperative verb, and also immediately found myself puzzled. I could see no reason why I should resent any of the digests (unless, of course, they had exposed some folly of mine for all the world to see, or said something snide, or whatever). And it was very unlikely that Hardy would use an imperative form in a title.

I quickly re-read the title to "Recent Digests," silently emending what I took to be a typographical error, and assuming that he was offering a collective comment on posts of the past few days.

But I was wrong. What he was talking about were re-sent digests, ones that he had to send out over again because of one of those glitches that periodically infect the digital world. For some reason the hyphen had dropped out. (Alternatively, Hardy may feel that the hyphen is unnecessary.)

In any case, the title was understandable once I clarified what the actual word was, a process that I accomplished by reading the rest of the passage and discarding the two incorrect readings. By acquiring the intended meaning of the whole note, I could figure out the intended meaning of the puzzling word.

I offer this as a parable. Do with it what you will.

[7]-----

From: Hugh Grady <HughGrady@comcast.net>

The discussion on intention in this Roundtable has been a very full one, but I have one more topic to add to the mix: the issue of aesthetic meaning in the discussion of the interpretation of Shakespeare's works. I want to emphasize the

difference between a conventional message, delivered in a concrete social context from a known speaker to a known audience -- and the communications situation of an artwork -- let us take the drama as an example -- in which language is put to fictional, emotive purposes outside of normal social contexts, by an author or authors whose words are formed within generic and theatrical traditions not invented by the author and mediated by actors, directors, and others, to an audience of persons not personally known and representing a multitude of personal biases, intellectual frameworks, and familiarities with the story, language, and conventions of the drama.

It should be obvious that the kind of communication in each of these two disparate instances is quite different.

[8]-----

From: David Schalkwyk <David.Schalkwyk@uct.ac.za>

My apologies for taking so long to rejoin the conversation. I have been burdened by a hectic schedule of packing and travelling. Between June and September I will have visited five different continents and moved my household from Africa to the USA!

Duncan Salkeld writes very generously of my original posting that "there are plenty of areas of agreement between us, and both of us leave room for manoeuvre in our approaches." He goes on to say, "I accept that Shakespeare's intentions will always be a matter of (belated) inference but suggest there are cases where the 'I-word' just has to be invoked whether we like it or not (by everyone)... the appeal to intention is not just heuristic: it is inescapable." To show just how much we agree, here's an extract from my posting on "Authorial Intention" on Monday, 17 September 2007: "In my view, much of the trouble with the debate lies in the ambiguous use of the word 'intention', which seems to be indispensable in any talk about things that are produced by human beings, but cannot eradicate the equally unavoidable work of interpretation." "Indispensable" or "inescapable": they imply the same thing. In that posting, however, I go on to agree with Hugh Grady that the appeal to intention in literary interpretation is a red herring. Therein, I think, lies my difference from Salkeld. Let me elaborate on this difference, which, for the sake of discussion, I am going to draw quite starkly, perhaps to the point of exaggeration.

Salkeld asks whether if, as I stated, intention is not "the determining and authoritative cause" of a play's meaning, it could be "a determining and authoritative cause." I would claim that one either has to say that it is the determining cause (in which case one would be an intentionalist) or that it is not a determining cause at all (which would not necessarily make one an anti-intentionalist, though it might). My problem lies with the notion of

intention as a form of causality, which is why I re-cited Derrida's statement that intentionality will have its place in the world of interpretation for which he is arguing, but it will not be able to govern and control the entire field. Just as some philosophers have a "redundancy" theory of truth ("The cow is in the field" says the same thing as "It is true that the cow is in the field", so the phrase "It is true" is not doing any work) I hold a (weak) redundancy theory of intention.

Let me illustrate this via Steve Urkowitz's contribution. He laments that despite his attempts to show that it was Shakespeare's intention to write "what we find in Q1 KING LEAR" through the "marshalling of lots of evidence ... my basic claims and especially my citation of what I see as authorially introduced and intended \_patterns\_ have been dismissed or ignored." We need to ask what work the appeal to intention is doing in Urkowitz's argument. Does it add anything to the "marshalling of lots of evidence" and the citation of "patterns"? Rhetorically, it adds a great deal -- in fact, Urkowitz's whole argument as he summarizes it depends upon the appeal to authorial intention: if \_Shakespeare\_ did not introduce such patterns, then they are not his, and Q1 is not his play. But how do we know that Shakespeare did indeed introduce them? Well, by indicating patterns that could only have been produced by an intending agent. But the rejection of Urkowitz's arguments show that the patterns themselves do not prove anything definitive about what Shakespeare intended. So the appeal to intention is redundant except in a purely rhetorical or heuristic sense. Let me put it this way: no appeal to an author's intention absolves one of producing any piece of evidence or argument in support of that intention. So one might as well leave out the appeal to intention and stick to the evidence that one would have produced anyway.

Cary Mazer's example of Beerbohm Tree's appeal to William Poel's invocation of Shakespeare's intentions to bolster the contrary position, I think, underscores my point that the appeal to intention is a (very) useful and powerful rhetorical or heuristic device, but that it settles nothing. Can all those thousands of separate companies who believe that they are bringing out what Shakespeare himself intended in \_their specific\_ production be right? Nonetheless, I agree with Cary that there is nothing wrong with using intentionality as a method for \_shaping\_ an interpretation. That's why I'm not an anti-intentionalist. What I would object to is the appeal that thereby one has found the \_determining cause\_ of the interpretation.

Larry Weiss's distinction between critical and textual intention is a useful way of clarifying many of these issues. It corresponds roughly to what some refer to as "categorical" intention: the intention to write something; the intention to write a play; the intention to write a tragedy; the intention to write a tragedy for the King's Men; the intention to write "Iudean" rather than "Indian." This

kind of intention is separate from that which may be thought to govern the meaning of the play, or a speech in it, and some anti-intentionalists with regard to the latter would happily accept the invocation of the author's intention with regard to the former. Is this a contradiction? I don't think so. Because the argument that an author intended to use this word is compatible with the agency of the author without attributing to him or her the capacity to control and determine what that word may mean. It's the appeal to intention of the latter kind, in which intentionality is invoked to govern the whole field of (possible) meaning, which seems to me to be impermissible or redundant, precisely because "meanings ain't in the head."

This brings me to a further difference with Salkeld: his distancing himself from my Putnamian and Wittgensteinian position that meanings are public affairs. I'd like to see a fresh argument that puts them back in the head without falling into the position that once they're in there, there is no way for anyone else to get at them. *Hamlet* offers a compelling representation of the appeal to an interior self that "passes outward show." Everyone will recall how Hamlet the character appeals to an inscrutable inner self that "knows not seems", that is not exhausted in "actions that a man might play." There is an interesting paradox here, since the *actor* who plays the part can hardly be said to have the concealed but vital interiority that the character claims to have. If we can understand what the actor says without such an informing, controlling, vitalizing, or intentionalizing interiority in the person who is actually making the claim, then it means that language works perfectly adequately without it. It's like Wittgenstein's "beetle in the box": it's redundant (*Philosophical Investigations*, para. 293). Furthermore, when Hamlet encounters the player, whose speech is filled with passion, he reflects on the "monstrosity" of the fact that the actor has no inward cause for such emotion. Yet, when Hamlet tries to express what HE, who does apparently have such interior cause, should be able to say and do, he is disgusted that all he can produce is an example of BAD acting: in search of his interior self he turns into the worst kind of ham. I repeat Wittgenstein's comment that "the best examples for a sentence with a particular meaning is a quotation for a play. And whoever asks a person in a play [the actor] what he's experiencing when he's speaking?" (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Last Writings*, Vol 1, ed. G.H. von Wright and Heikki Nyman (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1990), para. 38).\*

Finally, Cary offers the following challenge: "can you define or describe a methodological approach to literary criticism (and some definition of or elaboration upon that term seems necessary) that has practical pedagogical applications and does not have some recourse, on some level, to authorial intention?" This is in fact a challenge to start the whole discussion again. If we hold the circular Knapp and Michaels definition that all meaning is necessarily intentional, then the answer must be "no." But if the challenge

includes a pedagogical procedure that attends to all that we normally look at in our teaching of Shakespeare: editorial processes, genre, close reading of passages, performance history, the performative force of speech, historical context and so on, then for the past thirty years I have never invoked what Shakespeare intended, except when a student has objected in the middle of a discussion of a passage, "But surely Shakespeare could never have intended all that! Aren't we just reading it all into the words?" No student has ever been satisfied when a fellow has suggested that Shakespeare did and must have intended it all. I have asked, if Shakespeare couldn't have intended "all that", what exactly we would retract, to leave us with a sufficiently limited interpretation that would satisfy our intuition of what Shakespeare could have meant. There is never an adequate answer to this question. And then, when I have suggested that what was going on in Shakespeare's head while he was writing is beside the point -- that all we have are some extraordinary words, produced by a man called Shakespeare, but that their meaning is a matter of publicly accessible rules and possibilities, the objectors have generally been satisfied. Note that I consistently appeal to Shakespeare's biography in this process. I am skeptical about certain kinds of appeal to intentionality, but I think biography as a genuine source of evidence has had a particularly hard time over the past fifty years, not least because it has been CONFUSED with an appeal to the author's controlling intentions.

So, in one corner we have William Shakespeare, the genius who must have poured everything that his texts could mean into them from his vast store of intentions which ultimately "passes show." And on the other, his theatre, the "actions that a man might play," in which meaning is a matter of performance and re-performance in ever-changing contexts. My money is on the theatre.

\*For a full elaboration of this argument about interiority in *\_Hamlet\_*, see chapter 3 of my *\_Speech and Performance in Shakespeare's Sonnets and Plays\_* (CUP, 2002).

[9]-----  
From: Cary DiPietro <cary.dipietro@utoronto.ca>

I recently challenged participants in the Roundtable to define or describe a pedagogical approach to literary criticism that does not in some way rely upon or return to the problem of intention, to which David Schalkwyk has responded: "This is in fact a challenge to start the whole discussion again." Though my goal is not to return us to the point where we began, I can understand why he would respond this way, and why, from his perspective, his response to the challenge would require merely a restatement of his position; David demonstrates in his following hypothetical anecdote that his theory and pedagogical practice are entirely consistent with one another. I wish I could say the same. I wish I

could persuade my students just as easily to the idea "that all we have are some extraordinary words, produced by a man called Shakespeare, but that their meaning is a matter of publicly accessible rules and possibilities." My students are disinclined to abandon the romanticist fantasy of literary genius the study of Shakespeare promises. That Shakespeare is the greatest writer in the English language, a writer of unparalleled insight into the human condition, that his plays contain deep spiritual meanings, that he invented the human, no less--this is the mythology they are fed through the high school curriculum, the marketing media and, perhaps most conspicuously, the global cultural apparatus that holds Shakespeare up as an archetypal model of English-language genius. Many of my students, coming from post-colonial diaspora, are equally wary or critical of Shakespeare's ascendancy in the global cultural sphere. But make no mistake, his presence is keenly felt: Shakespeare presides, he hovers, bearing down with the weight of four hundred-year-old intentions on my classroom.

This is the larger challenge from which this particular Roundtable challenge emerges, the application of theoretically sophisticated and nuanced positions to the practice of teaching, and what, at least in my own teaching, sometimes feels like a kind of double standard or hypocrisy. Indeed, I find that I've become since the start of this Roundtable acutely aware of the numerous ways I invoke or appeal to Shakespeare's authorship as a determining cause for the meaning of the plays, and how that appeal often, though usually inadvertently, turns upon my use of the word "intention" or its derivatives. For example, a student wrote to me recently to get feedback on questions she had prepared for an oral presentation on *The Merchant of Venice*. The student was proposing to isolate two separate passages from Act 4 in which Shylock invokes scripture in his rhetorical justification for exacting the bond, the question for the class: "What does Shakespeare want us to take away from these two passages?" My response: "Shakespeare didn't intend for us to read these passages in isolation to derive an isolated meaning from them. You might rephrase the question to something like: 'How does Shylock's use of biblical precedents or doctrinal positions persuade or fail to persuade his audience in the courtroom? How does it affect the theatre audience's perception of him, whether in a positive or negative way?'"

The questions I offer in lieu of her own imply the corrections that need to be made of my first fallacious sentence, that Shakespeare was a theatre artist, that the plays were constructed to produce certain responses in the context of performance, and that these responses occur irregardless of their intentional construction. Not only was Shakespeare apparently unconcerned with the effect his plays would have upon reading communities, it was likely inconceivable that quarto publication in his lifetime would lead to the long-term preservation of versions of his manuscripts, and that the literary meaning of these manuscripts, a concept equally alien for Shakespeare (at least in a hermeneutic sense), would

be debated by generations of scholars and readers. Shakespeare's writerly intentions, whatever they may happen to have been, are entirely incommensurate with the appropriative cultural practices--the ways that we read, interpret, even perform the plays--that have evolved since. So why invoke intention? Is this merely a heuristic device, or a rhetorical sleight of hand? No, clearly not: I'm appealing to intention as a determining cause in order to refine the scope and direction of the student's prepared questions, and in doing so, I'm legitimating my role as a teacher of Shakespeare. But let me propose a few reasons why this appeal to intention might, in some cases, be pedagogically desirable, and perhaps even inevitable within the current boundaries of English literature as a professional discipline.

I should begin by noting that understanding or decoding "what Shakespeare wrote" is not a course objective. As with most early modern courses offered in the post-secondary curriculum in North America, the emphasis is predominantly historical. The two key learning outcomes are to acquire a detailed knowledge of certain plays and to develop a critical understanding of the role of the drama in shaping, in the case of this particular course, early modern English attitudes to and perceptions of race, gender and religion. There are clearly certain "new critical" assumptions that lie behind my student's approach to her task; that plays can be read "spatially" (that is, scenes or episodes taken out of context or order) to uncover, typically, themes and motifs, an authorial message connoted in the subtext. This is what I would consider an intentional reading practice because it presumes both the wholeness of the work, as well as, whether acknowledged or not, the wholeness of intention behind the work. And as an instructor of the course, my task is to train her to think more symptomatically about the historically specific conditions that give rise to the text. Rather than assuming the wholeness of the work, such symptomatic reading seeks to identify gaps or fissures (Alan Sinfield calls them "faultlines") that evidence wider meanings and that are potentially inconsistent with the unifying vision of restricted textual meanings.

One could argue that, by appealing to intention, I'm speaking to my student in a language she can understand, even as I model for her a critical perspective informed by the comparatively recent interventions of historicism, critical race theory, gender studies, and so on. But I'm also speaking to her within and against the grain of an institutional framework that, in the first instance, privileges single creative authorship as the determining cause of literary meaning. It is, of course, possible to speak of authorship and reading as historically determined social and cultural phenomena without emphasizing such values as genius and imagination, but the institutional priority given to such canonical figures reinforces for students wider cultural assumptions about literary genius that students inevitably bring with them to a course devoted to Shakespeare. As a teacher of Shakespeare working within a conventional

departmental curriculum, is it my task merely to disabuse students of such value-laden assumptions?

Similar assumptions about literary value lie discretely behind David Schalkwyk's carefully qualified description of the plays as "some extraordinary words, produced by a man called Shakespeare, [whose] meaning is a matter of publicly accessible rules and possibilities." If we borrow, as he does, a position from Wittgenstein that meanings are public affairs, then we would also have to allow that such descriptors as "extraordinary" are also publicly determined, that there is nothing innately extraordinary about these words that have descended to us beyond the value we assign to certain conventions employed by Shakespeare in his writing, and that the cult of his genius is therefore based on \*nothing more\* than the surreptitious desire of institutional bodies (education, theatre, publishing, archiving) to consolidate their authority by constructing, perpetuating and privileging various kinds of literary "knowledge." Such absolutism makes me uncomfortable, and not least because I make my living by disseminating such forms of knowledge.

As Duncan Salkeld observes, something has to be privileged in any given case, and by privileging Shakespeare's authorship as a determining cause of certain kinds of literary meaning, even in strictly qualified ways, I risk teaching my students to attend to and appreciate the imaginative and psychological force of distinctly literary forms of writing, even as we historicize and deconstruct them. It may be true to argue that meanings "just ain't in the head," but that's where they begin, and I find I'm increasingly drawn to the idea of a possible continuity in this experience of literature, a continuity between literary authorship as a psychological and social phenomenon, and what we do in the here and now when we read or perform or invest ourselves in these texts. This is what I mean when I speak of a phenomenology of the text (though "phenomenology" as a term leads us to the impasse between Husserl and Derrida and their subsequent advocates); that is, an investigation of the structures of experience that are written in to the text, structures determined by a range of phenomena including but not limited to creative authorship, and that partially determine how we experience the text now in any given cultural sphere.

Some of the most exciting work of this nature is being done in the field of trauma studies, much of it centred upon Holocaust narratives (see, for example, Caruth 1995, 1996; and La Capra). The often controversial power of trauma narratives speaks directly to the role that such psychological phenomena as memory and subjectivity play in the process of storytelling. As victims of trauma tell their stories, and as their experiences are told by others, recreated or re-imagined, experience is translated into narrative; and even if such narratives are demonstrably constructed, shown to depend upon the unreliable processes of memory, the subjectivity of individual experience, and

the fictionalizing of narrative, these narratives are no less powerful as contemporary social experiences. Trauma narratives demonstrate acutely the praxis between the psychology of individual experience and the social experience of storytelling, and they raise questions about what such storytelling does for narrative communities, whether it serves as a repository for collective, social memory, or whether it has some greater therapeutic or psycho-social value.

I'm not prepared to attempt an answer to these questions here, but I raise this example briefly to make the point that there may yet be some scope for addressing questions about the psychology of the author as a determining cause of, if not a hermetic meaning, then an aesthetic experience situated both within and across time. Moreover, this aestheticist or phenomenological appeal to the experience of literature might not only answer the presentist call to arms, but might be a way reconciling the professional crisis in the teaching of English brought on by, among other things, a Derridean deconstruction of intention.

#### Works Cited

Caruth, Cathy (ed.). *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins UP, 1995.

Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, History*. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996.

La Capra, Dominick. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins UP, 2001.

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0375.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0371 Sunday, 29 June 2008

From: Duncan Salkeld <D.Salkeld@chi.ac.uk>

Date: Friday, 27 Jun 2008 11:11:06 +0000 (GMT)

Subject: 19.0364 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Comment: Re: SHK 19.0364 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Hugh Grady raises a fascinating point - - the relationship of the 'aesthetic' to intentionality. But it's not so easy to see how a distinction between 'conventional' and 'aesthetic' language (if it can be drawn at all) ties in with an equivalent distinction between 'non-intended' and 'intended' language. As a side issue, I can see very good reasons for regarding genres as shared conventional literary modes with their own social purposes but also as exemplars

of writerly intention.

David Schalkwyk seems content to hold that intention may be 'indispensable' or 'inescapable' but ultimately doesn't matter. For him, you can drop talk of intention and just stick to the evidence. But since evidence must be evidence of something, and sometimes of intention or purpose, that is precisely what you have to address. I don't think the debate comes down to a loaded choice between Shakespeare the fixed intending genius in one corner and the changing world of performance in the other. Cary DiPietro gives a very honest assessment of the pedagogical issues intentionality raises, and sensibly recommends that consciousness merits a place in the discussion. In philosophy, as in literary criticism, intentionality raises tricky problems not easily resolved. I simply maintain that avoiding talk of authorial intention at all costs seems an odd and limiting way to go about Shakespeare studies.

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0382.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0378 Wednesday, 2 July 2008

[1] From: Kenneth Chan <kckc@pacific.net.sg>  
Date: Monday, 30 Jun 2008 10:33:26 +0800  
Subt: Re: SHK 19.0364 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[2] From: Robin Hamilton <robin.hamilton2@btinternet.com>  
Date: Monday, 30 Jun 2008 03:42:43 +0100  
Subt: Re: SHK 19.0371 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[1]-----  
From: Kenneth Chan <kckc@pacific.net.sg>  
Date: Monday, 30 Jun 2008 10:33:26 +0800  
Subject: 19.0364 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0364 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Hugh Grady writes:

>The discussion on intention in this Roundtable has been a very full one,  
>but I have one more topic to add to the mix: the issue of aesthetic meaning  
>in the discussion of the interpretation of Shakespeare's works. I want to  
>emphasize the difference between a conventional message, delivered in  
>a concrete social context from a known speaker to a known audience -- and  
>the communications situation of an artwork -- let us take the drama as an

>example -- in which language is put to fictional, emotive purposes outside of  
>normal social contexts, by an author or authors whose words are formed  
>within generic and theatrical traditions not invented by the author and mediated  
>by actors, directors, and others, to an audience of persons not personally  
>known and representing a multitude of personal biases, intellectual frameworks,  
>and familiarities with the story, language, and conventions of the drama.

Hugh Grady's point with regards to aesthetic meaning is an important one. Concerning authorial intention, let us imagine, for the sake of argument, that a playwright did carefully craft an entire play as a cohesive unit for the purpose of conveying a specific meaning through the emotive medium of drama, a process of reaching the audience by having them live through the experience. Certainly, we must concede the possibility that a playwright may have this intention.

The playwright, however, has to contend with the fact that language has its limitations. The meaning of any isolated sentence or passage may always be deemed ambiguous to a certain extent because of the limitations of language. Nonetheless, is it not an over-generalization to then conclude that it is not even a legitimate or useful exercise to attempt understanding the meaning of an entire play (as a whole unit) as the author intended? Are the limitations of our language so severe that even the intended aesthetic meaning of an entire play - carefully crafted to convey a specific meaning - rendered completely irretrievable?

Kenneth Chan

[2]-----

From: Robin Hamilton <robin.hamilton2@btinternet.com>

Date: Monday, 30 Jun 2008 03:42:43 +0100

Subject: 19.0371 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Comment: Re: SHK 19.0371 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

How to escape the regress of intention?

How do we know what the intention of the author of Hamlet/"Hamlet"/\_Hamlet\_ \*is?

We know it because he writes\_here\_, that this is what he "means".

He says it (except he doesn't) \*here, in a set of words:

"This is what I meant in Amleth."

Comes down to it, it's text(s) all the way down.

I 'believe' in Hamlet in the same way that I believe in god.

"Intention" is literary criticism's equivalent to intelligent design.

{Somewhere, some person, it might have been Derrida, but I think it was earlier with Kierkegaard in The Concept of Irony With Constant Reference To Socrates, points out that Socrates refused to write anything down due to his distrust of the written word, with the result that Plato promptly transmogrified him into a figure created in orthography.

Angels weep!}

Robin Hamilton

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0386.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0382 Tuesday, 8 July 2008

[1] From: Kenneth Chan <kckc@pacific.net.sg>  
Date: Thursday, 03 Jul 2008 12:56:14 +0800  
Subt: Re: SHK 19.0378 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[2] From: Hugh Grady <HughGrady@comcast.net>  
Date: Monday, 7 Jul 2008 11:41:57 -0400  
Subt: RE: SHK 19.0364 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[1]-----  
From: Kenneth Chan <kckc@pacific.net.sg>  
Date: Thursday, 03 Jul 2008 12:56:14 +0800  
Subject: 19.0378 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0378 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Robin Hamilton writes:

>"Intention" is literary criticism's equivalent to intelligent design.

I am afraid this analogy is inappropriate. There is a significant difference between the two.

It is because of the fact that the presence of a creator God cannot be proved scientifically that intelligent design is heavily disputed. That, however, is not the case with regards to a work of literature. Every work of literature has

a creator, the author, and an author can certainly have intentions. Whether or not we can discern the author's intentions correctly is, of course, the problem.

Kenneth Chan

[2]-----  
From: Hugh Grady <HughGrady@comcast.net>  
Date: Monday, 7 Jul 2008 11:41:57 -0400  
Subject: 19.0364 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: RE: SHK 19.0364 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

In regard to Kenneth Chan's question, "to attempt understanding the meaning of an entire play (as a whole unit) as the author intended? Are the limitations of our language so severe that even the intended aesthetic meaning of an entire play - carefully crafted to convey a specific meaning - rendered completely irretrievable?"

We don't have to simply speculate about such an experiment. The archives of Shakespearean criticism, and especially those dating from c. 1900 on, represent a huge array of such attempts, following the widely influential canons of positivist historical scholarship. The results: such readings for Shakespeare's intentions are never conclusive and continually change as history progresses.

An additional point: the purpose of my calling attention to the issue of aesthetic meaning was to highlight the point of the non-conceptual (but rational) nature of aesthetic knowledge. If we think of "intention" as a set of clearly expressible concepts, I believe we will be continually frustrated in our attempts to agree on such concepts in interpreting artworks like Shakespeare's.

Best,  
Hugh Grady

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0389.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0385 Thursday, 10 July 2008

[Editor's Note: Because of the recent activity, Cary and I have decided to postpone, for a while, the concluding digest in SHAKSPER Roundtable 2. Since we do not foresee the current exchange lasting for a long time, we expect that the last digest will be appearing soon. As Cary puts the final touches on his final essay, anyone having any more to say in the Roundtable should do so quickly. -Hardy]

[1] From: Kenneth Chan <kckc@pacific.net.sg>  
Date: Tuesday, 08 Jul 2008 12:44:55 +0800  
Subt: Re: SHK 19.0382 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[2] From: Alan Horn <alanshorn@gmail.com>  
Date: Tuesday, 8 Jul 2008 04:59:45 -0400  
Subt: Re: SHK 19.0382 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[3] From: Duncan Salkeld <D.Salkeld@chi.ac.uk>  
Date: Tuesday, 08 Jul 2008 10:21:24 +0000 (GMT)  
Subt: Re: SHK 19.0382 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[1]-----  
From: Kenneth Chan <kckc@pacific.net.sg>  
Date: Tuesday, 08 Jul 2008 12:44:55 +0800  
Subject: 19.0382 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0382 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Hugh Grady writes:

>In regard to Kenneth Chan's question, " to attempt understanding the  
>meaning of an entire play (as a whole unit) as the author intended?  
>Are the limitations of our language so severe that even the intended  
>aesthetic meaning of an entire play - carefully crafted to convey a  
>specific meaning - is rendered completely irretrievable?"

>  
>We don't have to simply speculate about such an experiment. The  
>archives of Shakespearean criticism, and especially those dating from  
>c. 1900 on, represent a huge array of such attempts, following the widely  
>influential canons of positivist historical scholarship. The results: such  
>readings for Shakespeare's intentions are never conclusive and  
>continually change as history progresses.

The same, of course, can be said for the historical progress in physics, or in any other science. The theories of science have repeatedly changed throughout history, as paradigms shift, as new discoveries come to light, and as new ways of research and understanding are developed.

Physicists, however, do not declare, for example, that "a theory linking gravitation and electromagnetism together" is impossible just because, over the centuries, scientists have still failed to come up with such a theory. Such a declaration would presume that we, humans, are infallible, that we have already

achieved all that can be achieved, and that further progress is simply impossible. Physicists, therefore, do not make such a declaration because they realize that it would be presumptuous and also that such a declaration would slam the door to further progress and development.

I am suggesting here that we, likewise, refrain from making a similar presumptuous declaration with regards to Shakespeare's works.

Kenneth Chan

[2]-----

From: Alan Horn <alanshorn@gmail.com>

Date: Tuesday, 8 Jul 2008 04:59:45 -0400

Subject: 19.0382 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Comment: Re: SHK 19.0382 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

I agree with Robin Hamilton that there can be something circular about discussing what Shakespeare may have intended. What does it mean to take an author's intentions into account if the only direct evidence of these intentions are the works themselves? In doing so, is one doing anything more than simply reading in the normal way?

Similar questions come up even in the cases of authors whose intentions, unlike Shakespeare's, we do have direct, extra-textual evidence of. As Frank Kermode notes in his essay "The Single, Correct Interpretation" (in *The Art of Telling*), readers don't always take much account of such evidence, especially when it seems to conflict with their own intuitions. He gives this example: "Critics used to be troubled by a passage in a letter of Jane Austen to Cassandra which appeared to state that the subject of *Mansfield Park* was 'ordination,' for although Edmund's taking of orders, and Mary Crawford's attitude to the clergy, are certainly relevant to the design of the book, it would not have occurred to most readers that ordination was what the book was ABOUT."

It seems to me that the main value of speculation about an author's intentions is as a heuristic for getting at the specific social contexts in which and for which a given work was made. After all, it is quite true -- as Hugh Grady points out -- that over a century of historical scholarship on Shakespeare has failed to arrive at a "conclusive" account of his intentions. And in fact consideration of the original contexts of a work is less likely to lead to a singular, definitive reading than to the uncovering of an even wider range of semantic possibilities. But this is only a problem if one takes the narrow aim of recovering an author's intentions as one's ultimate goal.

Consider, for instance, how an awareness of the contemporary competing sectarian

conceptions of the afterlife complicates our reading of Hamlet. This understanding raises questions about Shakespeare's intentions that will never finally be resolved. But are they therefore not worth asking?

Alan Horn

[3]-----

From: Duncan Salkeld <D.Salkeld@chi.ac.uk>

Date: Tuesday, 08 Jul 2008 10:21:24 +0000 (GMT)

Subject: 19.0382 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Comment: Re: SHK 19.0382 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

I have the utmost regard for Hugh Grady (whom I only know through his publications), but I am hard pushed to see how 'the nature of aesthetic knowledge' could be 'non-conceptual'. I find the category of 'aesthetic knowledge' enigmatic too. But I'd like to add that intention is significant as more than 'a set of clearly expressible concepts'. I tried to show earlier that where the evidence for Shakespeare's intention is unclear or contradictory, this matters (to bibliographers and editors at least).

It also seems possible to exaggerate the effects of historical change and under-rate the obstinacy of certain textual properties (eg. variants, false starts, duplications, speech prefixes, ghost or mute characters, kinds of indecision and so forth). Put directly and simply, how different is your or my 'Shakespeare' to, say, Nicholas Rowe's 'Shakespeare' of 1685 (4th Folio) or 1709 (Rowe's edition)? The answer to this question is not, 'We can never know' because then you can't make claims for historical change; nor is it, '100% different', because, if so, we could not even begin to make the comparison. Taking a via media is the difficult, puzzling and fascinating part. The point is not only how much alters, but what also is intransitive, what attributes or properties persist through time, or what products arise from the complex interaction between critic and text that are not reducible merely to a prevailing, temporary consensus. This requires thinking as a presentist and historicist all at once.

On a separate note, I'm not convinced by arguments that take the form: (a) Shakespeare might have had a single intention by a single and entire play/poem; (b) We can't know what that intention is; therefore (c) Shakespeare's intentions remain unknowable/not worth discussing. At such a naively holistic level, intentionality is entirely vapid. But when examining particular textual details and their relationships, intention becomes not only a question worth raising but sometimes essential. Naturally, one has a choice of whether to address it directly or indirectly, and a critic or editor still harping on intentionality

would be tedious indeed. But to imagine possible a detailed analysis of Shakespeare without even the most latent regard for the writer's choices, strategies, indecisions, or intentions is unrealistic.

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0398.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0394 Saturday, 12 July 2008

[1] From: Larry Weiss <larry@lweiss.net>  
Date: Thursday, 10 Jul 2008 23:26:14 -0400  
Subt: Re: SHK 19.0385 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[2] From: Robin Hamilton <robin.hamilton2@btinternet.com>  
Date: Friday, 11 Jul 2008 09:21:00 +0100  
Subt: Intentionism

[3] From: Robin Hamilton <robin.hamilton2@btinternet.com>  
Date: Friday, 11 Jul 2008 10:00:50 +0100  
Subt: Re: SHK 19.0385 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[1]-----

From: Larry Weiss <larry@lweiss.net>  
Date: Thursday, 10 Jul 2008 23:26:14 -0400  
Subject: 19.0385 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0385 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Duncan Salkeld concludes his latest contribution with a comment he expresses as an aside:

>On a separate note, I'm not convinced by arguments that take the form:  
>(a) Shakespeare might have had a single intention by a single and entire  
>play/poem; (b) We can't know what that intention is; therefore (c) Shakespeare's  
>intentions remain unknowable/not worth discussing. At such a naively holistic  
>level, intentionality is entirely vapid. But when examining particular textual  
details  
>and their relationships, intention becomes not only a question worth raising but  
>sometimes essential.

This is very similar to the point I made about the difference between what an author intended by his words (critical analysis) and what words the author intended to use (textual analysis). I regret that this Roundtable is about to

end without anyone addressing the matter explicitly, not even to offer a refutation, despite Cary's request for a discussion of the point.

[Editor's Note: Conversation on issues that are related to the Roundtable discussion do not necessarily have to end with the formal end of the Roundtable. Related subjects can become new threads and goes on as long as I can take them. Cary is finishing his concluding guest editor's essay and then will begin preparing for the Special Edition of STYLE he will also be guest editing -- you all will be hearing more about this special issue in the coming weeks. -Hardy]

[2]-----

From: Robin Hamilton <robin.hamilton2@btinternet.com>  
Date: Friday, 11 Jul 2008 09:21:00 +0100  
Subject: Intentionalism

I still fail to be convinced of the utility of the concept of authorial intention.

For one thing, "authorial intention" is simply one of several modes of defining the meaning of a written text.

There are better examples to chose than Shakespeare.

Is the text of Thomas Wyatt's "Farewell Love, and all thy laws forever ..." that of the Egerton MS, the closest we have to what the "historical author" wrote, or does it involve the version found in the Devonshire MS (text as process) or should we hew to the Tottel version which was read by every major English poet between 1550 and 1900?

Leave aside the notorious fact that authors lie, and even if one could drag the ghost of Shakespeare kicking and screaming from his or her unquiet grave, who'd believe?

Especially as the report would be mediated.

It's orthoglyphs all the way down, as Jane probably said to Cassandra.

Robin Hamilton

{In scribing these glyphs in pixels on your screen, I violate my own integrity, but who the frelk cares, mon sembabble, ma soeur?}

[3]-----

From: Robin Hamilton <robin.hamilton2@btinternet.com>  
Date: Friday, 11 Jul 2008 10:00:50 +0100

Subject: 19.0385 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0385 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

>Consider, for instance, how an awareness of the contemporary competing  
>sectarian conceptions of the afterlife complicates our reading of Hamlet.

Oddly, that's easily answered.

Why does Hamlet's daddy's ghost return from a catholic purgatorial afterlife?

Because if he didn't, there'd be no play.

Doesn't matter diddly squat whether or not Shakespeare was a believing catholic,  
but the play needs Purgatory.

RH

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0402.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0398 Monday, 14 July 2008

[1] From: Robin Hamilton <[robin.hamilton2@btinternet.com](mailto:robin.hamilton2@btinternet.com)>  
Date: Sunday, 13 Jul 2008 08:03:38 +0100  
Subt: Intentionalism

[2] From: Felix de Villiers <[felixdevilliers@alice.it](mailto:felixdevilliers@alice.it)>  
Date: Sunday, 13 Jul 2008 04:46:23 +0200  
Subt: SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

[1]-----  
From: Robin Hamilton <[robin.hamilton2@btinternet.com](mailto:robin.hamilton2@btinternet.com)>  
Date: Sunday, 13 Jul 2008 08:03:38 +0100  
Subject: Intentionalism

This has little to do with Shakespeare but much to do with the utility of the  
concept of "intentionalism" in the editorial process.

I'm concerned at the moment with the "authenticity" (deliberate scare quotes) of  
broadside song texts, printed in a roughly 150 year period between 1700 and 1850.

Many of these texts can clearly be related to documented historical figures --

Jack Hall (hanged for robbery at Tyburn in 1707), Jack Sheppard (Tyburn, 1724), Thomas Mount (Rhode Island, 1780) and David Haggart (Tollcross, Edinburgh, 1821).

Other than Sinfu' Davey, I seriously doubt that any of these figures scribed their own laments.

Of all of them, Jack Hall is in some ways the most intriguing.

He exists in the Old Bailey Records, the Ordinary of Newgate's Accounts, Alexander Smith's account of Highwaymen, and most later versions of The Newgate Calendar.

Lots of material for an Intentionalist perspective here, you'd think.

{Except the glossary which the editor of the cant section of Memoirs of the Right Villainous John Hall, the Late Famous and Notorious Robber. Penn'd from His Own Mouth Sometime Before His Death. London: printed for J. Baker, 1714 lifts the vocabulary straight from an earlier printed text.}

Also, of course, Jack or John or Sam Hall achieves immortality via a 1850s comic song, as "Sam Hall, Damn your eyes."

As far as I can make out, the text which most represents the moment when Jack Hall was hung in 1707 only exists in a broadside ballad (Pickering, for the Toy Theatre) dating from the 1830s at the earliest.

... and when it comes to "To the Hundreds of Drury I write," which seems to pretty much dissociate itself from Jack Sheppard from the start, from the moment it's printed the day after Sheppard dies, as "Jack Sheppard's Farewell" and resurfaces as "The Bowman Prig's Farewell" (independent of Sheppard) in Francis Place -- 1800, reporting songs he'd heard in the 1780, and Thomas Mount, topped in Rhode Island in the 1780s ...

Even a time machine wouldn't help.

The point I'm tediously making is that there are serious editorial judgements to be made on a whole range of issues at least mildly relevant to Shakespeare, and it seems to me that none of them are usefully illuminated by the concept of "intentionality".

Possibly the worst is a ghost footnote which reaches as far as (at least) Arden3 As You Like It, to do with "Peddlar's Greek".

D'oh!

That one at least can be tracked down and put to rest with a stake through the heart.

{I blame this on as much as anyone else Thomas Dekker, whose joke at the expense of Thomas Harman's slightly lunatic attempt to justify his coinage of the term "cursitors" cascades down to the assertion that Cursitors (associated with drawlatches and roberdsmen) constituted the Second Order of the Old Canting Crew.}

It's orthoglyphs all the way down, and intention simply doesn't figure when it comes to making practical editorial judgements.

Robin Hamilton

[2]-----  
From: Felix de Villiers <felixdevilliers@alice.it>  
Date: Sunday, 13 Jul 2008 04:46:23 +0200  
Subject: SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

For when the work is finished, it has, as it were, an independent life of its own, and may deliver a message far other than that which was put in its lips to say. Oscar Wilde

The aim of this contribution is to move away from what one might call the poet's external intentions and to pursue the direction of those that or more hidden and manifest themselves of their own accord. These may be considered under three closely related headings:

- 1.. The non-conceptual aspect of art, which diverted intentions may lead to.
- 2.. Involuntary intentions.
- 3.. What we may not know about our own culture and the intentions it has produced in us, and those it fosters in us.

As far as what I call the external the intentions are concerned, some of the most valuable work that has been done for the Roundtable is summed up in Duncan Salkeld's recent posting (8 July): "But when examining particular textual details and their relationships, intention becomes not only a question worth raising but sometimes essential." In the same letter, referring to Hugh Grady's posting, he writes that he is hard pushed to see how "the nature of aesthetic knowledge" could be "non-conceptual." Grady's affirmation, while aiming in the right direction, is a contradiction in terms, since knowledge is necessarily conceptual. Perhaps he should have said that the content of art has a non-conceptual aspect and that art has tried to elude the grasp of conceptual language, which, throughout history, has been misused for repressive purposes.

The non-conceptual aspect of art is immediately evident in music and painting; poetry relies on conceptual language but tries to transform it by aesthetic means: context, word patterns, rhythm rhymes, images, assonance and alliteration, and other techniques. But all these arts are created by conceptual beings and must necessarily be understood by them, even if a residue of enigmatic content will always escape us.

T.W.Adorno, in his *Aesthetic Philosophy* writes: "The more art as an object is subjectively remoulded and freed from its mere intentions, the more articulately it serves as the model of a non-conceptual language that eludes signification." Here Adorno has his eye on modern art, but his observation is closely related to his view of aesthetics in general, in which art eludes the grasp of 'mere intentions.' One of his favourite expressions is that the work must go "where it wants to go of its own accord." This phrase comes in *Klangfiguren*, which also deals with the contemporary music of his time, but the idea arises in all his considerations of traditional art, which distances itself from normalised conceptuality as in the transformation of the latter in a lyrical poem. (see *Noten zur Literatur*).

Adorno's remark about art eluding 'mere intentions' leads us to a consideration of a more intelligible but nevertheless still enigmatic evasions of normal conceptuality. In creating art there is always and intense struggle between our rational selves and the material we work on, which has a natural tendency to go its own way, following the dictates of an alter ego which consumes our external intentions. Charlotte Bronte, reviewing "Wuthering Heights", wondered whether it was right to create beings like Heathcliff and she answers, saying, "I scarcely think it is." But then she goes on to declare that there are moments when all our intentions are thrown aside and "be the work grim or glorious, dread or divine, you have little choice left but quiescent adoption." Who would not think of Shakespeare in those words?

He leads us through a devious labyrinth of intentions gone astray. In the foul depths to which Macbeth and his Lady sink, there are glimmers of a lost humanity which the other characters don't possess. A strangled humanity mutters Macbeth's words:

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,  
To the last syllable of recorded time;  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death. Out, Out, brief candle!  
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player.  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
And then is heard no more: it is a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing.

What extraordinary inspiration put these words into the mouth of Macbeth, beyond all conceivable intention, in this monster of a man, and yet so aesthetically just? The three repetitions of 'to-morrow,' are in themselves nothing, but express, in their context, an ineffable poignancy, hard to explain. Here the other self, the lyrical psyche, has come out trumps. And continues to do so line by line.

And then there are cultural and historical intentions nurtured in us of which we are not aware. I doubt whether Shakespeare knew that he was a Mannerist. I agree entirely with Arnold Hauser, who classifies him as a renaissance man, a realist, yes, but for the most part a Mannerist. He breaks all domestic boundaries. One might at first think, in his plays, yes, but not so much in his Sonnets. But they are exemplary of his Mannerism. This is evident in the lyrical 'I' that abases itself to the point of madness, suicide, death. That was surely one of his unintentional intentions, which leads us again down stray paths and hidden intentions in the Sonnets. Shakespeare demolishes the conceptual I as a dominating instance, in poetry, if not in life, in which we have to survive somehow with our more or less hardened egos. There are still people who try to extract -from the spuriously normal world - the would-be happy family man out of the Sonnets, a man who is nowhere to be found in them. The one Sonnet that refers to such a family is mythologized immediately by its concord with music. If the young man had gone straight ahead and produced the duplicate son, the Sonnets would have lost their reason for being, the aesthetic veil would have been torn. As it is the imaginary son becomes a mythical figure in the Sonnets, in one of them he is addressed as "your golden time." And yet, and yet, I do believe that Shakespeare would like to have torn the aesthetic veil. There are examples in Beethoven and Mahler of desperate attempts to do so. So much in Shakespeare rebels against the magic of the aesthetic mirror. Prospero gives up magic hoping for the best. Macbeth, in the speech quoted above, seems to face a black impenetrable wall and, in their negativity, his words belong to one of the most passionate appeals for humanity that I have read. It is here perhaps that one finds Shakespeare's innermost intention. But he cannot break the spell as long as he remains in the realm of fiction.

A note: I have nothing against happy families and only wish there were more of them. Art moves on a different plane.

Works cited:

T.W. Adorno, *Noten zur Literatur 1*, Suhrkamp 1973

T.W. Adorno, Klangfiguren, Suhrkamp 1963

T.W. Adorno, Aesthetische Theorie, Suhrkamp, 1974

Arnold Hauser, Storia sociale dell'arte, Einaudi, 1987, second volume.

Emily Bronte, Wuthering Heights, Dent, 1963, the Introduction

Oscar Wilde in The Critic as Artist.

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0415.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0412 Friday, 18 July 2008

From: Cary DiPietro <cary.dipietro@utoronto.ca>

Date: Thursday, 17 Jul 2008 21:33:02 -0400

Subject: SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

This is the final digest of the current Roundtable; and, as is now the custom, I'm going to offer a few observations about the operation of the Roundtable format generally, and its use as a venue for the kinds of critical arguments we've seen made here. I'll begin by proposing that the Roundtable, as a topic-oriented and moderated forum for reflective critical discussion on SHAKSPER, has the potential to harness the Internet as an emergent mode of literacy and, in doing so, to reshape, if only marginally, a powerful discourse community in positive and productive ways; but I believe the current Roundtable has fallen somewhat short of that objective. I should note that what I'm not talking about is the overall quality of the discussion, which has been exemplary in my opinion. Rather, I'm suggesting that the Roundtable, rather than falling in the rift between scholarly discourse and a wider non-academic community of enthusiasts and practitioners, can serve as a productive bridge between them, much as SHAKSPER itself does, only with a much more defined critical agenda. And, for reasons I'll detail below, debates about authorial intention must remain at the very centre of that project.

We're fortunate in this case because we can compare our discussion not only to the first Roundtable on presentism guest-moderated by Hugh Grady, but to the earlier discussion on authorial intention initiated by Larry Weiss as a regular list thread (there were two earlier threads on authorial intention, one in 2001 and one in 2002). That thread ran for about one month from early September to mid-October 2007 for a total of nineteen posts. There were 32 contributors for a total count of about 26 000 words. Our Roundtable will have had about nine formal digests from April to July, though with numerous interim postings. There

are to date a total of 20 contributors for a total count of approximately 52 0000 words and counting. 13 of the 20 contributors to the Roundtable participated in the earlier thread; more significantly, this means that 19 of the contributors to the thread did not participate in the Roundtable. Even more significantly, there was much greater participation in the regular thread by those members whose email domains are not academic (ending in .com, .co.uk, etc.), as compared to the Roundtable which was dominated by contributors currently affiliated with postsecondary institutions.

The data is not difficult to interpret. The discussion in the Roundtable has been more sustained and generally more thoughtful, at nearly double the word length over a comparable number of posts. Quantity doesn't necessarily equal quality, but the overall quality of writing on the Roundtable easily approaches that of peer-reviewed journal publication. The initial thread was also witness to many thoughtful and well-made arguments, and it was, of course, the success of that thread that prompted both the current Roundtable topic and the collaboration with `_Style_`. The Roundtable discussion has been, however, significantly less diverse and spontaneous, much of it "engineered" by way of topic-driven leading essays. Hardy and I have also intervened and restricted contributions to the discussion at different points with the goal of maintaining a more reflective or scholarly format and forestalling essentialist or under-critical commentary; this has not been a direct cause for that loss of diversity, however, because we only intervened significantly in the case of about five contributions, two of which were revised according to suggestions we made. It may be that the perceived possibility of intervention was itself a deterrent to wider participation, though I think the more obvious deterrents were the excellent and formidable leading essays solicited for each week's digest.

At the end of the last presentism Roundtable, Hugh Grady lamented the fact that so few, if any, of the participants engaged with the initial reading list he proposed, noting that not a single contribution quoted or referred to those works. The same is true in this case, though I anticipated this problem. In the case of presentism, there are relatively few sources to turn to, and those that do exist usefully lay the groundwork for further discussion. Authorship and intention are much larger topic areas and devising a required reading list that does justice to them or that anticipates where the discussion will go was a much more difficult task. Far more useful were the sources brought into the discussion by leading essayists: Alan Dessen's use of Cary Mazer's article on intention and the theatre, for example, led directly to Mazer's later participation in the forum; equally compelling were discussions revolving around Derrida, Wittgenstein, Searle and others, particularly in the dialogue between Duncan Salkeld and David Schalkwyk.

Grady also argued that in the first Roundtable contributors, perhaps as a result

of their failure to engage with the existing scholarship, often talked at cross purposes. There was a much greater sense of ongoing dialogue in this current Roundtable, particularly between the leading essayists, but also between the essayists and respondents to them from the list. There is a danger for sophisticated conceptual arguments to devolve into abstract generalities and misunderstandings when participation is widened to a group such as this; this was the nature of the criticism, or part of it, made by Gabriel Egan towards the latter half of the Roundtable, and voiced by others to me off list. My feeling, however, was that the many theoretical and philosophical positions raised in the Roundtable were useful and compelling. Another criticism made both on and off list is that the many textual cruxes proposed by John Drakakis, Larry Weiss, Duncan Salkeld, and Steve Urkowitz, among others, largely fell by the wayside, and that the discussion tended towards the abstract rather than the concrete. While this is the pitfall of the intention debate, I find this starting and stalling of textually focused discussion curious since many of the liveliest threads on the regular list revolve around such cruxes. At several points during the Roundtable, I also attempted to steer the dialogue in certain directions, but these suggestions were largely met with silence.

I think the greatest difficulty facing the Roundtable is, ironically, the electronic medium. There is a growing body of research to show that literacy behaviours differ significantly when readers engage with screen text versus traditional print media, some researchers even suggesting that reading cognition is itself evolving (see, for example, Coiro, di Sessa; there is also a recent article in *The Atlantic* by Nicholas Carr, "Is Google Making Us Stupid?"). Even though SHAKSPER posts are delivered to my email client, I tend to read them the same way I read web pages: following the headers that interest me, reading the first few sentences, skimming the rest, and jumping to embedded hyperlinks or returning to browse subsequent posts. This is not merely a problem of interest and intellectual self-discipline, but may extend to higher cognitive functions such as being able to identify an argument, to contextualize writing in terms of writer and intended audience, and to formulate a critical response to it (the relative inconvenience of highlighting text and writing marginal comments when reading on electronic media is often cited as a symptomatic cause of this problem). The nature of the electronic medium might therefore be counter-productive to the kind of reflective critical encounter the Roundtable seeks to encourage. In short, I suspect many on the list are not reading longer digests, or not reading them fully, nor are they forming independent critical responses to them, and not merely for want of interest in the topic.

On the other side of the coin, there are many positive aspects to the global and electronic nature of the Roundtable, as with SHAKSPER more broadly. The Internet fosters diversity and plurality, and is arguably a more democratized medium for professional scholarship (witness recent discussions on SHAKSPER about

institutional subscription fees and open-access publication). The Internet is generally global, though participation on SHAKSPER is restricted to those fluent in English and is usually dominated by Anglo-American perspectives. Perhaps most importantly, the electronic medium of SHAKSPER fosters, at least in principal, a critical awareness of the diverse activities and attitudes that shape not just our understanding of Shakespeare and the drama of his period, but our assumptions about Shakespeare's place in our shared and distinct cultures and societies, and the priorities that are assigned to his writing by markedly different groups.

In an article addressing critical reading and literacy, Cervetti, Pardales and Damico argue that the foundation of a liberal-humanist critical reading practice rests on epistemological and ontological assumptions that include authorial intention: that knowledge is gained through a process of sense making, deduction and rational analysis; that reality is directly knowable and can serve as a referent for interpretation; and that detecting the author's knowable intentions has traditionally been the basis for higher levels of interpretation across numerous disciplines. In place of humanist reading, they offer a model of "critical literacy": "In essence, students of critical literacy approach textual meaning making as a process of construction, not exegesis; one imbues a text with meaning rather than extracting meaning from it. More important, textual meaning is understood in the context of social, historic, and power relations, not solely as the product or intention of an author." They argue further, borrowing from mostly Frankfurt school critical theory, that "meanings are always contested (never givens), and are related to ongoing struggles in society for the possession of knowledge, power, status, and material resources."

These arguments should be familiar to us, and are perhaps even simplistic for our purposes, but their appearance in reading and literacy research offers an astonishing point of comparison; they could be card-carrying presentists when they write that "meanings emerge only in relation to other meanings and practices within specific sociopolitical contexts. From this perspective, authors create texts and individuals interpret them within discursive systems that regulate what it means to know in a particular setting." More to the point, they isolate authorial intention as being at the centre of the liberal-humanist tradition and attempt to decentre it when they argue for a different kind of reading whose goal is the development of a critical consciousness, a consciousness of power, social justice, and "differences across race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and so on."

A global electronic critical forum, especially one about authorial intention, should therefore be well-poised to meet this goal of critical consciousness; of, more specifically, widening participation, democratizing conventional scholarship in an open-access environment, and developing an awareness of the

contestable power relations of scholarly discourse. As David Schalkwyk argued at one point, "the argument about what kinds of things we want to do as institutionalised beings (professional scholars, critics, historians, and so on) is a matter of institutional debate, politics, and power." The Roundtable and SHAKSPER more generally are uniquely poised to challenge those very institutional debates from the electronic margins. But the fact that the majority of the discussion on the current Roundtable has been restricted to mostly academic dialogue reinforces the point that scholarly discourse is largely impenetrable and self-serving. As a critical forum, the Roundtable has worked remarkably well. It's been far more productive and educating for me than many of the conference seminars I've attended or organized; the responses and consequent dialogue, in particular, have been far more substantial than is possible in the typical two-hour seminar format. Also very successful was the dialogue, though engineered, between different textual practices from criticism and theory to editing, performance and theatre history. I'm particularly proud of this aspect of the Roundtable; this kind of exchange is rare in professional circles. However, it would have been even more productive to hear from the perspective of actual theatre practitioners and those engaged in different aspects of popular culture and Shakespeare production.

While there are clear resonances between the literacy article I've quoted above and the debate we've seen here, the Roundtable has also demonstrated the necessary and irremediable complexity of authorial intention, not only across different textual practices such as editing and performance, but, as I've tried to argue, to literary criticism as a distinct discipline. The poststructuralist argument against intention is well-rehearsed, but I would like to have seen greater intersection with narrative studies and narratological theory, which is more directly concerned with literary aspects of the text and the text's reception within reading communities. This was a view shared with me off list by John V. Knapp, editor of *\_Style\_*, and this is a goal we'll seek to meet as we make the transition to the journal, with a particular emphasis on the utility of narratology to the study of drama.

In summary, what I think the Roundtable should aim to achieve is, as Hardy has maintained from the start, a mode of reflective critical discussion comparable to what you would find in a conference seminar or similar professional outlet, but making the most of the convenience and ease of access SHAKSPER offers. From my own perspective, I think the Roundtable should aim to widen scholarly discussion to new communities of readers and writers, to rethink for whom and by whom such knowledge is produced, and to develop a meta-cognitive awareness of the uses to which such textual understanding is put. Some brief practical suggestions: (1.) I would dispense with the initial reading list or greatly abbreviate it, but instead compile an ongoing bibliography; (2.) in an ideal world, this bibliography would be mounted on a web page and hyperlinked to PDF

files, as would in-text citations; (3.) when possible, contributors might annotate sources or relevant aspects of sources for readers; (4.) contributors of longer posts (leading essayists, for example) might also abstract their own contributions, allowing readers to read the short version and refer to the longer version if interest compels them; (5.) younger scholars and graduate students might be motivated to participate if a model entry for participation in the Roundtable were mounted on the SHAKSPER website, to be included under the "Professional Activities" section of a scholarly CV; finally, (6.) I would suggest that future topics for the Roundtable, in keeping with the electronic medium, continue to stir things up, challenging the parameters of conventional scholarship and thinking.

The digest below includes a total of thirteen contributions, all previously published to the list. I reproduce them below in chronological order. The discussion may continue from here, but will do so in a regular thread list. In a few days, I'll be posting to the list a CFP for the `_Style_` issue. By way of conclusion, let me extend my warm thanks to the many contributors over the past several weeks, including, but not limited to, our outstanding leading essayists. Considerable thanks must also go to both Hardy and John Knapp whose presence on the sidelines of the discussion has been indispensable.

[1]-----

From: Duncan Salkeld <D.Salkeld@chi.ac.uk>  
Date: Friday, 27 Jun 2008 11:11:06 +0000 (GMT)  
Subject: SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: SHK 19.0364 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Hugh Grady raises a fascinating point - - the relationship of the 'aesthetic' to intentionality. But it's not so easy to see how a distinction between 'conventional' and 'aesthetic' language (if it can be drawn at all) ties in with an equivalent distinction between 'non-intended' and 'intended' language. As a side issue, I can see very good reasons for regarding genres as shared conventional literary modes with their own social purposes but also as exemplars of writerly intention.

David Schalkwyk seems content to hold that intention may be 'indispensable' or 'inescapable' but ultimately doesn't matter. For him, you can drop talk of intention and just stick to the evidence. But since evidence must be evidence of something, and sometimes of intention or purpose, that is precisely what you have to address. I don't think the debate comes down to a loaded choice between Shakespeare the fixed intending genius in one corner and the changing world of performance in the other. Cary DiPietro gives a very honest assessment of the pedagogical issues intentionality raises, and sensibly recommends that consciousness merits a place in the discussion. In philosophy, as in literary

criticism, intentionality raises tricky problems not easily resolved. I simply maintain that avoiding talk of authorial intention at all costs seems an odd and limiting way to go about Shakespeare studies.

[2]-----

From: Kenneth Chan <kckc@pacific.net.sg>

Date: Monday, 30 Jun 2008 10:33:26 +0800

Subject: 19.0364 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Comment: Re: SHK 19.0364 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Hugh Grady writes:

>The discussion on intention in this Roundtable has been a very full one,  
>but I have one more topic to add to the mix: the issue of aesthetic meaning  
>in the discussion of the interpretation of Shakespeare's works. I want to  
>emphasize the difference between a conventional message, delivered in  
>a concrete social context from a known speaker to a known audience -- and  
>the communications situation of an artwork -- let us take the drama as an  
>example -- in which language is put to fictional, emotive purposes outside of  
>normal social contexts, by an author or authors whose words are formed  
>within generic and theatrical traditions not invented by the author and mediated  
>by actors, directors, and others, to an audience of persons not personally  
>known and representing a multitude of personal biases, intellectual frameworks,  
>and familiarities with the story, language, and conventions of the drama.

Hugh Grady's point with regards to aesthetic meaning is an important one. Concerning authorial intention, let us imagine, for the sake of argument, that a playwright did carefully craft an entire play as a cohesive unit for the purpose of conveying a specific meaning through the emotive medium of drama, a process of reaching the audience by having them live through the experience. Certainly, we must concede the possibility that a playwright may have this intention.

The playwright, however, has to contend with the fact that language has its limitations. The meaning of any isolated sentence or passage may always be deemed ambiguous to a certain extent because of the limitations of language. Nonetheless, is it not an over-generalization to then conclude that it is not even a legitimate or useful exercise to attempt understanding the meaning of an entire play (as a whole unit) as the author intended? Are the limitations of our language so severe that even the intended aesthetic meaning of an entire play -- carefully crafted to convey a specific meaning -- rendered completely irretrievable?

Kenneth Chan

[3]-----

From: Robin Hamilton <robin.hamilton2@btInternet.com>

Date: Monday, 30 Jun 2008 03:42:43 +0100

Subject: 19.0371 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Comment: Re: SHK 19.0371 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

How to escape the regress of intention?

How do we know what the intention of the author of Hamlet/"Hamlet"/\_Hamlet\_ \*is?

We know it because he writes \_here\_, that this is what he "means".

He says it (except he doesn't) \*here, in a set of words:

"This is what I meant in Amleth."

Comes down to it, it's text(s) all the way down.

I 'believe' in Hamlet in the same way that I believe in god.

"Intention" is literary criticism's equivalent to intelligent design.

{Somewhere, some person, it might have been Derrida, but I think it was earlier with Kierkegaard in \_The Concept of Irony With Constant Reference To Socrates\_, points out that Socrates refused to write anything down due to his distrust of the written word, with the result that Plato promptly transmogrified him into a figure created in orthography.

Angels weep!}

Robin Hamilton

[4]-----

From: Kenneth Chan <kckc@pacific.net.sg>

Date: Thursday, 03 Jul 2008 12:56:14 +0800

Subject: 19.0378 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Comment: Re: SHK 19.0378 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Robin Hamilton writes:

>"Intention" is literary criticism's equivalent to intelligent design.

I am afraid this analogy is inappropriate. There is a significant difference between the two.

It is because of the fact that the presence of a creator God cannot be proved scientifically that intelligent design is heavily disputed. That, however, is not the case with regards to a work of literature. Every work of literature has a creator, the author, and an author can certainly have intentions. Whether or not we can discern the author's intentions correctly is, of course, the problem.

Kenneth Chan

[5]-----

From: Hugh Grady <HughGrady@comcast.net>  
Date: Monday, 7 Jul 2008 11:41:57 -0400  
Subject: 19.0364 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: RE: SHK 19.0364 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

In regard to Kenneth Chan's question, "to attempt understanding the meaning of an entire play (as a whole unit) as the author intended? Are the limitations of our language so severe that even the intended aesthetic meaning of an entire play - carefully crafted to convey a specific meaning - rendered completely irretrievable?"

We don't have to simply speculate about such an experiment. The archives of Shakespearean criticism, and especially those dating from c. 1900 on, represent a huge array of such attempts, following the widely influential canons of positivist historical scholarship. The results: such readings for Shakespeare's intentions are never conclusive and continually change as history progresses.

An additional point: the purpose of my calling attention to the issue of aesthetic meaning was to highlight the point of the non-conceptual (but rational) nature of aesthetic knowledge. If we think of "intention" as a set of clearly expressible concepts, I believe we will be continually frustrated in our attempts to agree on such concepts in interpreting artworks like Shakespeare's.

Best,  
Hugh Grady

[6]-----

From: Kenneth Chan <kckc@pacific.net.sg>  
Date: Tuesday, 08 Jul 2008 12:44:55 +0800  
Subject: 19.0382 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0382 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Hugh Grady writes:

- >In regard to Kenneth Chan's question, " to attempt understanding the
- >meaning of an entire play (as a whole unit) as the author intended?
- >Are the limitations of our language so severe that even the intended
- >aesthetic meaning of an entire play - carefully crafted to convey a
- >specific meaning - is rendered completely irretrievable?"
- >
- >We don't have to simply speculate about such an experiment. The
- >archives of Shakespearean criticism, and especially those dating from
- >c. 1900 on, represent a huge array of such attempts, following the widely
- >influential canons of positivist historical scholarship. The results: such
- >readings for Shakespeare's intentions are never conclusive and
- >continually change as history progresses.

The same, of course, can be said for the historical progress in physics, or in any other science. The theories of science have repeatedly changed throughout history, as paradigms shift, as new discoveries come to light, and as new ways of research and understanding are developed.

Physicists, however, do not declare, for example, that "a theory linking gravitation and electromagnetism together" is impossible just because, over the centuries, scientists have still failed to come up with such a theory. Such a declaration would presume that we, humans, are infallible, that we have already achieved all that can be achieved, and that further progress is simply impossible. Physicists, therefore, do not make such a declaration because they realize that it would be presumptuous and also that such a declaration would slam the door to further progress and development.

I am suggesting here that we, likewise, refrain from making a similar presumptuous declaration with regards to Shakespeare's works.

Kenneth Chan

[7]-----

From: Alan Horn <alanshorn@gmail.com>

Date: Tuesday, 8 Jul 2008 04:59:45 -0400

Subject: 19.0382 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Comment: Re: SHK 19.0382 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

I agree with Robin Hamilton that there can be something circular about discussing what Shakespeare may have intended. What does it mean to take an author's intentions into account if the only direct evidence of these intentions are the works themselves? In doing so, is one doing anything more than simply reading in the normal way?

Similar questions come up even in the cases of authors whose intentions, unlike Shakespeare's, we do have direct, extra-textual evidence of. As Frank Kermode notes in his essay "The Single, Correct Interpretation" (in *The Art of Telling*), readers don't always take much account of such evidence, especially when it seems to conflict with their own intuitions. He gives this example: "Critics used to be troubled by a passage in a letter of Jane Austen to Cassandra which appeared to state that the subject of *Mansfield Park* was 'ordination,' for although Edmund's taking of orders, and Mary Crawford's attitude to the clergy, are certainly relevant to the design of the book, it would not have occurred to most readers that ordination was what the book was ABOUT."

It seems to me that the main value of speculation about an author's intentions is as a heuristic for getting at the specific social contexts in which and for which a given work was made. After all, it is quite true -- as Hugh Grady points out -- that over a century of historical scholarship on Shakespeare has failed to arrive at a "conclusive" account of his intentions. And in fact consideration of the original contexts of a work is less likely to lead to a singular, definitive reading than to the uncovering of an even wider range of semantic possibilities. But this is only a problem if one takes the narrow aim of recovering an author's intentions as one's ultimate goal.

Consider, for instance, how an awareness of the contemporary competing sectarian conceptions of the afterlife complicates our reading of *Hamlet*. This understanding raises questions about Shakespeare's intentions that will never finally be resolved. But are they therefore not worth asking?

Alan Horn

[8]-----

From: Duncan Salkeld <D.Salkeld@chi.ac.uk>

Date: Tuesday, 08 Jul 2008 10:21:24 +0000 (GMT)

Subject: 19.0382 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Comment: Re: SHK 19.0382 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

I have the utmost regard for Hugh Grady (whom I only know through his publications), but I am hard pushed to see how 'the nature of aesthetic knowledge' could be 'non-conceptual'. I find the category of 'aesthetic knowledge' enigmatic too. But I'd like to add that intention is significant as more than 'a set of clearly expressible concepts'. I tried to show earlier that where the evidence for Shakespeare's intention is unclear or contradictory, this matters (to bibliographers and editors at least).

It also seems possible to exaggerate the effects of historical change and under-rate the obstinacy of certain textual properties (eg. variants, false

starts, duplications, speech prefixes, ghost or mute characters, kinds of indecision and so forth). Put directly and simply, how different is your or my 'Shakespeare' to, say, Nicholas Rowe's 'Shakespeare' of 1685 (4th Folio) or 1709 (Rowe's edition)? The answer to this question is not, 'We can never know' because then you can't make claims for historical change; nor is it, '100% different', because, if so, we could not even begin to make the comparison. Taking a via media is the difficult, puzzling and fascinating part. The point is not only how much alters, but what also is intransitive, what attributes or properties persist through time, or what products arise from the complex interaction between critic and text that are not reducible merely to a prevailing, temporary consensus. This requires thinking as a presentist and historicist all at once.

On a separate note, I'm not convinced by arguments that take the form: (a) Shakespeare might have had a single intention by a single and entire play/poem; (b) We can't know what that intention is; therefore (c) Shakespeare's intentions remain unknowable/not worth discussing. At such a naively holistic level, intentionality is entirely vapid. But when examining particular textual details and their relationships, intention becomes not only a question worth raising but sometimes essential. Naturally, one has a choice of whether to address it directly or indirectly, and a critic or editor still harping on intentionality would be tedious indeed. But to imagine possible a detailed analysis of Shakespeare without even the most latent regard for the writer's choices, strategies, indecisions, or intentions is unrealistic.

[9]-----

From: Larry Weiss <larry@lweiss.net>  
Date: Thursday, 10 Jul 2008 23:26:14 -0400  
Subject: 19.0385 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0385 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

Duncan Salkeld concludes his latest contribution with a comment he expresses as an aside:

>On a separate note, I'm not convinced by arguments that take the form:  
>(a) Shakespeare might have had a single intention by a single and entire  
>play/poem; (b) We can't know what that intention is; therefore (c) Shakespeare's  
>intentions remain unknowable/not worth discussing. At such a naively holistic  
>level, intentionality is entirely vapid. But when examining particular textual  
>details and their relationships, intention becomes not only a question worth  
raising  
>but sometimes essential.

This is very similar to the point I made about the difference between what an

author intended by his words (critical analysis) and what words the author intended to use (textual analysis). I regret that this Roundtable is about to end without anyone addressing the matter explicitly, not even to offer a refutation, despite Cary's request for a discussion of the point.

[10]-----  
From: Robin Hamilton <robin.hamilton2@btInternet.com>  
Date: Friday, 11 Jul 2008 09:21:00 +0100  
Subject: Intentionalism

I still fail to be convinced of the utility of the concept of authorial intention.

For one thing, "authorial intention" is simply one of several modes of defining the meaning of a written text.

There are better examples to chose than Shakespeare.

Is the text of Thomas Wyatt's "Farewell Love, and all thy laws forever ..." that of the Egerton MS, the closest we have to what the "historical author" wrote, or does it involve the version found in the Devonshire MS (text as process) or should we hew to the Tottel version which was read by every major English poet between 1550 and 1900?

Leave aside the notorious fact that authors lie, and even if one could drag the ghost of Shakespeare kicking and screaming from his or her unquiet grave, who'd believe?

Especially as the report would be mediated.

It's orthoglyphs all the way down, as Jane probably said to Cassandra.

Robin Hamilton

{In scribing these glyphs in pixels on your screen, I violate my own integrity, but who the frelk cares, mon sembabble, ma soeur?}

[11]-----  
From: Robin Hamilton <robin.hamilton2@btInternet.com>  
Date: Friday, 11 Jul 2008 10:00:50 +0100  
Subject: 19.0385 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0385 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

>Consider, for instance, how an awareness of the contemporary competing  
>sectarian conceptions of the afterlife complicates our reading of Hamlet.

Oddly, that's easily answered.

Why does Hamlet's daddy's ghost return from a catholic purgatorial afterlife?

Because if he didn't, there'd be no play.

Doesn't matter diddly squat whether or not Shakespeare was a believing catholic, but the play needs Purgatory.

RH

[12]-----

From: Robin Hamilton <robin.hamilton2@btInternet.com>

Date: Sunday, 13 Jul 2008 08:03:38 +0100

Subject: Intentionalism

This has little to do with Shakespeare but much to do with the utility of the concept of "intentionalism" in the editorial process.

I'm concerned at the moment with the "authenticity" (deliberate scare quotes) of broadside song texts, printed in a roughly 150 year period between 1700 and 1850.

Many of these texts can clearly be related to documented historical figures -- Jack Hall (hanged for robbery at Tyburn in 1707), Jack Sheppard (Tyburn, 1724), Thomas Mount (Rhode Island, 1780) and David Haggart (Tollcross, Edinburgh, 1821).

Other than Sinfu' Davey, I seriously doubt that any of these figures scribed their own laments.

Of all of them, Jack Hall is in some ways the most intriguing.

He exists in the Old Bailey Records, the Ordinary of Newgate's Accounts, Alexander Smith's account of Highwaymen, and most later versions of The Newgate Calendar.

Lots of material for an Intentionalist perspective here, you'd think.

{Except the glossary which the editor of the cant section of Memoirs of the Right Villainous John Hall, the Late Famous and Notorious Robber. Penn'd from His Own Mouth Sometime Before His Death. London: printed for J. Baker, 1714 lifts the vocabulary straight from an earlier printed text.}

Also, of course, Jack or John or Sam Hall achieves immortality via a 1850s comic

song, as "Sam Hall, Damn your eyes."

As far as I can make out, the text which most represents the moment when Jack Hall was hung in 1707 only exists in a broadside ballad (Pickering, for the Toy Theatre) dating from the 1830s at the earliest.

... and when it comes to "To the Hundreds of Drury I write," which seems to pretty much dissociate itself from Jack Sheppard from the start, from the moment it's printed the day after Sheppard dies, as "Jack Sheppard's Farewell" and resurfaces as "The Bowman Prig's Farewell" (independent of Sheppard) in Francis Place -- 1800, reporting songs he'd heard in the 1780, and Thomas Mount, topped in Rhode Island in the 1780s ...

Even a time machine wouldn't help.

The point I'm tediously making is that there are serious editorial judgements to be made on a whole range of issues at least mildly relevant to Shakespeare, and it seems to me that none of them are usefully illuminated by the concept of "intentionality".

Possibly the worst is a ghost footnote which reaches as far as (at least) Arden3 \_As You Like It\_, to do with "Peddlar's Greek".

D'oh!

That one at least can be tracked down and put to rest with a stake through the heart.

{I blame this on as much as anyone else Thomas Dekker, whose joke at the expense of Thomas Harman's slightly lunatic attempt to justify his coinage of the term "cursitors" cascades down to the assertion that Cursitors (associated with drawlatches and roberdsmen) constituted the Second Order of the Old Canting Crew.}

It's orthoglyphs all the way down, and intention simply doesn't figure when it comes to making practical editorial judgements.

Robin Hamilton

[13]-----  
From: Felix de Villiers <felixdevilliers@alice.it>  
Date: Sunday, 13 Jul 2008 04:46:23 +0200  
Subject: SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

For when the work is finished, it has, as it were, an independent life of it's

own, and may deliver a message far other than that which was put in its lips to say. Oscar Wilde

The aim of this contribution is to move away from what one might call the poet's external intentions and to pursue the direction of those that or more hidden and manifest themselves of their own accord. These may be considered under three closely related headings:

- 1.. The non-conceptual aspect of art, which diverted intentions may lead to.
- 2.. Involuntary intentions.
- 3.. What we may not know about our own culture and the intentions it has produced in us, and those it fosters in us.

As far as what I call the external the intentions are concerned, some of the most valuable work that has been done for the Roundtable is summed up in Duncan Salkeld's recent posting (8 July): "But when examining particular textual details and their relationships, intention becomes not only a question worth raising but sometimes essential." In the same letter, referring to Hugh Grady's posting, he writes that he is hard pushed to see how "the nature of aesthetic knowledge" could be "non-conceptual." Grady's affirmation, while aiming in the right direction, is a contradiction in terms, since knowledge is necessarily conceptual. Perhaps he should have said that the content of art has a non-conceptual aspect and that art has tried to elude the grasp of conceptual language, which, throughout history, has been misused for repressive purposes. The non-conceptual aspect of art is immediately evident in music and painting; poetry relies on conceptual language but tries to transform it by aesthetic means: context, word patterns, rhythm rhymes, images, assonance and alliteration, and other techniques. But all these arts are created by conceptual beings and must necessarily be understood by them, even if a residue of enigmatic content will always escape us.

T.W.Adorno, in his *Aesthetic Philosophy* writes: "The more art as an object is subjectively remoulded and freed from its mere intentions, the more articulately it serves as the model of a non-conceptual language that eludes signification." Here Adorno has his eye on modern art, but his observation is closely related to his view of aesthetics in general, in which art eludes the grasp of 'mere intentions.' One of his favourite expressions is that the work must go "where it wants to go of it's own accord." This phrase comes in *Klangfiguren*, which also deals with the contemporary music of his time, but the idea arises in all his considerations of traditional art, which distances itself from normalised conceptuality as in the transformation of the latter in a lyrical poem. (see *Noten zur Literatur*).

Adorno's remark about art eluding 'mere intentions' leads us to a consideration

of a more intelligible but nevertheless still enigmatic evasions of normal conceptuality. In creating art there is always and intense struggle between our rational selves and the material we work on, which has a natural tendency to go its own way, following the dictates of an alter ego which consumes our external intentions. Charlotte Bronte, reviewing "Wuthering Heights", wondered whether it was right to create beings like Heathcliff and she answers, saying, "I scarcely think it is." But then she goes onto to declare that there are moments when all our intentions are thrown aside and "be the work grim or glorious, dread or divine, you have little choice left but quiescent adoption." Who would not think of Shakespeare in those words?

He leads us through a devious labyrinth of intentions gone astray. In the foul depths to which Macbeth and his Lady sink, there are glimmers of a lost humanity which the other characters don't possess. A strangled humanity mutters Macbeth's words:

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,  
To the last syllable of recorded time;  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death. Out, Out, brief candle!  
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player.  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
And then is heard no more: it is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing.

What extraordinary inspiration put these words into the mouth of Macbeth, beyond all conceivable intention, in this monster of a man, and yet so aesthetically just? The three repetitions of 'to-morrow,' are in themselves nothing, but express, in their context, an ineffable poignancy, hard to explain. Here the other self, the lyrical psyche, has come out trumps. And continues to do so line by line.

And then there are cultural and historical intentions nurtured in us of which we are not aware. I doubt whether Shakespeare knew that he was a Mannerist. I agree entirely with Arnold Hauser, who classifies him as a renaissance man, a realist, yes, but for the most part a Mannerist. He breaks all domestic boundaries. One might at first think, in his plays, yes, but not so much in his Sonnets. But they are exemplary of his Mannerism. This is evident in the lyrical 'I' that abases itself to the point of madness, suicide, death. That was surely one of his unintentional intentions, which leads us again down stray paths and hidden intentions in the Sonnets. Shakespeare demolishes the conceptual I as a dominating instance, in poetry, if not in life, in which we have to survive

somehow with our more or less hardened egos. There are still people who try to extract -from the spuriously normal world - the would-be happy family man out of the Sonnets, a man who is nowhere to be found in them. The one Sonnet that refers to such a family is mythologized immediately by its concord with music. If the young man had gone straight ahead and produced the duplicate son, the Sonnets would have lost their reason for being, the aesthetic veil would have been torn. As it is the imaginary son becomes a mythical figure in the Sonnets, in one of them he is addressed as "your golden time." And yet, and yet, I do believe that Shakespeare would like to have torn the aesthetic veil. There are examples in Beethoven and Mahler of desperate attempts to do so. So much in Shakespeare rebels against the magic of the aesthetic mirror. Prospero gives up magic hoping for the best. Macbeth, in the speech quoted above, seems to face a black impenetrable wall and, in their negativity, his words belong to one of the most passionate appeals for humanity that I have read. It is here perhaps that one finds Shakespeare's innermost intention. But he cannot break the spell as long as he remains in the realm of fiction.

A note: I have nothing against happy families and only wish there were more of them. Art moves on a different plane.

#### Works Cited

Adorno, Theodor W. *\_Aesthetische Theorie\_*. Suhrkamp, 1974.

----- *\_Klangfiguren\_*. Suhrkamp, 1963.

----- *\_Noten zur Literatur 1\_*. Suhrkamp, 1973.

Bronte, Emily. *\_Wuthering Heights\_*. London: Dent, 1963.

Carr, Nicholas. "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" *\_The Atlantic\_* (July/August 2008). 17 July 2008. <<http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200807/google>>.

Cervetti, Gina, Michael J. Pardales and James S. Damico. "A Tale of Differences: Comparing the Traditions, Perspectives, and Educational Goals of Critical Reading and Critical Literacy." *\_Reading Online\_* 4.9 (2001). 17 July 2008 <[http://www.readingonline.org/articles/art\\_index.asp?HREF=/articles/cervetti/index.html](http://www.readingonline.org/articles/art_index.asp?HREF=/articles/cervetti/index.html)>.

Coiro, Julie. "Reading Comprehension on the Internet: Expanding our Understanding of Reading Comprehension to Encompass New Literacies." *\_The Reading Teacher\_* 56.6 (2003). Reprinted online March 2003 *\_Reading Online\_*. 17 July 2008.

<[http://www.readingonline.org/electronic/elec\\_index.asp?HREF=/electronic/RT/2-03\\_column/index.html](http://www.readingonline.org/electronic/elec_index.asp?HREF=/electronic/RT/2-03_column/index.html)>

Cook, Hardy M. "Authorial Intention." Online posting. 7 Sept. 2007 to 17 Oct. 2007. \_SHAKSPER: The Global Electronic Shakespeare Conference\_. 21 April 2008. <<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2007/0576.html>>

diSessa, Andrea. \_Changing minds: Computers, Learning and Literacy\_. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000.

Hauser, Arnold. \_Storia sociale dell'arte, Einaudi\_, second volume. [Place: Publisher?,] 1987.

Wilde, Oscar. "The Critic as Artist" [no publication details given].

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0436.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0433 Thursday, 24 July 2008

From: David Schalkwyk <David.Schalkwyk@uct.ac.za>  
Date: Wednesday, 23 Jul 2008 05:25:56 +0200  
Subject: SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions (Addendum)

I've just rejoined the land of electronic communication to see that I've being able to contribute to Cary's last Roundtable Digest. I'm pleased to see, however, his invitation to continue the discussion as part of the normal conversation. I'd like to thank Cary for being a superb co-ordinator, as well as my fellow contributors for their tough but open-minded engagement.

My desire to say one more thing stems from Larry Weiss's lament (on 10 July) that the "distinction between what an author intended by his words (critical analysis) and what words the author intended to use (textual analysis)" has not been "addressed explicitly." I think that Larry is right that this distinction is closely related to Duncan Salkeld's insistence that at "a naively holistic level, intentionality is entirely vapid. But when examining particular textual details and their relationships, intention becomes not only a question worth raising but sometimes essential." Clarifying this distinction will also, I hope, cast light on my own "flip-flop" between declaring intention inescapable and ultimately entirely heuristic or even redundant.

I responded to the distinction that Larry makes in an earlier post, where I pointed out that the kind of intention that informs the words an author meant to use is invoked by some philosophers as "categorical" intention. Such intention

also encompasses what Hugh Grady calls "aesthetic" meaning: that is to say, the intention to write a play of a particular genre with a specific, but broadly conceived, aesthetic effect and affect.

Leaving aside for the moment whether such "aesthetic meaning" is or is not necessarily conceptual, I think a good case can be made for the position that to speak of these things (this or that word? a play or an epic? a tragedy or a comedy?) must involve an appeal to intention, or is considerably helped by an appeal to what the author wanted to do (of course, the author may, for a number of reasons, not have succeeded). However, I think an equally good case can be made for the position that when it comes to deciding on the meaning of these words, or that passage, or those images, an appeal to an author's intention is not only unnecessary, but can in fact be positively unhelpful (see my argument relating the heuristic nature of intention, its redundancy, and the fact that the appeal to intention is in these cases a rhetorical ploy in an essentially political debate).

Now the intriguing question is: what is the difference? Why intention in one case but not in the other? The answer, I propose, lies not in the nature of intention, but rather in that of language. It's the introduction of meaning that severely attenuates (even if it does not negate) the controlling reach of intention. I can intend to use "solid" rather than "sullied", and it makes sense to ask which word I meant to use (even if there is too little evidence to decide the matter). But when an interpreter asks about the meaning of "solid" rather than "sullied", he or she is invoking not a binary choice between two signifiers, but rather a complex set of relations to other signifiers and contexts (local and historical) through which a signified (or signifieds) are produced that lie beyond the controlling or determining ambit of any intention. The choice of signifiers is intentionally driven, but the production of signifieds ultimately escapes intention. (The latter is Derrida's argument that intention cannot control the field of meaning.) Humpty Dumpty is wrong to say that words mean what he wants them to mean; he would be right, however, to say that only he can choose to use these rather than those words.

The interesting thing about this argument is that it shows that whether we can know a particular intention or not is irrelevant in both cases. There may not be sufficient evidence to determine whether Shakespeare intended to use "solid" rather than "sullied", but that does not mean that it is illegitimate to approach the question via the concept of intention. On the other hand, an author may tell us what s/he intended a text to mean, but there is no reason to believe him or her if our reading the text contradicts this (*Mansfield Park* is about ordination?) Here we trust the tale, not the teller. This means that the question of knowledge of an author's intentions is irrelevant to the issue about whether we should be talking about intentions at all. It's a conceptual, not an

epistemological issue.

Another noteworthy point is that in practice questions of a textual sort are determined by decisions of an interpretive bent. So, in the absence of any firm evidence about whether Shakespeare meant to use "solid" rather than "sullied" (or "sallied"--or "rest" rather than "rust" in \_R&J\_) editors and critics will decide on the basis of which signifier fits best with their overall reading of the meaning of the speech, character or situation. It may be for this reason that Duncan wishes to retain an appeal to intention as a necessity: to determine the factual details of a text independently of a favorite interpretation of that text, or to prevent a settled signified derived independently of what the author wanted as a signifier from determining the signifier that he could well have wanted.

This is very rough, and belated. But I hope it will be of interest to some, and I trust that I will be corrected where I have gone egregiously wrong.

David

\*\*\*\*\*

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0454.html>

The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 19.0451 Thursday, 31 July 2008

From: Duncan Salkeld <D.Salkeld@chi.ac.uk>  
Date: Saturday, 26 Jul 2008 12:20:56 +0000 (GMT)  
Subject: 19.0433 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions  
Comment: Re: SHK 19.0433 SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions

David Schalkwyk identifies very clearly why I have urged the appeal to intention as an occasional necessity: 'to determine the factual details of a text independently of a favorite interpretation of that text' [and] 'to prevent a settled signified derived independently of what the author wanted as a signifier from determining the signifier that he could well have wanted'. But I do so not to freeze the text into a timeless rigid structure determined solely by its genius-author but simply as a way of acknowledging evident signs of its historical moment. To this end, may I cite a few brief examples of topical allusion as an indication of authorial intent?

1.  
Were now the general of our gracious empress,  
As in good time he may, from Ireland coming,  
Bringing rebellion broached on his sword,  
How many would the peaceful city quit,

To welcome him! (Henry V, 5.0.29-34)

If this is an allusion to the Earl of Essex (as most editors and critics concur), then it dates the play to between January and June 1599. On 27 March, Essex had left England for his Ireland expedition. By summer of that year, it was already clear that the venture would fail (see Oxford ed., 1982, 5). So in this instance, the intentionality clearly matters for our knowledge of the play..

2.

... there is, sir, an aery of children, little eyases,  
that cry out on the top of question, and are most  
tyrannically clapped for't: (Hamlet, 2.2.339-42)

If this is an allusion to the boys who played at Blackfriars from Michaelmas 1600, as most editions accept, then at least part of its historical interest/significance lies in the fact that it dates the play to around this time (see Arden 2 ed., 1982, 1-2).

3. 'Go get thee to Yaughan. Fetch me a stoup of liquor' (Hamlet, 5.1.60-1, Folio text only)

Here the intention is unclear. Oxford and Norton editors emend 'Yaughan' to 'Johan', following Brinsley Nicholson's suggestion in 1871 that this 'Johan' might be a foreign alehouse keeper. Nicholson suggested 'Johan' might be a Dutch version of a name Jonson uses in *The Alchemist*, 'Deaf John'. Given that 'Johan' is a very common Elizabethan spelling of 'Joan', an argument for emending 'Yaughan' to 'Johan' is an argument for rendering 'Johan' as 'Joan' for modern readers and audiences. In as much as we don't know what 'Yaughan' means or refers to, the obscurity arrests what we can make of it: intention thus matters even when unclear.

4. When Jonson refers to 'Deaf John' in *The Alchemist* (1.1.85), he alludes (deliberately) to an historical figure, a man who was 'comon about the house' in the Bridewell Hospital (31 January 1600). A note recorded on Saturday 22 December 1604 states, 'It is ordered yt deffe John a poore man in this house shall have a canvass dublett & a paire of hose'. His food allowance each day was eight ounces of bread, a fifth of a pound of beef, a mess of porridge and a quart of beer for dinner, with a little extra beef for supper. By 7 May 1606, he was dead: 'Murrey the officer to have the Romes wch deaf John hadd the said John beinge dead And he must pay iiiis a yeare to the Trer [Treasurer] by xiid a quarter.'

5. Jonson makes reference to another historical figure in *Bartholomew Fair*. Wasp snipes at Mistress Overdo. 'Good Lord! How sharp you are, with being at Bedlam

yesterday! Whetstone has set an edge upon you, has he?' (1.5.22-23). Here Jonson alludes to William Whetstone, a disturbed young man notorious for outbursts in public places and kept at Bethlem Hospital. A census of inmates on 28 June 1624 records that, 'William Whetston hath been here about 18 yeares & is fitt to be kepte'. He died the following year. It makes sense to infer that Jonson intended his some of his audience to 'get the joke'.

Details of (4) and (5) are available in *The Review of English Studies* 2005 56 (225): 379-385. One can claim either that these 'signs of historical moment' are intended topical allusions or (less plausibly) unintended slips of the pen but it makes no sense to argue that they are 'non-intended', as if to imagine they bear no relation of any kind to authorial intention. 'Nor does it make sense to hold that adducing such material perpetuates 'fantasies' of authorial intention (see the CFP). David might perhaps allow that here intention is 'inescapable', though he may also think it redundant. If so, I can agree with him on the first part but not (at least not very much) on the second.

\*\*\*\*\*