SHAKSPER Roundtable on Intentions: The Origins of the Collaboration with *Style*
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Now in its twentieth-first year of serving the academy, SHAKSPER is an edited and moderated, international, e-mail distribution list for discussion among Shakespearean researchers, instructors, students, and anyone sharing their academic interests and concerns. The SHAKSPER digests are delivered, archived, and managed with L-Soft's LISTSERV® software. In addition to the regular mailings to subscribers, anyone can use the Internet to access the archives and the list's other materials from the SHAKSPER web site <www.shaksper.net>. The list's more than a 1,000 members have enrolled from sixty-eight countries; they include prominent Shakespearean textual scholars and bibliographers, editors and critics, as well as university, college, and community-college professors, high-school teachers, undergraduate and graduate students, actors, theatre professionals, authors, poets, playwrights, librarians, computer scientists, lawyers, doctors, retirees, and other interested participants. SHAKSPER endeavors to emphasize the scholarly by providing the opportunity for the formal exchange of ideas through queries and responses regarding literary, critical, textual, theoretical, and performative topics and issues. Announcements of conferences, calls for papers, seminars, lectures, symposia, job openings, the publication of books, the availability of online and print articles, Internet databases and resources, journal contents, and performances and festivals are regular features as are assessments of scholarly books, past and present theatrical productions, and Shakespeare and Shakespeare-inspired films as well as citations and discussions of "popular" culture references to Shakespeare and his works. SHAKSPER also provides occasion for spontaneous informal discussion, eavesdropping, peer review, and a sense of belonging to a worldwide scholarly community. Besides the archive of past discussions, the SHAKSPER web site includes "A Selected Guide to Shakespeare on the Internet," an international directory of Shakespearean institutions, organizations, libraries, and journals; a bibliography of poems, novels, plays, and films inspired by Shakespeare and his works, and much more. In recent years, several special features, discussed later in this paper, have been added to SHAKSPER.

The Origins of the SHAKSPER Roundtable[1]

Many trace the foundations of the Internet to Leonard Kleinrock's early 1960s queuing theory.[2] Queuing theory enabled for packet switching, a method for breaking down large amounts of information into discrete units or packets, then electronically transmitting those packets, before reassembling them into the original message. Packet switching thus provided the theoretical underpinnings for electronic communication. The United States (U.S.) military was responsible for moving the Internet from the theoretical to the practical: having a procedure for transmitting information over vast distances, the U.S. military then required an infrastructure over which its computers could send data. In 1958, at the height of the Cold War and in response to the Soviet Union's launching of Sputnik with its potential military applications, the U.S. military established the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA); then, in the early 1970s, using ARPA funding, the military developed the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET), a bombproof, distributed packet-switching network,

which went worldwide with the Department of Defense's connecting ARPANET supercomputers to other supercomputers at University College in London and at the Royal Radar Establishment in Norway, launching the mode of operations that what would become the Internet as we know it.

As proficiency with computer applications began to spread from scientists and librarians to academics in other disciplines, e-mail was the entry-level Internet application adopted by most. E-mail could be archived and organized on electronic bulletin boards with Usenet newsgroups being generally employed for messages of a mundane nature while listserv software became the preferred method for distributing messages among members with more scholarly or focused interests.[3] By the early 1980s, academics were using BITNET to share electronic mail or to download files and executable programs from electronic bulletin boards. In the early 1990s, hypertext, a protocol for information distribution that embedded links in a text to connect it to other texts, was developed by the European Laboratory for Particle Physics (CERN) and became the basis for such graphical interfaces as the then popular Mosaic program, transforming the Internet into the World Wide Web. The implementation of Mosaic and other graphical interfaces thoroughly changed computing. Instead of typing obscure commands, each often with its own syntax, at a prompt (C:\>__) to execute protocols like FTP, Usenet, and Gopher, users of graphical interfaces used a device, like a "mouse," to maneuver and to point an icon, usually an arrow, to another icon that represented the program, and then clicking that image to execute the command. A world previously the exclusive domain of the military, engineers, scientists, and academics was now opening to the general public, profoundly changing the users on and the content of the Internet.

I first became interested in the potential of academic listservs when I attended a panel at the December 1989 MLA convention in Washington, DC, and heard Willard McCarty, then of the University of Toronto, deliver his paper "Humanist: Lessons from a Global Electronic Seminar," prompting me immediately to sign up for Humanist and to begin to explore this brave new world.[4] A few months later in April 1990 at the SAA Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, I met Kenneth Steele, a graduate student from the University of Toronto. A few months after that (July 1990), he launched SHAKSPER, and I was one of the list's founding members. In less than two years, I was assisting Steele; and, in June 1992, I completely took over from him when he left academia for the commercial world of Internet start-ups. At that time, SHAKSPER had grown from its original dozen members to around 300, virtually all of whom were from academia.[5] The opening the Internet beyond the military and the academy occurred rapidly and transparently with the introduction of graphical interfaces and the subsequent proliferation of Internet Service Providers (IPOs) like AOL (America Online) and CompuServe, services which increased the numbers of non-academics having access to and thus using the Internet.

Many early users of the Internet saw themselves as staunch defenders of free speech and abjured any attempts to reign in or control what they had to say, no matter what they maintained. I was far less interested in preserving SHAKSPER as a bastion of free speech than I was in observing how the conference was participating in the shaping, with similar lists, a new discursive academic idiom, one that was not as formal as that of print journals but that was more decorous than ordinary conversation or than the virtually anything goes culture of unmediated Internet bulletin boards and chat-rooms. Daily discussions on SHAKSPER could not possibly reflect the formality of published articles in print journals, nor did I expect them to. Members enjoyed their ability to respond quickly to each other, and the vitality and spontaneity of SHAKSPER's exchanges was a quality I wished to preserve. Nevertheless, the scope of the topics in the list's purview demanded then and continues to demand now a level of formality greater than that of everyday discourse, written or spoken. By the middle of the 1990s, SHAKSPER's members had become a mix of academics, some of whom were prominent specialists in their fields and of non-academics, enthusiasts with varying degrees of knowledge of scholarly academic matters. Yet, even if the conference had remained exclusively composed

of subscribers with university credentials, not all members could have had the same depth of knowledge regarding some of the highly complex topics discussed. In these circumstances, the only legitimate expectation I had was that participants have an informed but not necessarily an encyclopedic knowledge of current issues in the discipline to participate intelligently in list exchanges. Most of SHAKSPER's subscribers hail from the US and UK, with some living in relatively isolated places there and around the world, places where those academic subscribers might be the only Shakespeareans on the faculty at their college or university and who would, consequently, feel geographically isolated, cut-off from other scholars with similar interests. The metaphor that people in these situations often used to describe SHAKSPER was that it was like a global, electronic faculty lounge, where they could go to find like-minded individuals with interests similar to theirs to talk with about ideas that arose from their scholarship or in their teaching, without having to wait for the annual Shakespeare Association meetings or for the biennial International Shakespeare conferences. Another metaphor that was frequently used to describe the list was that it was like an electronic seminar. The first implies that participants have similar levels of knowledge, while the second implies that one person has superior knowledge to the often, junior and future colleagues, for whom the forum provides the opportunity to practice their craft and to hone their argumentative skills, as well as to test their ideas. In fact, over the years, I have watched many members begin their SHAKSPER memberships as graduate students, over the years flexing their academic muscles as it were by engaging in sophisticated exchanges with recognized scholars in the disciple, then completing their advanced degrees and joining the ranks of the Shakespeare establishment, some even becoming highly recognized scholars themselves.

Even though SHAKSPER was from its birth an academic conference, diversity and inclusiveness were always encouraged. Through the early 1990s, the number of members steady rose: 400 in October 1993, 500 in February 1994, 700 in September 1994, and 1,000 in March 1995, the latter being the level around which the membership has hovered ever since. Although I did not recognize it then, the expanding access of the Internet beyond academia with the mounting presence of personal computers as familiar items in many middle- and upper-class households significantly contributed to the rise in the number of subscribers and with this rise to slow and subtle changes in the nature of the list itself. Beginning in the mid-1990s, meta-discussions concerning SHAKSPER's purpose, mostly initiated by academics on the list, began to appear with increasing frequency. In October of 1995, Jonathan Sawday asked, "What, exactly, does this list think it is for?"[6] Six months later, Michael Saenger wrote, "It occurred to me that we really have a problem. I realize this is a sensitive issue, but the proliferation of junk is making it hard to take the list seriously at times. Many valuable contributors have tuned out after reading careless and incorrect postings. The basic idea of this list is a noble one—a truly democratic forum for ideas, a way of weaving anyone with a modem into the academic community. And it is not naive questions that bring the list down so much as selfish and lazy ranting. So what's the solution?"[7] About a year later, Gabriel Egan, replying to an oversimplified response to a matter that involved complex textual problems, posed this question: "Are we really still a viable conversing community?"[8] Excited by the increase in the number of members, I was not, *at the time*, particularly worried about these inquiries.

Even though, in April of 2000, Stuart Manger described SHAKSPER as "a model of academic rectitude,"[9] occasionally, SHAKSPER members have resorted to ad hominem remarks and tempers have flared. However, for the most part, SHAKSPER has been remarkably free from the *incessant* flaming that characterizes so many Internet discussion groups. I have also come to believe that, in a sense, much flaming is in the eyes of the receiver. There have been times when a member has complained about being flamed or about the flaming of others; yet when I read these so-called flames, I see criticism, sometimes strongly worded criticism but criticism, nonetheless. For example, in the previous paragraph, I quote Jonathan Sawday's question: "What, exactly, does this list think it is for?" One subscriber described a response to it from someone implicitly criticized in Sawday's post as a flame. The person complaining of flaming, as best I can determine, was referring to this passage: "you

[Sawday] are a scholar who *could*[10] give SHAKSPER valuable contributions. Why don't you do so, why don't you state what you'd like to discuss to start with, instead of wasting your time (and perhaps not only yours) listing what you do not like of other people's discussions?"[11] The passage's tone is certainly aggressive, but I will leave it up to readers of this essay to decide whether the passage constitutes flaming: I just do not. My reason for examining this exchange is to note these varying judgments mark a difficulty I have had as SHAKSPER's editor: *readers characterize postings differently and react accordingly*. A naive question is useful to one reader but a waste of time to another. Differing views regarding postings also have had a geographical component. In 1994, Shakespeare Association of America President Phyllis Rackin in her "President's Letter" cited a heated discussion on SHAKSPER that followed the announcement that Sam Wanamaker had been awarded a CBE for his work on the Bankside Globe: "Outraged responses from the UK provoked a series of exchanges that exposed profound differences between the political and cultural locations occupied by 'Shakespeare' on the two sides of the Atlantic," she wrote. As this fascinating thread unfolded, many of us on *this* side of the "pond" learned that British Shakespeareans, coming from a culture in which "class" plays a role with which Americans are not familiar, see some issues from a vastly different perspective than Shakespeareans from North America do. Furthermore, the consequent British argumentative style tends to be practically pugilistic compared to the culture of politeness that generally characterizes academic discourse in the States. In this regard, I recalled a conversation I had with a leading British Marxist scholar around this time about these kinds of exchanges at the 1994 Shakespeare Association Annual Meeting barbeque dinner in Albuquerque, Arizona. I commented that I was not used to the *ad hominem* quality of some British discourse, and he responded, "It's nothing personal; we go out to the pub afterwards and have a pint together."

I struggled for a long time about how which I should intercede in conversations on the list. I had no desire to micromanage; yet, in late December 1994, I realized that continuing to permit discussions of matters pertaining to the so-called "authorship" question condemned me to endless repetitions of the same arguments by fervent partisans on both sides of the debate—so I banned these discussions permanently. I continued to format and lightly edited the contributions; otherwise, I tried to stay out of list exchanges, generally only intervening to kill endless threads that have degenerated into two or three members trading barbs with each other. However, changes in the late 1990s began to give me pause. I did not realize it at the time, but *discourse on the list was slowly but progressively changing*. Unsophisticated questions and discussions multiplied, including threads that treated characters as if they were real persons. In late May 1994, in response to a naïve question about Cordelia, Terence Hawkes asserted: "Cordelia is not a real, live flesh and blood human being. In consequence, she has no 'character', and it does not 'develop'."[12] Discussions of characters *were* occasions for remarkable witticisms like Louis Scheeder's response the question of whether Hamlet and Ophelia had sexual relations—"Only in the Chicago Company"—and Terence Hawkes's "The theory shared by a number of MY colleagues is that Hamlet and Ophelia had textual relations."[13] *Some* of the discussions treating Shakespeare's characters as if they were "real" people were indeed fascinating.[14] Striving to find a legitimate reason for exploring the psychological justification for characters' actions, some in these debates, myself included, wanted to distinguish between textual and performative characters—characters in texts and characters in performances—the work of criticism and the work of actors preparing for their roles.[15] Nonetheless, discussions of characters as "real persons" generally without any reference to sophisticated theoretical or performative matters continued. Interest in characters and their motivations, especially as related to a "pet" theory about Shakespeare or about a particular play, has been the central location of contention on SHAKSPER, emanating often from exceptionally vocal and passionate non-academic members. These disputes greatly complicated my role as moderator

As I said earlier, I did not want moderate list discussions draconically, but I did expect members to behave civilly toward each other. However, as the 1990s progressed, traffic on the

list, dramatically increased. List discussions were becoming dominated by a handful of members, some of whom could be counted on daily to submit multiple posts, oftentimes multiple responses to the same thread. The subjects of these threads frequently tended to involve characters' motivations or thematic discussions of the meaning of events in a handful of favorite plays, from enthusiasts who ardently believed they understood that particular play better than anyone who had come before them and who also were seemingly unfamiliar with or hostile to post-modern theoretical criticism, criticism that rendered their attempts at establishing a single, undisputed interpretation mute. Regularly, "pet" theories that academics found preposterous were being advanced. Long-time members conveyed to me that during these years the excitement they initially had when they joined the list was diminishing with the number of times a day they found themselves hitting the delete key, usually when they discovered a submission from one of these frequent posters. If this were not enough that a few members were dominating list postings with subjects not of interest to the core members for whom the list had been established, these discussions also were becoming more rancorous. In April 2000, I asked members to count to ten before they hit the reply key. In a subsequent post, I clarified what I meant, urging subscribers to practice self-moderation:

> Now, when I requested that members count to ten before hitting the reply key, what I had in mind was that members would initiate a kind of self-regulation: self-moderation if you will. Is there really a need to reply to seven out of the ten digests under discussion on a particular day or to reply four times to the same digest? I strive to maintain SHAKSPER as an academic discussion list. My preference is for a somewhat elevated level of discourse without, of course, ruling out occasional humor or just plain silliness. My point is that I believe that the membership has as much responsibility as I do in moderating SHAKSPER. At one time or another, it has been suggested to me that members be allowed only to post once a day or that postings should not exceed one or two computer screens. I am not willing to moderate SHAKSPER in this way, but I do believe that some submissions are frivolous or are not really necessary or productive. I attribute this attitude to the fact that I am not a very touchy-feely, warm and cuddly kind of guy.[16]

My mailbox was flooded with expressions of support, but a new pattern developed: I would admonish the members about list traffic, about a handful of members dominating list conversation, about incivility, frequently with implied threats of my setting up guidelines or limiting postings, and matters would quite down for a while, only to return to the previous state after a respite. I continued to be concerned that the very people I was cultivating, those for whom the list was founded, were unsubscribing out of disgust.

It seemed that no matter what I did, the hostile, acrimonious, and sometimes downright unkind posts continued. In January of 2001, in a post I labeled "A Plea from the Editor: "Can't we all just get along," I reposted my counting to ten admonitions at the urging a long-time and well-respected subscriber, who wrote to me:

> I'm not one of those 'write to the editor' types, but I'm writing to ask if you might think about re-posting your note about counting to ten before posting. I've been disturbed lately by the intermittent nastiness and cruelty of some of the SHAKSPER posts, which have made me think more than once about un-subscribing. (Dealing with face-to-face incivility in the academy is bad enough without subjecting yourself to e-mail incivility.)[17]

Clearly, something had to be done, but I was at a loss to figure out just what I should do. In May of 2002, my frustration was palpable as I asked members to pre-format their submissions, to consider that some exchanges may be more appropriate offline than online, and to pick their fights more carefully by limiting the number of replies each posted daily.[18] I complained that I thought that some members were treating the list more like a "chat room" or a venue for electronic exhibitionism than as the academic forum it was intended to be.[19] One day, I even

invited members to "act as moderator" and reply privately to me whether they judged the digests of that day appropriate or not appropriate for the list.[20] The next day, I reported the distinctly divergent results; some would have posted around half of the twenty-seven digests, while others would not have excluded any, expressing a sense of liking the list exactly as it was and not wishing that there be any changes.[21] In 2003, I continued my pleas urging civility, announcing "SHAKSPER is not a newsgroup nor was meant to be one. . . . Practices that are acceptable on less formal electronic media are not appropriate to this list,"[22] but the personal attacks continued: "For whatever reasons—bravado, exhibitionism, misguided attempts at cleverness, or just plain malice—lately there has just been too much venom spilled."[23] In September 2004, I pledged "to take more time reviewing submissions for appropriateness."[24]

At some point during these years, Patrick Finn asked me to write an essay about SHAKSPER for a special issue of *College Literature* dedicated to Shakespeare and technology.[25] While I was writing this essay, Christy Desmet and her colleagues asked me if I would participate in an SAA seminar "Shakespeare Readings, Societies, and Forums" for the 2006 Annual Meeting.[26] I agreed; and while working on my seminar paper in late 2005, the SPARC 10 Unix computer that was the SHAKSPER fileserver for almost ten years crashed and died. Before the new server was operating, I had an eight-week break from my SHAKSPER editing duties and used the time to concentrate on these two essays. As I reflected on SHAKSPER's evolution and the changes that had taken place since its founding until that time, I had an intuitive flash—I realized that 1995 was the watershed year in SHAKSPER's history, the year that the membership broke the 1,000 mark *and* the year that the first meta-discussions concerning SHAKSPER's purpose began. As I teased out my thinking, what I realized was that I had finally figured out that the changes in the discourse on the list could be directly attributable to its changing from a virtually all academic conference in the early 1990s into one in which the membership that was composed half of scholars and half of non-academics, each with conspicuously different interests.[27] When SHAKSPER came back online in February 2006, I announced a new policy: I resolved to become a more active moderator and to post only messages I believe were of interest to the academic community of Shakespeare scholars. I was not restricting the membership in SHAKSPER or limiting who could post. The source of the post was not the issue; what was important instead was a post's relevance to the broad scope of academic Shakespeare studies.[28] I comprehended further that simply being a more active moderator was not the only strategy I needed to implement to regain the academic focus of the list and to entice members who had resigned or become inactive to return: in addition, I was to plan several new features that I would instituted in subsequent years: "Cook's Tour of Internet Resources for Students and Scholars of the Early Modern Period"; Roundtable discussions, concentrating on significant topics derived from issues of contemporary interest in the discipline; and the SHAKSPER Book Reviews (SBReviews), reviews overseen by a Moderator and Panel responsible for selecting the books for review and the peers to review them, then vetting submitted reviews prior to their distribution as digests, digests which are then archived on the SHAKSPER web site.

SHAKSPER Roundtable: Presentism

On June 21, 2006, I disclosed the first of these new features that I hoped would aid me in my recapturing SHAKSPER's founding purpose:

> Now, that it appears that we are approaching my long-sought goal of raising the level of discourse on SHAKSPER, I would like to propose a possible new feature to the conference.
> In the early days of the list, Shakespeareans who taught in smaller, relatively isolated institutions around the world would often seek me out at conferences to thank me for providing them a kind of virtual faculty lounge, a sense of belonging to a

community of scholars with whom they could share their thoughts and explore their ideas despite the comparative dearth of actual colleagues where they lived and worked.

It has occurred to me that we might be more intentional about this aspect of our community and institute periodic topics to discuss amongst ourselves—a SHAKSPER Roundtable.[29]

The following week I articulated my preliminary thoughts on procedures for how such a feature might work. Roundtable digests would be uniquely identified in the subject line with a title that distinguished them from "regular list" offerings; and only one of these Roundtable discussions would be running at a time. Further, Roundtable discussions would have a "guest moderator," who "would edit and oversee the contributions and determine when the discussion had run its course." I also suggested a procedure for letting members determine what Roundtable topic would be discussed.[30] The comments I received were favorable. Over the next few weeks, I clarified and made further suggestions about how this feature might operate. Even though I had had a number of people who said they *might* be interested in guest moderating a Roundtable discussion at some point, no one was willing to come forward at the time.[31] In my enthusiasm, I neglected to realize that the members who I would have liked most to conduct a Roundtable were already deeply engaged with their scholarship. Further, the momentum I had started was slowed by a several-week interruption in my conducting SHAKSPER business so I could take a few weeks off to travel to the UK for the International Shakespeare Conference in Stratford-upon-Avon and to attend theatrical performances there and in London. Before I left, I issued a call for volunteers to conduct Roundtable discussions, but I returned to a new semester with no proposals or expressions of interest and no time myself to start a new project. In early December, I brought up the Roundtable again, making more suggestions for possible features and procedures.

By the New Year, I finally had a volunteer: the distinguished Professor Hugh Grady of Arcadia University agreed to be Guest Moderator for a Roundtable on Presentism, a topic I was particularly interested in and one for which he was one of the leading theoretical proponents. At this time, I foresaw this and subsequent special discussions' operating as follows:

1. The Guest Moderator was responsible for initiating, moderating, directing, and concluding the discussions.
2. The Guest Moderator would develop a Reading List that would be announced several weeks before discussion began. Anyone wishing to contribute would be expected to be thoroughly familiar with these readings as an implied condition for participation.
3. Sometime after the topic and the Reading List were announced, the Guest Moderator would initiate the discussion with an essay, a statement, or other means.
4. Participants would send responses that were clearly identified as belonging to the Roundtable discussion to me so I could easily separate regular list posts from Roundtable submissions.
5. I would forward those to the Guest Moderator, who would organize and comment on the approximately weekly submissions before suggesting the direction that the debate might take the following week.
6. The Guest Moderator would send this material back to me on Sunday, and I would format it for distribution on Monday or Tuesday. I would be responsible for all technical matters.
7. The discussions would continue until the Guest Moderator determined that the Roundtable had run its course.
8. The Guest Moderator would then announce a last call, and the next week's digest would be the penultimate in the Roundtable.
9. The Guest Moderator's summary statement would be distributed afterwards.
10. All digests in the Roundtable would then be grouped together on the SHAKSPER web site for public review.[32]

With these procedures to guide me, I introduced Professor Grady on Thursday, January 11, 2007, and posted his reading list. After acknowledging that we were charting new territory, we began the first SHAKSPER Roundtable, "Presentism Now," on Monday, January 29, 2007, with Hugh Grady's essay "Why Presentism Now?"[33] A week later, two members had replied and their responses and Grady's introduction to them and comments on them constituted the next digest in the Presentism Roundtable.[34] I was disappointed that there were only two responses and expressed my hope that "in the following weeks more members will feel inclined to contribute/participate in this Roundtable."[35] In this digest, Grady noted that both contributors, Julia Crockett and Cary DiPietro had amplified "the concerns [he] raised in [his] initial statement" and invited others "to address some of the points" that DiPietro raised, "particularly the critique of earlier cultural materialism and new historicism as insufficiently aesthetic and insufficiently committed to identifying the qualities of Shakespeare and related early modern texts that make them meaningful in our times." Further, Grady asked critics of the Presentist enterprise "to weigh in with reasoned statements that try to identify the problems and issues with this approach" and asked if others "with specific ideas about the development of a presentist approach" would also contribute to the discussion.[36] The next week's digest included passages Joseph Egert had excerpted from past SHAKSPER discussions that were critical of Presentism. I quoted from a message that I was sent suggesting the relatively modest number of responses offered in the first two weeks were a sign that the issues raised were of interest only to a few academics. My response to this message was to sketch a history of the changing critical paradigms in the last 80-100 years of academic Shakespeare criticism to propose that the age of New Historicism was ending and that Presentism deserved to be investigated as a possible new direction for the field.[37] As much as we could, Professor Grady and I tried to follow this pattern throughout the first Roundtable: a more or less weekly digest I distributed that was introduced by and then concluded with commentary from him as the Guest Moderator. By mid-March, Grady and I had decided that the Roundtable was winding down, and he called for final comments. Then on June 6th, the Roundtable came to its formal conclusion when I posted Grady's summary statement and my concluding observations. Grady judged the Roundtable a modest success. He observed that the topic had been discussed on the list in a "fragmented and partial way," and he had hoped that by his beginning with "a longer than usual (for SHAKSPER) opening statement-about 2500 words, roughly the length of a 15-minute oral presentation" that he could address some of what he "considered several misunderstandings of Presentist criticism, particularly its relation to historicist criticism, that had been aired previously." Except for an exchange between David Lindley and John Drakakis, which we included, Grady felt that his attempt to "conduct discussions according to the norms of professional academic discourse" had been "undermined by the many readers who simply do not share in nor recognize these norms." I found Professor Grady's analysis a forthright, honest assessment of the difficulties we both had trying to conduct a professional-level discussion among SHAKSPER's diverse subscribers.[38]

SHAKSPER Roundtable: Shakespeare's Intentions[39]

In the fall of 2007, a lively discussion on "Authorial Intentions,"[40] (September 10 through October 18)[41] took place on SHAKSPER. Early in this discussion, John V. Knapp, a Professor of English at Northern Illinois University and editor of the journal *Style*,[42] send the list a Call for Papers with a suggestion. Knapp's post read in part:

> I have followed the "Authorial Intention" thread with considerable interest since the issues surrounding authorial intent have been a major topic of conversation for several decades now for those working with narratives. However, this issue has not been discussed as widely nor in quite the same way for those working with the drama, although many of you reference those writers whose thinking about such issues have

become basic required reading in criticism of narrative (Booth; Chatman, Cohen; Rabinowitz; Fludernik; Phelan, etc etc).

> I think the readers of STYLE would be very interested in reading a special issue on authorial intent in drama. As such, I would like to issue a Call for Papers (CFP) that could grow out of any round-table conversations (suitable edited, of course) about authorial intent in dramatic literature, especially primarily concerning major authors like Shakespeare, Marlow, Chekhov, etc. What might begin as an extended argument in the round-table could then get developed into full-blown mini-essay exchanges, gathered in one issue of STYLE.

The post continued with an offer to me to contact him to explore a possible collaboration. Since SHAKSPER is a moderated list, I am the only one who can send postings to the members. So before I distributed Professor Knapp's message I contacted him and made an offer of my own, the offer that I announced in an Editor's Note I appended to his posting:

> I am constantly looking for interesting ways that SHAKSPER can make contributions to the academic community. Consequently, a collaboration such as the one John Knapp suggests here fascinates me.
>
> This sort of collaboration could occur as the result of a number of different structures. John, I believe, is suggesting here that essays for publication in STYLE might grow out of a Roundtable-style discussion on SHAKSPER; in this scenario, interested participants would develop their ideas through exchanges during the Roundtable and then edit those ideas into essays for consideration for print publication in the journal STYLE. For this to happen, John and I would need a guest editor who, as I see it, would moderate the Roundtable and then edit the special issue of STYLE. Guest editing the journal issue might be the incentive that would entice someone to step forward to moderate the Roundtable. . . .
>
> Therefore, why don't we begin with an invitation to the membership to respond to John's initial idea for establishing a structure out of which a special issue of STYLE might be generated.
>
> Let us begin by my requesting private message. In these, you can offer any responses that occur to you. I would especially welcome ideas about mechanisms by which the ideas that would be the basis of subsequent essays could be generated. Also, if you have a special interest in narratology or "authorial intention" and would be interested in playing a significant role in this proposed enterprise (such as Roundtable Moderator or Issue Guest Editor), let me know. I will gather responses and share them with John, and together he and I will make an effort to realize John's vision for a collaboration between SHAKSPER and STYLE.[43]

To my delight, Cary DiPietro, one of the thoughtful contributors to the first SHAKSPER Roundtable and to the "Authorial Intentions" thread applied for the job of Roundtable Moderator and journal Guest Editor. Though e-mail exchanges, John Knapp and I decided that DiPietro was the person we were looking for to conduct our collaborative experiment.[44]

On April 3, 2008, I introduced him as guest moderator for the second SHAKSPER Roundtable: "Shakespeare's Intentions," and provided the background I discussed above and a review of the Roundtable procedures.[45] In addition, this posting included the reading list that anyone planning to participate in the Roundtable discussions was expected to know as a condition for participation and Cary DiPietro's introduction of himself that he wrote so as to get readers to begin thinking about some of the theoretical implications of the concepts of authorial intention in general and of Shakespeare's intentions in particular. DiPietro further explored some of the issues associated with the works on his reading list, providing an overview of each. The following only affords a taste of the complex argument with which DiPietro used to begin the second SHAKSPER Roundtable:

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). . . .

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. . . .

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 cruces 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.[46]

DiPietro, having actively participated in the first Roundtable, benefited from the groundbreaking work of Hugh Grady and from its commencement, he set out to model the level of discourse with which he intended to conduct discussions during this Roundtable. Further, he and I had exchanged e-mails discussing some of the strategies we would use to avoid the pitfalls Hugh Grady wrote about in his concluding statement assessing the first Roundtable, strategies to avoid postings from members who were not observing "the norms of professional academic discourse," by "avoiding ad hominems" and more importantly of "taking responsibility for understanding what one is critiquing" by knowing the works on the Reading List and the issues being debated.[47] We decided, first, simply not to include any submission that we deemed was not following these norms. Some we would reject outright; others, DiPietro would provide feedback to the submitter who would be given the opportunity to rewrite and resubmit should he or she decide to do so. If I recall correctly, some did not take DiPietro up on his offer, while others, did; and in at least one instance, a submitter did multiple rewrites before we were finally satisfied with the posting and included it in a digest. DiPietro, of course, always had the final word as Guest Moderator, but he relied on my experience with

editing SHAKSPER and permitted me to share with him any problems I had regarding a submission.

In the second installment, DiPietro prefaced his opening statement, "Shakespeare's Intentions," by further explaining some of his plans for conducting this Roundtable. He began by praising the first Roundtable moderated by Hugh Grady, adding based upon e-mail exchanges that Grady would have "preferred to have seen more contributions during the actual Roundtable itself." Therefore, to stimulate discussion, DiPietro announced that he had "solicited a number of leading contributions from the SHAKSPER community to headline the discussion for each installment." These solicited contributions would be "organized topically," with each installment identifying the upcoming "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." To facilitate the eventual migration of the Roundtable to the special issue of *Style*, he requested contributors to adhere to the MLA format and documentation system in the Roundtable itself. DiPietro's own essay used Virginia Woolf's writings about Shakespeare to situate it "within and against a genealogy of intention in professional literary criticism." His essay included a Works Cited list and announced that the solicited essay for the upcoming week would be from John Drakakis on the topic of "Intention and Textual Authority." Interested participants were asked to respond to DiPietro's essay, to the topic upon which Drakakis was writing, or to any other related matters.[48]

On Monday, April 28, 2008, after a week of puzzlingly not having received responses to DiPietro's preliminary statement,[49] I decided, upon consulting with him, to repost both the Reading List and the essay.[50] A few days later, on Friday, May 2, 2008, although I cannot recall the exact reasons—to keep the momentum, to stick to the schedule, or because DiPietro was just excited with the materials he had on hand and was anxiously to get that material before the list to be read—we proceed to distribute the next Roundtable digest, which DiPietro introduced with the following:

> 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."[51]

Drakakis, interestingly, concluded his essay with an observation that I felt identified the principal shortcoming with our first Roundtable:

> . . . 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.[52]

I associated Drakakis' "entrenched positions" with the attitudes of some of those, generally non-academic, members who were seemingly hostile to post-modern theory and practice and *not* shy about letting their prejudices be known: Ron Rosenbaum's *Shakespeare Wars* had after all been a lively topic of conversation on the list during the eighteen months since it was published. Two contributors, Larry Weiss and Gabriel Egan, replied to the May 2, 2008, Roundtable digest; and I judged, at the time, these responses as comments upon the process rather than as a part of the Roundtable discussion itself. I, therefore, published them the following Monday (May 5, 2008) in a digest that I titled "Meta-Comment on Intentions Roundtable."[53] On reflection, I now believe that I was mistaken not to see these two as responses that belonged to the Roundtable itself and not distinct from it. Also, the next day, I distributed a highly favorable comment from the previous Roundtable's Guest Moderator,

Hugh Grady, whose observation was an indication that even this early on in our second Roundtable, DiPietro, and to a lesser extent, I were conducting this exchange more effectively than the first:

> 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.[54]

I suppose that my rush to post the comments from Weiss and Egan, especially Egan's post to which I responded to myself and the congratulations from Grady was a result of my excitement over the early successes, as I saw them, of the Intentions Roundtable. Two days later, again under the rubric of "Meta-Comment on Intentions Roundtable," I posted a question from Joseph Egert, "Can Drs. Drakakis, Egan, et al, define for us the play editor's task or mission?"[55] and the next day responses from Drakakis to Weiss and Egert in the meta-commentary thread[56] and to Weiss and Egan in the Roundtable thread itself.[57] What I had done was to inadvertently create a muddle, but the confusion turned out to have a useful consequence—I had failed to observe my procedures of posting all Roundtable contributions together in one weekly digests, but in doing so I had resolved another difficulty with my Roundtable model. My hope had been that if I held off and posted Roundtable replies so they would only be send out roughly once a week rather than on the regular, almost daily basis as with usual threads on the list, that I would be discouraging responses "on the fly" and thereby striving to encourage contributors to reflect upon their submission before sending them off rather than posting them to the list "i' th' heate."

The next week's leading essay was from Alan Dessen, one of the major figures in establishing performance criticism as a legitimate/significant branch of the discipline of Shakespeare studies. Dessen wrote from "the perspective of a theatre historian" addressing "the question of how or whether the dramatist's intentions were accommodated in the Elizabethan/Jacobean theatre."[58] With this digest, we got back on track as if were with our established procedures: DiPietro began his introductory commentary by placing Dessen's essay in the context of "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 . . . 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."[59] DiPietro went on to connect Dessen's essay to that the week before from Drakakis: "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." DiPietro continued his introductory commentary by exploring connection among Drakakis' essay and the dialogue that took place between him and the contributors who responded to it. DiPietro announced that the next Roundtable installment would include two leading essays, from Duncan Salkeld and Terence Hawkes, offering "contrasting, if not exactly dialectical, positions" on the topic of intention and meaning. Then, as had been our procedure since the beginning, we reproduced the weekly contributions after Dessen's essay, referring to the contributions I had identified as "meta" commentary but not including them.

Between the Roundtable digest featuring Dessen's essay, "The intentions of the playwright," discussed above and the one that included the contrasting pair of essays by Salkeld and Hawkes,[60] DiPietro and I exchanged private e-mails exploring the consequences of my slips in the distributing both what I had labeled the "meta" digests as well as the Roundtable

responses to Drakakis' essay. Because of these deliberations, I opened DiPietro's next formal Roundtable digest with an Editor's Note in which I announced a change in procedure that we had decided to attempt:

> [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][61]

Throughout the run of both Roundtables, I had received occasional e-mails expressing disapproval with my not posting responses as they arrived and waiting instead for the "official" weekly digest. These e-mails were expressing dissatisfaction with the established procedure, suggesting that the delays were disrupting the flow of the exchange of ideas. By attempting to have it, as it were, both ways as my Editor's Notes outlines, we were striving to determine whether we might encourage greater participation while maintaining the more elevated level of discourse that was one of the principal reasons for my pursuing the Roundtable-style exchanges in the first place. We were interested in seeing if we might affect the rhythms of the Roundtable exchanges by encouraging greater participation without negatively affecting the quality of those contributions. I think the change in procedures succeeded. What we accomplished by this change was to enable in the roughly daily postings to maintain the excitement so much at the foundation of the list's appeal by enabling participants to give and to receive feedback more swiftly from each other than has been the case with the original approach, while the weekly summaries enabled the moderator to step back and from this removed perspective to comment on any rhythms or trends this vantage made evident. Although not ideal, this approach let us have as much as possible under the circumstances the enthusiasm of the daily posts and the reflection of the moderator's weekly overview.

As the new arrangement structured the discussions publically in a cadence that enabled participants to respond rapidly and while we held off the guest moderator's reflective meta-commentary until publication of the weekly digest, DiPietro and I also began to develop, something like a good-cop/bad-cop rhythm behind the scenes. Over the years as SHAKSPER's editor, I usually erred on the side of inclusiveness when it came to posting member's submissions to the list, an approach that led to my distributing the vast majority of messages sent to me. However, this habit of working exacerbated the problem that arose in the first Roundtable, that some members were less interested in participating in the substantive matters under consideration than they were in voicing their disapproval of the postmodern enterprise upon which Presentism is based. The result was more a clash of cultures than an investigation of the subject. Aware of this dynamic, DiPietro and I were stanchly committed to not repeating it in the second Roundtable. To do so, we more aggressively monitored what submissions we included, rejecting some and returning others to the poster for the opportunity to rewrite, a task that DiPietro was far more adept at than I had been. I continued to control the technical presentation of the postings, while DiPietro acted as the intellectual gatekeeper behind the scenes. This arrangement allowed us to control the content, guarding against submissions that strayed from discussion topics and thus addressing the major difficulty of the first Roundtable.

A further factor in maintaining the focus of the discussion was the presence of the solicited/leading essays from established scholars, who represented various theoretical and critical approaches to Shakespeare studies as currently practiced. To begin, there was DiPietro's introductory essay, "Shakespeare's Intentions," which surveyed the topic in relations to Shakespeare studies and set the tone for what was to follow.[62] In addition, there was a substantial reading list, the foundation upon which the Roundtable discussion would proceed. As mentioned, John Drakakis provided the first leading essay, "Intention and Textual

Authority," exploring the connect between textual editing practices and notions of intention.[63] What is significant here is the fact that DiPietro invited Drakakis to write a topic in his area of interest and expertise; DiPietro had outlined the aspects of Shakespeare and intentions he wished to be addressed during the discussions and invited essayists with specialties in those areas beforehand to investigate them in leading essays. DiPietro had a fully developed plan for the Roundtable he was guest moderating from the start, and he followed that plan as those discussions unfolded. DiPietro's careful planning exemplifies my intention for the Roundtable project, to have in-depth discussions of topics of current interest to the discipline, discussions that differed from the ordinary, less intentional threads that develop during daily exchanges on the list. The Roundtable project was a venture I devised to recapture the original purpose of the SHAKSPER, to provide a forum for the Shakespeare academic community. The next leading essay was from Alan Dessen, "The Intentions of the Playwright," which examined textual authority from the perspective of theatre history, his specialty.[64] Then, Duncan Salkeld wrote on "Meaning and Intention"; in his piece, Salkeld argued that Shakespeare's intentions *can* sometimes be known and that knowing those intention does not preclude multi-vocal readings from other perspectives. DiPietro combined Terence Hawkes's contribution "Sans Everything," with Salkeld's essay. This short piece is an excerpt from an essay Hawkes was writing for another venue that argues Shakespeare's interpreters are the ones who impose their intentions upon the text, "meaning by Shakespeare," or as he wrote in his Introduction to *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."[65] The next weekly digest demonstrated how successful our new strategy had been: it contained eleven contributions besides the leading essay "Giving Intention Its Due" by David Schalkwyk, who during the time was moving from South Africa to Washington, D.C., to assume a position at the Folger Shakespeare Library and included his becoming the editor of *Shakespeare Quarterly*. Schalkwyk argued we must dispense with Old Historicist the notion of authorial psychology as a determiner of textual meaning, that we must recognize that authorial intention is a category imposed by and giving authority to the interpreter, and finally that choosing what to do with literary texts is a "matter of institutional debate, politics, and power."[66] With the next leading essay, DiPietro returned to matters of theatrical criticism with Cary Mazer's "Two Cheers for the Intentional Fallacy: Intention, Theatre Practice, and Performance History."[67] Whereas Alan Dessen discussed the question of authorial intention in theatrical production from the perspective of the original staging in the Elizabethan/Jacobean theatre, Mazer was interested in the relationship between authorial intention and subsequent performances in the contemporary theatre as related to theatre practice and to the writing of performance history.[68] DiPietro had intended to have leading essays on "literary criticism as a profession," on psychologically–oriented criticism, and on pedagogy, but he could get no taker. By the end of June, it appeared that interest in the Roundtable was waning, and DiPietro was ready to "to wind down towards a conclusion,"[69] only to see that interest began to pick up again.[70]

On July 18, DiPietro issued what he thought would be the concluding weekly digest, and he proposed "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."[71] He began by maintaining 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." After discussing differences between the discussion in the thread that inspired the Roundtable and the Roundtable discussion itself, DiPietro makes so many thoughtful observations that the piece deserves to be read on its own as a commentary on the process. His assessment of the Roundtable was

> 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.

[. . .]

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.

DiPietro then offered some practical suggestions, which I have produced below:

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 thirteen posts included with the statement were, however, not the final word. A post from David Schalkwyk and another from Duncan Salkeld were significant enough to be consider a part of the Roundtable even though they were distributed after DiPietro's concluding digest.

What conclusions can I draw from this experience? First, Roundtables are a *lot* of work. Second, this one might never have occurred had there not been an interesting thread on the subject that ran for approximately a month as an ordinary SHAKSPER discussion, prompting John Knapp to bring up the possibility of a collaboration between SHAKSPER and *Style*. Third, the success of this project owes a great deal to the work of the intelligent, thoughtful young scholar who agreed to guest moderate it and did so with noteworthy planning and diplomatic moderating. And, finally, the exercise as productive as it was might never have come about without the carrot of the collaboration with the print journal *Style*. This carrot undoubtedly influenced the decision of those who volunteered to write leading essays for it and may also have influenced the guest moderator to take on this daunting task. This final point convinces me that until electronic projects such as this one carry the same respect in the

academy that a scholarly publication does future Roundtables may be doomed never to come about.

Works Cited

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 <http://lachesis.english.uga.edu/cocoon/borrowers/>

Endnotes

[1] To trace the development of the Roundtable feature on SHAKSPER and the list's subsequent collaboration with the academic print journal *Style*, I will begin by reviewing some information about the conference's origins and background as I discuss in several of my recently published essays.

[2] In an essay I wrote for the collection *Sh@kespeare in the Media,* I examine the evolution of the Internet and its early academic uses.

[3] Within the past eight or nine years, blogs have become remarkably popular, so much so that, many feel that blogging has rendered listservs and newsgroups superfluous. However, Terry Gray, the founder of the popular gateway site "Mr. Shakespeare and the Internet," on his blog of February 5, 2008, after identifying "the SHAKSPER listserv" as "one of the great Shakespeare resources on the Internet," wrote the following: "SHAKSPER is a moderated discussion among those interested in Shakespeare—I mean seriously interested in Shakespeare, not those interested in such silly, dilettantish "issues" like the "authorship problem." It is a place to learn of conferences, events, important publications, to make observations, ask questions, and carry on discussions with like-minded Shakespeareans. It all goes on via email. I know that blogs have supplanted much of the need for email discussion lists, but they are still useful, and the most convenient way to conduct this sort of multi-threaded discussion." <http://mrshakespeare.typepad.com/mrshakespeare/2008/02/shaksper.html>.

[4] In "Behind the Scenes with *SHAKSPER: The Global Electronic Shakespeare Conference*," I discuss the origins of SHAKSPER as an international, academic, electronic, e-mail distribution list modeled on Willard McCarty's pioneering listserv HUMANIST.

[5] Commercial Internet service providers (such as AOL, EARTHLINK, COMCAST, ATT, and MINDSPRING) and free Internet e-mail services (such as HOTMAIL, YAHOO, MSN, GMAIL, and NETSCAPE) had not yet begun to open the Internet to non-academics.

[6] <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/1995/0789.html>

[7] <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/1996/0164.html>

[8] <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/1997/0001.html>

[9] <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2000/0799.html>

[10] E-mail conventions are that "*"s represent **Bold** typeface for emphasis since messages sent from the SHAKSPER listserv are sent as plain text files, thus not having italics, bolding, or underling features.

[11] <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/1995/0796.html>

[12] <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/1994/0474.html>

[13] <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/1996/0099.html> and <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/1996/0104.html>

[14] I discuss two of these in my essay "Behind the Scenes with *SHAKSPER: The Global Electronic Shakespeare Conference*": the 1994 thread on began with a question about Cordelia and the 1996 thread that began with a question about whether or not Hamlet and Ophelia had Sexual Relations. The following links refer to some of these exemplarily posts:
 <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/1994/0468.html>
 <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/1994/0474.html>
 <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/1994/0479.html>
 <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/1994/0490.html>
 <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/1994/0501.html>
 <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/1994/0615.html>
 <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/1994/0623.html>
 <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/1996/0092.html>

<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/1996/0099.html>
<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/1996/0100.html>
<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/1996/0104.html>
<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/1996/0100.html>
[15] <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/1996/0104.html>
[16] <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2000/0696.html>
[17] <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2001/0061.html>
[18] <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2002/1361.html>
[19] <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2002/1386.html>
[20] <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2002/1387.html>
[21] <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2002/1415.html>
[22] <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2003/1355.html>
[23] <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2003/1419.html>
[24] <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2004/1754.html>
[25] http://www.wcupa.edu/_academics/sch_cas.lit/backissues/361.html
[26] The resulting essay appeared as *"SHAKSPER:* An Academic Discussion List" in *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation* (2.2. Winter/Fall 2006) as part of a collection of essays from this seminar. <http://lachesis.english.uga.edu/cocoon/borrowers/>.
[27] I went on to publish my conclusions in the essay I wrote for *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriations* (Cook 2006, 2.2: Winter/Fall). See Note 27.
[28] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2006/0000.html
[29] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2006/0583.html
[30] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2006/0606.html
[31] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2006/0628.html
[32] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2007/0017.html
[33] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2007/0065.html
[34] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2007/0091.html
[35] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2007/0090.html
[36] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2007/0091.html
[37] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2007/0128.html
[38] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2007/0315.html
[39] As of the writing of this essay, the information on the "Shakespeare's Intentions" Roundtable has not been mounted in the Roundtable section of the SHAKSPER fileserver. The reason, in part, is that the webmaster, Eric Luhrs, has held off making further major changes to the server until he completes his work on redesigning the entire site. As a way to fill that void, I have mounted an Adobe pdf file containing all of the files that constitute the complete second Roundtable at the following link: http://www.shaksper.net/~hcook/RT2_Intentions.pdf. Anyone with a copy of the Adobe Reader or Acrobat can read the files at this URL, but anyone wishing to download this file should be warned that it is extremely large, almost 1 Gb, and will thus depending on one's connection take a considerable time to download.
[40] To find the entire discussion thread, see entries under "Authorial Intentions" in the Volume 18 (2007) index of discussions in the Browse SHAKSPER section of the SHAKSPER web site: http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2007/index.html.
[41] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2007/0550.html and http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2007/0666.html.
[42] *Style* is a journal that addresses questions of style, stylistics, and poetics, including research and theory in discourse analysis, literary and nonliterary genres, narrative, figuration, metrics, rhetorical analysis, and the pedagogy of style. Its contributions draw from such fields as literary criticism, critical theory, computational linguistics, cognitive linguistics, philosophy of language, and rhetoric and writing studies. See submission information at http://www.style.niu.edu/index.html.
[43] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2007/0586.html
[44] Earlier in this essay, I implied that I had expected that remarkably busy, established scholars would jump at the opportunity to moderate a SHAKSPER Roundtable of their choosing but that I later recognized the essentially *fantastical* nature of this anticipation. After I came to this realization, I came up with a more realistic scenario. I would need to have an offer that would have a "payoff" enticing enough that it would appeal to an eager, young scholar anxious to establish legitimacy at the beginning of a promising career. Whether I like it or not, guest moderating a SHAKSPER Roundtable is not as attractive nor does it carry the same prestige as guest moderating a special issue of a print journal, and the combination of the two was I needed to attract an up-and-coming a young scholar of the caliber of Cary DiPietro to be Guest Moderator of the second SHAKSPER Roundtable.
[45] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0199.html
[46] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0199.html
[47] http://shaksper.net/archives/2007/0315.html
[48] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0235.html
[49] Puzzlingly, that is, unless readers were simply stunned into silence by the thoroughness of that opening essay and the clearly evident preparations DiPietro had made before this Roundtable began.
[50] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0243.html
[51] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0252.html
[52] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0252.html
[53] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0259.html
[54] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0265.html
[55] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0271.html
[56] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0277.html
[57] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0278.html
[58] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0252.html
[59] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0284.html
[60] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0312.html
[61] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0312.html
[62] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0235.html
[63] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0252.html
[64] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0284.html
[65] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0312.html
[66] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0333.html
[67] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0349.html
[68] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0349.html
[69] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0368.html
[70] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0389.html
[71] http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2008/0415.html