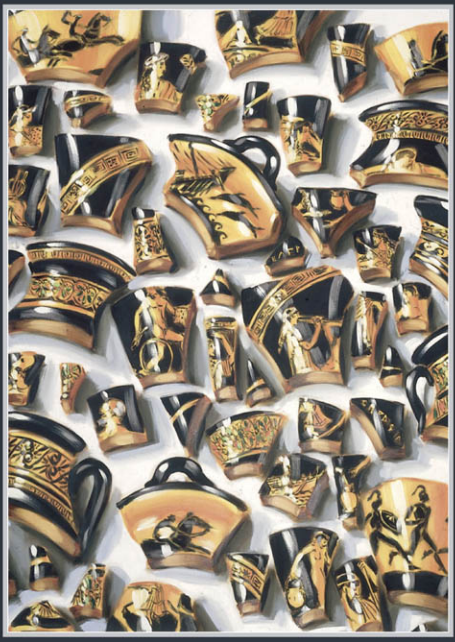
ART AND INTENTION

A PHILOSOPHICAL STUDY



PAISLEY LIVINGSTON

OXFORD

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Do the artist's intentions have anything to do with the making and appreciation of works of art? In *Art and Intention*, Paisley Livingston develops a broad and balanced perspective on perennial disputes between intentionalists and anti-intentionalists in philosophical aesthetics and critical theory. He surveys and assesses a wide range of rival assumptions about the nature of intentions and the status of intentionalist psychology. With detailed reference to examples from diverse media, art forms, and traditions, he demonstrates that insights into the multiple functions of intentions have important implications for our understanding of artistic creation and authorship, the ontology of art, conceptions of texts, works, and versions, basic issues pertaining to the nature of fiction and fictional truth, and the theory of art interpretation and appreciation.

Livingston argues that neither the inspirationist nor rationalistic conceptions can capture the blending of deliberate and intentional, spontaneous, and unintentional processes in the creation of art. Texts, works, and artistic structures and performances cannot be adequately individuated in the absence of a recognition of the relevant makers' intentions. The distinction between complete and incomplete works receives an action-theoretic analysis that makes possible an elucidation of several different senses of 'fragment' in critical discourse. Livingston develops an account of authorship, contending that the recognition of intentions is in fact crucial to our understanding of diverse forms of collective art-making. An artist's short-term intentions and long-term plans and policies interact in complex ways in the emergence of an artistic *oeuvre*, and our uptake of such attitudes makes an important difference to our appreciation of the relations between items belonging to a single life-work.

The intentionalism Livingston advocates is, however, a partial one, and accommodates a number of important anti-intentionalist contentions. Intentions are fallible, and works of art, like other artefacts, can be put to a bewildering diversity of uses. Yet some important aspects of art's meaning and value are linked to the artist's aims and activities.

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A philosophical study

Paisley Livingston

CLARENDON PRESS · OXFORD

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,
and education by publishing worldwide in

Oxford New York

Auckland Cape Town Dar es Salaam Hong Kong Karachi Kuala Lumpur
Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Nairobi New Delhi Shanghai Taipei Toronto

With offices in

Argentina Austria Brazil Chile Czech Republic France Greece
Guatemala Hungary Italy Japan South Korea Poland Portugal
Singapore Switzerland Thailand Turkey Ukraine Vietnam

Published in the United States
by Oxford University Press Inc., New York

First published 2005

First published in paperback 2007

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Data available

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Data available

Typeset by SPI Publisher Services, Pondicherry, India
Printed in Great Britain on acid-free paper by
Biddles Ltd,
King's Lynn, Norfolk

ISBN 978–0–19–927806–0 (Hbk.) 978–0–19–920429–8 (Pbk.)

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

For Erik and Siri

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Preface

Sextus Empiricus relates a story about Apelles of Kolophon, the legendary fourth century BC artist whose motto is said to have been 'Not a day without a line'. Apelles was at work on a picture of a horse, having set himself the task of producing a vivid depiction of the lather on the animal's mouth. Frustrated by his failure to achieve the desired effect, he angrily cast his paint-soaked sponge at the picture, only to discover that the paint he had splashed onto the surface yielded a fine depiction of the horse's lather.[1] Sextus suggests that the sceptic can enjoy a similar success: when we suspend judgement, tranquillity follows.

I draw a rather different lesson from this legendary episode of artistic creation. In thinking about art, we want to keep in mind the artist's specific intentions, and the actions and events to which they give rise. Apelles, for example, has definite aims in mind when he begins to paint his picture. His efforts are successful until he tries to perfect the representation of the lather, and he finally gives up on realizing that intention. (It is said that in a lost treatise on painting, Apelles argued that knowing when to stop working on a picture is a crucial part of the artist's skill.) The painter's attempt to destroy the fragmentary picture also fails, its unexpected by-product uncannily recalling the abandoned intention to depict the lather. I imagine an Apelles who finds his painterly diligence mocked by the fortuitous appearance of what looks like a successful work of art.

My conjecture is that the artist is quite unlike Sextus' sceptic. Tranquillity does not follow the accidental appearance of a mimetic effect, because Apelles is after a kind of artistic value that depends crucially on the skilful and intentional realization of his intentions. The painter knows he had

[1] Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Scepticism*, ed. and trans. Julia Annas and Jonathan Barnes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 10–11. For background on Apelles and the allegorical tradition inspired by one of his lost works, see David Cast, *The Calumny of Apelles: A Study in the Humanist Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

taken up the challenge of skilfully painting the lather, and he cannot pride himself on achieving that goal. We can, of course, imagine an Apelles who learns how to splash paint to achieve desired artistic effects, but that is a different story.

Intentions, then, are a crucial part of the story of artistic creation. In aesthetics the topic of intention is broached most often in debates over the relevance of artists' intentions to interpretations of works of art. Assumptions about the nature of intentions usually remain implicit, the prevailing thought seeming to be that there is an underlying consensus concerning what intentions are and do, and that it is consequently unnecessary to go into the matter in any detail.[2] Yet in fact the advocates of rival theses on the interpretation of art rely upon divergent, and at times, rather tendentious premisses. Intentions are taken, for example, to be dark and elusive creatures of the mental night; essentially unknowable and indeterminate, intentions are thought of as ineffectual subjective illusions, such as an artist's private musings and forecasts regarding what he or she might do some day. At the other extreme, intention, or more precisely, the author's 'final intention', is cast as an atomic and decisive movement of the individual subject's sovereign will, and as such is supposed to function as the sole locus of the meaning of a work of art. Alternatively, intentions are conceived of as the *post hoc* constructions of an interpreter. The very determinacy and existence of an artist's intentions are said to depend on another person's acts, and in some accounts, on various interpreters' divergent imaginings.

Such contrasting assumptions about the nature of intentions cannot all be right, and they have significant and divergent implications. If intentions were in fact epiphenomenal, reference to them could have little or no explanatory or descriptive import; if, on the other hand, intentions infallibly determined the work's meaning, knowledge of them would be crucial to our understanding of art; and if the path to intentions were paved by others, the question of how attributions should be made would be decisive. These and other divergent implications of rival assumptions about inten-

[2] There are a few, article-length exceptions, yet the range of views on intention taken into account in them remains quite restricted. See, for example, Colin Lyas, 'Wittgensteinian Intentions', in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 132–51; and Michael Hancher, 'Three Kinds of Intention', *MLN*, 87 (1972), 827–51.

tions indicate the importance of investigating our reasons for preferring any one of them, and especially those reasons that do not amount to the question-begging contention that a given assumption is best because it supports one's favoured view of interpretation or some other topic in aesthetics. Additional, and in my view, sufficient motivation for a more explicit and detailed consideration of intention in aesthetics derives from some striking lacunæ in the critical literature: little or nothing is said, on either side of the question of 'the validity of interpretation', about various sophisticated accounts of intentions, about collective or joint intentions, about the diversity of intentions' functions, or about the complex relations obtaining between intentions and other attitudes.

Art and Intention has been designed to offset these tendencies in primarily two ways. First of all, I explore some of the implications that assumptions about intentions have for a number of distinct issues related to the making, reception, and value of works of art, and not only the question of interpretation. Although the latter topic is discussed in two of my chapters, my treatment of it is framed and informed by investigations of a number of issues of independent interest. Second, with regard to the question of which assumptions about intentions are to be preferred, I draw explicitly on the literatures of action theory and philosophical psychology, focusing, more specifically, on rival claims concerning individual and collective or shared intentions. The upshot is not the dubious thesis that we have a definitive, wholly unproblematic account of intentions; I do, however, identify what I take to be insightful proposals regarding the nature and functions of intentions. I also identify some unanswered questions and lines for future enquiry.

Although I am to be classified as a partial intentionalist in a sense to be specified in what follows, I think it important to declare at the outset of this study that I take various anti-intentionalist claims to be quite sound. There are, for example, excellent reasons to reject the sort of old-fashioned biographical criticism and Great Man historiography away from which Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, and company swerved in making their notorious, hyperbolic anti-humanistic pronouncements of May 1968 inspiration. An exclusive focus on the artist's self-understanding and psychology can obscure crucial dimensions of the context of creation, and it is not a good idea to try to reduce complex fictions to the status of psychological symptoms—a recurrent foible of biographical criticism. In

their strongest versions, intentionalist principles of interpretation are, I shall contend, misleading: the meanings (and other artistic features) of a work are not all and only those intended by its maker(s). Intentionalist insights can be divorced from at least some of the notions associated with what is called the 'Cartesian Subject'—a construct routinely scourged by theorists of several stripes. More specifically, intentionalists need not work with assumptions involving the agent's infallible self-knowledge and control—such as the thesis that to have a mental state is necessarily to be aware of it, and the idea that one's beliefs about one's mental states are always veridical. Nor are intentions always rational, lucid, or the product of careful deliberation. For example, it is plausible to imagine that when Apelles abandons his intention to paint the lather, the intention to destroy the picture by flinging the sponge at it emerges spontaneously and without due reflection. The impetuous gesture is none the less intentional, and its consequences stand in contrast to the intended results. Indeed, the story loses its very point if that contrast is not drawn.

Chapter 1 takes up two central issues: the nature of intentions and the overall status of the discourse or psychological framework within which attributions of intention are framed. I begin with reductive accounts of intention and objections raised against them, and then move on to a non-reductive perspective that underscores the various functions intentions play in the lives of temporally situated agents. Following Michael E. Bratman, I reject the methodological priority of so-called 'intention-in-action' and focus on the diverse functions of future-directed intentions to undertake some action.[3] More specifically, intentions are characterized, following Alfred R. Mele, as 'executive attitudes toward plans', the roles of which include initiating, sustaining, and orienting intentional action, prompting, guiding, and terminating deliberation, and contributing to both intrapersonal and interpersonal co-ordination.[4] In the final section of Chapter 1, I turn to a discussion of a range of competing positions with regard to the overall status of intentionalist psychology, including 'error

[3] Michael E. Bratman, *Intention, Plans, and Practical Reason* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987); and *Faces of Intention: Selected Essays on Intention and Agency* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[4] Alfred R. Mele, 'Deciding to Act', *Philosophical Studies*, 100 (2000), 81–108, at 100. Additional references to Mele's work on intention and related topics are provided in Chapter 1.

theory', eliminativism, instrumentalism, and versions of realism. With reference to the tension between anti-intentionalist theory and intentionalist practice, I discuss, but do not rely on, a transcendental argument based on the thought that anti-intentionalism is necessarily self-defeating. Similarly, I discuss, but do not embrace, 'double standard', contextualist, and 'Southern Fundamentalist' strategies for dealing with this question. My schematic treatment of these issues is not presented as having unravelled 'the world-knot', but does, I think, provide a reasonable basis for the investigations undertaken in the rest of this work.[5]

Chapter 2 examines some functions of intention in the making of art, a central goal being to explore a *via media* between Romanticist and rationalistic images of artistic creativity. Like Paul Valéry and some of the other authors who have written about the creation of art, I attempt to characterize both the spontaneous and deliberate, unintentional and intentional aspects of the process. A first question concerns the *necessity* of intentions to art-making. I contend that they are indeed necessary, arguing for this view in part by means of an examination of such putative counterexamples as automatic writing. With regard to the subsequent question of intention's roles in the making of art, I discuss ways in which future-directed and proximal intentions initiate and orient artists' intentional undertakings, prompting and framing their deliberations and activities. The question of the distinction between complete and incomplete works receives an action-theoretic analysis that makes possible an elucidation of several different senses of 'fragment' in critical discourse. Some of my key points are illustrated with reference to Virginia Woolf's writerly activities, as exemplified and commented upon in her diaries and novels.

Chapter 3 focuses on conceptions of authorship, individual and collective. Although it is sometimes complained that intentionalism is somehow linked to individualist dogma, I argue that the recognition of intentions is in fact crucial to our understanding of diverse forms of collective authorship and art-making. I discuss and propose an alternative to Foucauldian

[5] Arthur Schopenhauer is often said to have characterized the problem of 'free will' as the 'world-knot', but he may have had a different question in mind in using that expression. For background on free will, see Robert Kane, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), which includes an informative bibliography.

and other approaches to authorship, defending the idea that authorship is a matter of the production of utterances or works with expressive or communicative intent. With reference to contemporary philosophical analyses of joint and collective action, I propose an account of joint authorship broad enough to handle a range of cases, while distinguishing it from both individual authorship and from cases where authorship does not obtain. Although I do not conflate authorship and art-making, I do suggest that an analysis of the latter can be patterned after my account of the former.

It is uncontroversial to observe that people frequently take an interest in relations between different works by a single author or artist. Yet there has been little theorizing about the nature of these relations or the bases of critical interest in them. Chapter 4 is a response to this gap. My point of departure is an innovative and insightful essay by Jerrold Levinson concerning different kinds of relations between works in a single author's corpus. In developing a different approach, I outline an actualist, genetic perspective informed by Bratman's discussions of 'dynamic' intentions and the functions of plans and planning in our lives as temporally situated agents. This position is illustrated with a discussion of various examples, including Karen Blixen's bilingual *œuvre* and aspects of the careers of Ingmar Bergman, Virginia Woolf, and Mishima Yukio.

Chapter 5 deals with some issues in the ontology of art, taking as its point of departure philosophers' extrapolations from the Jorge Luis Borges story, 'Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*'. I contend that the success of arguments to the effect that a literary work is not reducible to a text requires an independent defence of claims about the identity and individuation of texts, and to that end, I present a new, 'locutionary' account which conjoins syntactical and speech-act theoretical conditions, where the latter include an intentionalist condition. I go on to elucidate some of the several senses of 'version' in artistic contexts, exploring the idea that the individuation of works and versions depends on an intentionalist perspective. The upshot of this chapter is nothing resembling a comprehensive ontology of art, but claims any theory of this sort ought to take into account.

In Chapter 6 I turn to the perennial debate over intention and interpretation, arguing for a form of partial intentionalism with regard to one central kind of interpretative project. I situate my position in relation to

other proposals in the literature, and more specifically, rival, fictionalist approaches and hypothetical intentionalisms. I distinguish between different lines of argumentation that can be given in support of a partial, actualist intentionalism, opting for an axiological approach that refers to the kind of artistic value involved in the skilful realization of intentions. A key issue in this chapter hinges on the nature of the 'success' condition to be weighed on artists' intentions, and the viability of a sharp distinction between categorial and semantic intentions. Rival assumptions about intentions turn out to have a crucial role in our weighing of alternative stances on the interpretation of art.

Problems related to the application of the intentionalist ideas sketched in Chapter 6 (and in particular, the question of success conditions) are further pursued in Chapter 7, which focuses on three main topics: the fiction/non-fiction distinction; the nature of fictional truth, and the determination of fictional truth. I sketch a pragmatic approach to the nature and status of fiction, and with reference to proposals by David K. Lewis, Gregory Currie, and others, I defend a partial intentionalist approach to fictional content. The question of how that approach may be applied is explored with reference to the interpretation of István Svabó's 1991 film, *Meeting Venus*, the story of which depends crucially on the qualities of an embedded performance of Richard Wagner's *Tannhäuser*.

In thinking about the issues taken up in this book I have learnt a great deal from the many persons with whom I have discussed these and related matters. Although I cannot mention them all, thanks are due to John Alcorn, David Bordwell, Michael E. Bratman, Michael Bristol, Staffan Carlshamre, Finn Collin, Gregory Currie, David Davies, Dario Del Puppo, Paul Dumouchel, Sue Dwyer, Jan Faye, Berys Gaut, Susan Haack, Robert Howell, Dorte Jelstrup, Ute Klünder, Erik Koed, Petr Kot'átko, Peter Lamarque, Jerrold Levinson, Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen, Poul Lübcke, Adam Muller, Robert Nadeau, Stein Haugom Olsen, Anders Petterssen, Bo Petterssen, Torsten Petterssen, Paul Pietroski, Trevor Ponech, Göran Rossholm, Siegfried J. Schmidt, Thomas Schwartz, Tobin Siebers, Robert Stecker, Peter Swirski, Folke Tersman, Kristin Thompson, Ron Toby, Tominaga Shigeki, Willie van Peer, George M. Wilson, and numerous colleagues and students at McGill University, Roskilde University, the University of Aarhus, Siegen University, Lingnan University, and the

University of Copenhagen. Alfred R. Mele deserves special mention, as I have learnt a lot from his work on action theory and intentions, especially in the context of our collaboration on two papers. Robert Howell (who got me started in aesthetics at Stanford three decades ago) offered helpful comments on a draft of Chapter 4. Berys Gaut and Stephen Davies read through the entire manuscript and provided a number of important suggestions for improvement. Gary Iseminger and Neven Sesardic also read and commented on Chapter 5. Jerrold Levinson offered helpful input on an early version of part of Chapter 1 and comments on parts of Chapter 6. Two anonymous readers provided some helpful comments on the manuscript. I also want to thank Mrs Clara Selborn (née Svendsen), Marianne Wirenfeldt-Asmussen, Tore V. Dinesen, and the staff at the Royal Danish Library for faciliating my archival research on Karen Blixen; Mrs Selborn kindly answered a number of questions about her collaboration with Baroness Blixen. None of these intelligent interlocutors should be blamed, of course, for whatever shortcomings this book may have.

Support for some of the research leading to this book was provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and by the F.C.A.R. of Quebec.

I am very grateful to Peter Momtchiloff and Rupert Cousens for their efficient editorial assistance, and to Conan Nicholas for helpful copy-editing.

Finally, special thanks are due to my wife, Mette Hjort, for her constant support and good advice. Her hard work at Hong Kong University gave me the time off needed to finish this book.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the following: Alfred R. Mele for permission to reproduce, in revised form, my part of two papers we co-authored, 'Intention and Literature', *Stanford French Review*, 16 (1992), 173–96, and 'Intentions and Interpretations', *MLN*, 107 (1992), 931–49; Johns Hopkins University Press, for permission to reprint a revised version of parts of my section of the latter essay; Oxford University Press, for permission to reprint, in revised form, my 'Intention in Art', in *Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*, ed. Jerrold Levinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 275–90; 'Counting Fragments, and Frenhofer's Paradox', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 39 (1999), 14–23; and 'Cinematic Authorship', in *Film Theory and Philosophy*, ed. Richard Allen and Murray Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 132–48.

I am very grateful to Lisa Milroy and an anonymous collector in New York for permission to reproduce one of the artist's pictures on the cover of this book.

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Chapter 1

WHAT ARE INTENTIONS?

'Few words have caused such barren discussion in aesthetics as the word "intention" ', complains Richard Wollheim in *Painting as an Art*, and he adds that one reason for this is that the term has been used either more narrowly or more broadly 'than seems reasonable elsewhere'.[1] Just what a reasonable usage of 'intention' might consist of is the topic of this chapter. I begin by taking a look at some salient theses about the nature and functions of intentions, and then turn to some claims about the status of intentionalist psychology as a whole. The upshot of my relatively cursory survey of these complex topics will be some ideas about intentions to be employed and developed in my subsequent chapters.

CONCEPTIONS OF INTENTION WITHIN INTENTIONALIST PSYCHOLOGY

The expression 'intentionalist psychology' will be used in what follows to refer to any attribution of conscious or unconscious mental states or attitudes, such as belief and desire. Utterances in everyday exchanges about people's thoughts and actions are included, as are the propositions of psychologists in a wide range of research traditions, including many strains of psychoanalysis, as both conscious and unconscious intentions are attributed to persons under analysis.[2] Intentionalist psychology includes

[1] Richard Wollheim, *Painting as an Art* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1987), 18.

[2] For example, although Anton Ehrenzweig mobilizes familiar psychodynamic concepts in his discussion of artistic creation, he also complains that 'modern abstract art has made us too

the innumerable biographies and works of art criticism in which thoughts, motives, wishes, desires, anxieties, and a host of other subjective states are imputed to artists and the people with whom they interact. The term 'intentionalist psychology' can also be understood as covering various non-discursive attributions, such as a person's unspoken thoughts concerning what he, she, or someone else thinks, believes, desires, or intends.

Although there is widespread agreement that there is such a thing as intentionalist psychology—or 'folk psychology' as it is dimly designated by some contemporary philosophers—there is much less agreement as to its specific components, beginning with the question of what sort of item an attitude should be taken to be. There are also fundamental questions concerning the overall status of intentionalist discourse—to which I return in the last part of this chapter.

Intention is a case in point. 'Intention' and relevant terms in other languages (*intenzione*, *Absicht*, *hensigt*, *yìtú*, *kokorozashi*, *tsumori*, *layon*, *úmysl*, *zamiar*, etc.) are multifarious as far as ordinary usage is concerned, nor is there any consensus amongst experts as to how a univocal concept might be stipulatively associated with these expressions. Conceptual clarification is needed, then, the goal being to carry forward the most cogent and useful aspects of the relevant thinking and discourse. I turn now to some of the main proposals in the literature, beginning with some of the more 'narrow' or reductionist usages decried by Wollheim.

Some attitude psychologists equate intentions with one of several meaningful cognitive or motivational states, such as forecasts, inklings, urges, wants, hopes, or longings. The social psychologists Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen, for example, define intention as 'a person's subjective probability that he will perform some behavior'.[3] Intention, then, is just a special case of belief, namely, one where the object of the belief is one's own future behaviour. Another proposal in contemporary psychology is that

willing to ignore the artist's conscious intentions', in *The Hidden Order of Art: A Study in the Psychology of Artistic Imagination* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967), 96. A similar point holds with regard to a more recent example, Nancy Mowll Mathews's informative *Paul Gauguin: An Erotic Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

[3] Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen, *Belief, Attitude, Intention, and Behavior* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1975), 12. Thanks to Alfred R. Mele for bringing this and the following source to my attention.

intention is a conscious plan to perform some behaviour.[4] Intention has also been equated with an evaluative attitude, with predominant motivation, and with volition or the will.[5]

Such minimalist views, it has often been rejoined, are too simple to account for the complexity of prevalent intentionalist discourses and attributions. Alfred R. Mele argues for this conclusion by pointing out that not all intentional activities are plausibly held to be motivated or triggered by a single kind of volitional action, the status of which is itself controversial. Volitions are actions, yet intentions are neither actions nor necessarily issue from them. Nor does it seem plausible to expect all intentions to be conscious, or the products of deliberate reflection. As Mele writes, 'Under ordinary circumstances, when I hear a knock at my office door I intend to answer it; but I do not consciously decide to answer it, nor do I consciously perform any other action of intention formation.'[6] (I say a bit more about the contrast between conscious and unconscious psychological states in Chapter 2.) Another of Mele's criticisms of minimalist views is that intending is not a kind of belief because someone can fully believe he or she will end up doing something, such as succumbing to temptation, without having any such intention. Intention is not the same as a plan, as one can think of a plan for doing something without having any intention of acting on that plan. And intending is not reducible to wishing, wanting, or desiring because the latter need not result in any intention to act, if only because the objects of some longings are believed to be out of reach. It seems unlikely, then, that any single notion can suffice to stand in for or elucidate the idea of intending.

These and other criticisms of minimalist proposals need not be taken as entailing that intentions constitute a special, *sui generis* attitude. One may instead hold that if other items, such as belief and desire, are combined in the right sort of way, a successful analysis of intention may be devised. Reductionists about intention deny, then, that the term refers to an independent kind of mental state. They often propose instead that

[4] Paul Warshaw and Fred Davis, 'Disentangling Behavioral Intention and Behavioral Expectation', *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 21 (1985), 213–28.

[5] For a sophisticated volitionist approach, see Carl Ginet, *On Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[6] Mele, *Springs of Action* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 141.

'intention' picks out the functions served by particular combinations of beliefs and desires, an example being what Donald Davidson dubbed a 'primary reason'.[7] The central idea behind such analyses is that intending amounts to a performance expectation—such as a belief that one will perform some action—which is suitably related to wanting, desiring, or some other item, such as a volition.[8] As an example of this kind of analysis, we could say that if a sculptor intends to create a statue, what this means is that the artist desires or wants to create the statue and has some relevant beliefs about means to that end. It may also mean that the artist believes that he or she will create the statue, or at least try to do so; in another version of such an account, what the artist believes is only that it is not impossible to create the statue. The belief and desire taken together constitute a 'primary reason'. There are alternative reductive accounts, but instead of lingering over them I shall move on to what I take to be telling criticisms of the basic approach.[9]

Dissatisfaction with reductionist accounts of intention has several grounds. Gilbert Harman presents a counter-example along the following lines. Someone sees that someone else is about to blow some pepper into his face and believes that this will make him sneeze. Since he also consciously wants to sneeze, it follows from the belief–desire analysis that he

[7] Davidson initially endorsed a reductive view of intention, but subsequently modified his position, contending that intention is an all-out judgement to the effect that some action is to be done; for a detailed discussion of Davidson on intention, see Michael E. Bratman, 'Davidson's Theory of Intention', in *Faces of Intention: Selected Essays on Intention and Agency* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 209–24. For Davidson's subsequent endorsement of H. Paul Grice's account of communicative intentions, see 'Locating Literary Language', in *Literary Theory after Davidson*, ed. Reed Way Dasenbrock (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 295–308, at 299.

[8] Robert Audi, 'Intending', *Journal of Philosophy*, 70 (1973), 387–403; Monroe C. Beardsley, 'Intending', in *Values and Morals*, ed. Alvin Goldman and Jaegwon Kim (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1978), 163–84; Wayne A. Davis, 'A Causal Theory of Intending', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 21 (1984), 43–54. For background and criticisms, see Gilbert Harman, 'Practical Reasoning', *Review of Metaphysics*, 79 (1976), 431–63.

[9] An example is Grice's proposal to the effect that someone intends to do something just in case he or she 'wills' it and believes that this willing will result in his or her bringing the target result about; see his 'Intention and Uncertainty', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 57 (1971), 263–79; for criticisms, see Harman, 'Willing and Intending', in *Philosophical Grounds of Rationality: Intentions, Categories, Ends*, ed. Richard Grandy and Richard Warner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 363–80.

intends to sneeze, which is highly counter-intuitive.[10] Another kind of objection to reductive accounts of intention has been raised by Hugh McCann, Mele, and others.[11] The thought is that such words as 'wanting', 'preferring', and 'desiring' have both *evaluative* and *motivational* senses, and that this ambiguity opens the reductive analyses to counter-examples.[12] In the *evaluative* sense of deeming something the best (or better) thing to do, a writer might want, prefer, or desire to write a difficult and controversial work, yet still be strongly inclined to write a lucrative piece of pulp fiction, wanting, in the *motivational* sense, to do so. In such a case, the terms of the belief–desire analysis might be satisfied without it being appropriate to say that the writer intends to write a great novel. The reductionist may respond that predominant, evaluative preferring, and not simply strong motivation, is what intending requires: if the writer believes he will write a serious novel and has the right sort of predominant, evaluative motive in favour of so doing, then this is a case of intending. Yet one can doubt whether this is a necessary condition: cannot a writer addicted to the penning of junk fiction fully intend to write another easy, lucrative book while maintaining a negative evaluation of this activity? If the answer is affirmative, then there are cases of intending which do not match the revised, belief plus predominant evaluative motivation analysis. The point to be underscored here is that the belief–desire pairs identified by reductionists fail to capture one of intention's characteristic functions, namely, a kind of commitment which encompasses a propensity to act.

What alternatives are there to reductionist analyses of intention? One proposal is that of Wollheim, who, as I indicated above, explicitly squares off against what he takes to be overly narrow and overly broad conceptions. The narrow understanding rejected by Wollheim is a volitionist analysis in

[10] Harman, *Change of View: Principles of Reasoning* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986), 79; 'Practical Reasoning', *Review of Metaphysics*, 79 (1976), 431–63.

[11] Hugh McCann, 'Intrinsic Intentionality', *Theory and Decision*, 20 (1986), 247–73, and *The Works of Agency* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998); Mele, 'Against a Belief/Desire Analysis of Intention', *Philosophia*, 18 (1988), 239–42, *Springs of Action*, ch. 9. Other critics of belief/desire accounts of intending include Myles Brand, *Intending and Acting: Toward a Naturalized Theory* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1984), and C. J. Moya, *The Philosophy of Action: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[12] This traditional distinction was emphasized by Gary Watson; see his 'Skepticism about Weakness of Will', *Philosophical Review*, 86 (1977), 316–39, and 'Free Agency', *Journal of Philosophy*, 72 (1975), 205–20.

which intention is reduced to a thought or internal command on the part of the artist to the effect that the work should have such-and-such a look or that the spectator should have a given reaction to the picture.[13] Wollheim unfolds his dialectic by noting that the excessively broad understanding is one in which intention is taken as referring to whatever goes on in the artist's head as he or she paints. 'A way through is needed', Wollheim aptly concludes, and then proposes that '"Intention" best picks out just those desires, thoughts, beliefs, experiences, emotions, commitments, which cause the artist to paint as he does.'[14] He adds that it is not his assumption that the painter must have a perfect image of the intended picture in his mind prior to his engagement with the medium, and further, that it is necessary to distinguish between intentions which are fulfilled in the work and those, which, though they have contributed to the making of the work, are not realized in it.[15]

Although it does seem reasonable to allow that intentions sometimes have motivational, cognitive, and even affective dimensions, Wollheim's proposal seems to err on the side of breadth. There may be some very broad sense in which all of a person's prior intentions have some influence on what he or she ultimately does, yet it could still be important to identify intentions that do not 'cause the artist to paint as he does', namely, intentions which, having been framed by the artist, were subsequently abandoned and hence were not in any way directly 'operative in its [i.e. the painting's] construction'. An intention which is not acted upon—which does not even prompt the creation of a *pentimento*—need not, then, 'cause the artist to paint as he does'. Also, other, psychological factors which are so operative, such as wishes and hopes, may not be aptly called intentions. And as Berys Gaut has argued, Wollheim's account also faces the objection that there are unintended yet artistically relevant features of a work of art.[16]

[13] Wollheim, *Painting as an Art*, 18. For a fine, critical exposition of Wollheim's theory and practice of intentionalist criticism of pictures, see Jeffrey L. Geller, 'Painting, Parapraxes, and Unconscious Intentions', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 51 (1993), 377–87.

[14] Wollheim, *Painting as an Art*, 19.

[15] Wollheim also stresses that the artist's intention is 'crucial to the understanding of a painting just in case the intention was operative in its construction: but its indispensability for the understanding of the painting does not entail that it was fulfilled' (ibid., 166).

[16] Berys Gaut, 'Interpreting the Arts: The Patchwork Theory', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 51 (1993), 597–609, at 600.

Fortunately, there is an alternative to Wollheim's proposal as well as to the various reductionist analyses of intention. Instead of characterizing intention as a total motivational episode, or as a simple combination of a pair of other attitudes, intentions can be picked out in terms of the functions they tend to fulfil. As developed and defended by such action theorists as Mele, Harman, Michael E. Bratman, and Myles Brand, sophisticated functionalist accounts of intention suggest that the term 'intention' plays a diverse and important role within our intentionalist discourse, and, as such, may be recognized as referring, at least in the first instance, to a type of psychological item not reducible to other attitudes or mental states. What follows is a synthetic presentation of insights from accounts in this spirit, with an emphasis on Mele's proposals.

In keeping with a basic and now familiar strategy of analysis sketched by Bertrand Russell in *The Analysis of Mind*, intention may be understood as a kind of propositional attitude.[17] As such, intention must conjoin contents as well as a characteristic stance or functional attitude towards these contents. Mele proposes that we call the content of an intention a *plan* for doing something; the attitude taken towards the plan in intending is an *executive* one. That attitude's specific nature is brought forth through a contrast with attitudes of desire or wanting: although intending and desiring both involve being motivated to do something, desire is not necessarily accompanied by being settled on doing that thing, or by a commitment to trying to do so. Nor is being settled on doing something the same as currently being preponderantly motivated to do that thing, since the lacking motivation may be brought in line with intention as the time for action approaches. In sum, to have the attitude of 'intending' towards a given plan is to be settled upon executing that plan, or upon trying to execute it. Being 'settled on' may be thought of, then, in terms of a firm yet defeasible form of commitment.

[17] Bertrand Russell, *The Analysis of Mind* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1921), Lecture 12. Adoption of this approach leaves many options open. For example, to identify intention in terms of the attitude's functions is not necessarily to ascribe to a 'functionalist' theory in the philosophy of mind more generally, nor is any particular view on the ontology or metaphysics of the mental (such as Russell's 'neutral monism') entailed. Nor are our hands tied with regard to questions surrounding the determination of 'content'. I am not here endorsing, for example, any popular, externalist accounts. My neo-Gricean leanings will become apparent in subsequent chapters.

As a meaningful attitude, an intention represents some targeted situation or state of affairs as well as some means to that end. The content of an intention is schematic, requiring specification and adjustment at the time of action.[18] A plan provides, then, some more or less definite specification of the intended behaviour and results, but there remains a gap between the schematic features of the mental construct and the actual, concrete deeds that may eventually realize the plan. Part of the schematic construction which is a plan is some indication of a temporal relation between, on the one hand, the moment at which the state of intending obtains and, on the other hand, the time or times at which the intended activity is to be undertaken. Schematically, then: S intends now (at t_1) to A during t_2. We speak of future-directed or distal intentions when $t_1 < t_2$, and of proximal intentions when t_1 converges on t_2.[19] Many intentions are temporally mixed.

To illustrate these points, we may say that if a composer has the intention of creating a symphony, he must have at least some rudimentary plan specifying some of the means and ends involved. And since the plan is schematic, all sorts of details will have to be filled in when the musician gets down to work. Should he intend to begin work on a symphony right away, the composer is also settled on performing various related future actions. He even intends to intend, in the sense that he plans to form and act on other relevant intentions when the time comes. When he began work on his Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Opus 68, Johannes Brahms most likely did not intend to continue working for fourteen years, but we may surmise that he meant to continue working until he was satisfied with his results.

The attentive reader may have wondered whether an ambiguity just surfaced in our discussion of action theorists' elucidations of intention, since the term is said to apply both to future-directed intentions—such as the young author's intention to write his *mémoires* some day, and to those proximal or present-directed intentions which are effectively acted upon—

[18] The link between plans and at least one category of intentions is mentioned by Harman, *Change of View*, 84.

[19] Here I revise a proposal made by Brand, 'Intention and Intentional Action', in *Contemporary Action Theory*. i: *Individual Action*, ed. Ghita Holmström-Hintikka and Raimo Tuomela (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1997), 197–217.

such as my intention to finish this phrase. Some philosophers have been so impressed with the fact that 'intention' embraces both future-oriented intentions and 'present-directed' ones that they have declared the term equivocal, arguing that we must recognize the existence of two distinct categories of intentions.[20] Another step that some philosophers have taken is that of acknowledging an even more basic dichotomy in our attributions of intention: intentions are not only states of mind or attitudes, but are also literally actions, or at least constituents thereof.[21]

John R. Searle's contrast between future-directed intentions and what he calls 'intention in action' is an influential instance of the latter approach.[22] Although a thorough discussion of the dispute over this proposal in the theory of action would require a fairly lengthy technical essay, a few key points can be briefly brought forth in this context. Roughly, for Searle 'intention in action' is an item that both causes and 'presents' bodily movements, and in conjunction with the latter, 'constitutes' actions (with an analogous account being offered for such purely mental actions as doing arithmetic in one's head). Searle thereby tries to close the gap between intentions and the behaviour and actions they may be thought to cause.

There are serious objections to his proposal, however. One can, for example, wonder how a 'present-directed' mental state that is perfectly simultaneous with a bodily movement can aptly be thought to cause it (assuming that causes temporally precede their effects).[23] How, one may also ask, is intending to perform some action in the present moment related to trying to do this thing? If the two are synonymous, one may worry that the gap between intending and trying has been wrongly effaced by this analysis. Intention may plausibly be thought of (in part) as a

[20] For an early evocation and denial of the possibility that 'intention' is equivocal, see G. E. M. Anscombe, *Intention* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), §1.

[21] On this point see Bratman, 'What is Intention?', in *Intentions in Communication*, ed. Philip R. Cohen, Jerry Morgan, and Martha E. Pollack (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 15–31. Here I follow Bratman in denying the methodological priority of intention-in-action.

[22] John R. Searle, *Intentionality: An Essay in the Philosophy of Mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983; and *Consciousness and Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). For a concise and lucid presentation, see Joëlle Proust, 'Action', in *John Searle*, ed. Barry Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 102–27.

[23] Bruce Vermazen, 'Questionable Intentions', *Philosophical Studies*, 90 (1998), 264–79.

disposition to try, but unlike trying, intention is not itself an action. As Mele suggests, one of Searle's motivations is the thought that not all intentional actions are preceded by a prior intention, apparent examples being cases of sudden yet intentional responses to some unexpected event. If, however, intentions can be formed 'at the speed of thought', there may be time for the rapid acquisition of the relevant proximal intentions. And Searle's emphasis on intention in action may be prompted by the faulty assumption that prior intentions must play their causal role in the genesis of action entirely prior to the episode of trying and related bodily movements. Yet it is preferable to observe, as does Mele, that 'the causal role of the prior intention extends through the completion of the bodily movement'.[24] Intentions are prior and future-directed, then, in the sense that they precede the action, but this does not mean that they cannot function to sustain, adjust, and guide an action once it is in progress, especially with regard to those aspects of the action that are as yet incomplete.[25]

Such considerations may not be decisive. There is, in any case, a way to resist the temptation to bisect our concept of intentions. The temporal schema indicated above, with its mention of a time 'converging on' the targeted time of realization, serves that end, allowing us to draw the contrasts we need within a single category of intention conceived of as a mental attitude (as opposed to a property of actions). Many of our intentions are never acted upon, let alone realized, since we often change our minds, finding, for example, that altered circumstances have rendered

[24] Mele, *Springs of Action*, 182.

[25] Another, more general worry concerns Searle's manner of distinguishing between theoretical and practical categories of psychological items in terms of 'conditions of satisfaction' or 'directions of fit', a contrast that stems from Anscombe's *Intention*, though the term was used earlier, in a different sense, by John Austin. Quickly, 'fit' is a symmetrical relation, and so cannot inform us about the contrast between practical and theoretic attitudes. 'Direction', however, leads us in circles, or to implausible normative explications: in what sense do we want to say that the world 'ought' to fit desires (including those of Caligula), while a belief 'ought' to fit that stretch of reality it characterizes or is about? Given that the two 'oughts' are not the same, how can we give a non-circular description of the different sorts of normativity involved in them? On this problem, see Wollheim, *On the Emotions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 46–5; and I. L. Humberstone, 'Direction of Fit', *Mind*, 101 (1992), 59–83. For what I take to be a more promising attempt to elucidate the contrast between theoretical and practical reason, see Audi, 'Doxastic Voluntarism and the Ethics of Belief', in *Knowledge, Truth, and Duty: Essays on Epistemic Justification, Responsibility, and Virtue*, ed. Matthias Steup (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 93–111.

a prior scheme inappropriate. Intentions directed towards a proximal moment, on the other hand, are usually acted on, issuing at the very least in episodes of trying, on the condition, that is, that events do not intervene to preclude such an effort, as when one's plan to act straight away gets thwarted by a telephone call. So there remains a gap between intending and trying, even in cases of 'proximal' intention. Nor are those intentions that do issue in tryings infallible. An agent's intention to do something 'immediately' is not always successfully realized, even when he or she tries to do so and acts on the intention in question.

Here it may be pertinent to recall a commonsensical distinction between the execution and realization of an intention (a distinction that finds a literary expression as early as Chaucer, who contrasted an 'entencioun' and its 'fyn').[26] To *execute* an intention successfully is to perform, or try to perform, some action guided by the plan embedded in that intention. To *realize* an intention is first of all to execute it, and second, thereby to bring about a state of affairs in which the situation specified in the plan is matched by relevant features of the actual world. Third, this situation must be achieved in the right sort of way; in other words, the realization of intention cannot involve 'deviant' causal chains, where acting on an intention leads to behaviour that contributes to an outcome which happens to match the intended results, but does so via a bizarre and totally unexpected chain of events—as when the very thought of having formed a ghastly intention causes one's hand to slip, thereby unintentionally bringing about the targeted state of affairs.[27]

A number of philosophers have defended another point about the conditions on intentional action, namely, the idea that the realization of intention cannot be a matter of sheer luck if it is to constitute an episode of intentionally achieving the intended result.[28] Good golfers can intentionally make a short putt, but no golfer *intentionally* sinks a sixty-footer, even though the stroke was made with the intention of so doing.

[26] David Burnley, *Guide to Chaucer's Language* (London: Macmillan, 1983), 223.

[27] On wayward or deviant causation in the theory of action, see Brand, *Intending and Acting* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1984), and John Bishop, *Natural Agency* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), chs. 4–5.

[28] For background, see Nicholas Rescher, *Luck: The Brilliant Randomness of Everyday Life* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1995).

The reason for this reservation is that the feat is extremely unlikely and not sufficiently within the golfer's control. Golfers and gamblers can, of course, intentionally *try* to bring off highly improbable results, and so can routinely act on, but fail to realize various intentions.[29] Of course the lucky golfer successfully and intentionally realizes the intention *to try* to sink the very long putt, since trying is under normal circumstances an activity well under the golfer's control. Actually sinking an extremely long putt is another matter, so that if the golfer gets lucky and sinks the putt as intended, we may not want to say that the feat was intentionally brought off, as this carries undue connotations of control. Whether ordinary usage systematically corresponds to such a stricture is another question.

It is often contended that intention, or at least the episodes of trying to which it can give rise, is basic to the very difference between purposeful action and mere happenings or events. One conception of this process is that of a functional hierarchy at the bottom of which are so-called basic actions, that is, those achieved by an immediate trying, as opposed to those brought about by means of the realization of some other intentional action.[30] Some actions are generated by means of the performance of other actions to which they are related by convention. For example, a painter's intentional depiction of a soap bubble conventionally generates a symbolic expression of the *vanitas* maxim, *homo bulla est*, given an iconographic convention according to which such bubbles stand for our transience and fragility.[31] Thus we can describe a complex chain of intentional actions including the basic gestures involved in applying paint to the canvas as well as the various other actions and plans to which they are related. For example, the painterly gestures are linked to the artist's plan of including a bubble at a certain position in the image, which plan is

[29] For the luck and control conditions on intentional action, see Mele and Paul K. Moser, 'Intentional Action', *Noûs*, 28 (1994), 39–68; reprinted in Mele, ed., *The Philosophy of Action* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 223–55. There may be additional considerations with regard to *basic* actions, i.e. actions neither executed nor realized by means of other actions of the same agent. Suppose a recovering victim of paralysis has a small chance of finally being able to lift her arm. When she tries and succeeds, this is a case of intentional action. Would we say the same if the patient had no previous history of intentional bodily movements?

[30] For a meticulous analysis of the 'by' locution in action discourse, see Ginet, *On Action*.

[31] On the 'generation' of actions by other actions, see Alvin Goldman, *A Theory of Human Action* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970).

informed by the thought that future viewers of the picture will be aware of the bubble's conventional, symbolic meaning, which in turn corresponds to part of the painter's intentions with regard to the target response.

Action theorists have debated the question whether intending is necessary to all intentional actions. According to what Bratman calls 'the simple view', for any agent, S, and any action, A, if S intentionally performed the action A, then S intended to A.[32] Although there may be cogent counter-examples to this formulation, the basic insight may be saved. In some cases, the relevant intention is not the intention to A *simpliciter*, but an intention to try to A, and we may therefore revise the simple view by adding a disjunct to that effect.

Another point that is especially relevant in the present context is that the acquisition of intention need not be the outcome of a bout of conscious deliberation. Those that are may be called decisions or choices. It may be that in some cases we choose or intend to decide, which decision in turn eventuates in an episode of intention formation; in other cases, intentions precipitate passively by dint of our reflection over, or registering of affairs internal and external. As Mele points out, the fixation of intention is in such cases like that of belief, on the assumption that one does not 'choose' to believe or disbelieve in the sense of intentionally and voluntarily adopting the attitude of belief straight away.[33] One may, of course, intend to acquire a belief *indirectly* by settling on some plan designed to bring about a desired change of mind (as in Blaise Pascal's advice about what to do with an eye to prompting one's own religious conversion).

One objection to the view that intentional action entails intending is based on unintended side-effects. For example, in writing a poem, it probably was not Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's intention to exacerbate

[32] Bratman, *Intention, Plans, and Practical Reason* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), ch. 8.

[33] Mele, 'Deciding to Act', *Philosophical Studies*, 100 (2000), 81–108. Although many philosophers agree that it is impossible simply to acquire belief in a proposition at will (or as a direct, basic action), it is difficult to provide conclusive grounds for this thesis. See, for a start, Jonathan Bennett, 'Why is Belief Involuntary?', *Analysis*, 50 (1990), 87–107; Barbara Winters, 'Believing at Will', *Journal of Philosophy*, 76 (1979), 243–56, and Dana Radcliffe, 'Scott-Kakures on Believing at Will', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 67 (1997), 145–51. A plausible case against strong forms of doxastic voluntarism is provided by Audi in 'Doxastic Voluntarism and the Ethics of Belief', in *Knowledge, Truth, and Duty*, 93–111.

Karl-Philip Moritz's powerful feelings of artistic inferiority, but it may be thought that as he in fact anticipated such an outcome, his realization of that unwanted consequence was in some sense intentional. Yet intuitions about such cases diverge, and some authors propose that such an action is better labelled as 'non-intentional' rather than as either 'intentional' or 'unintentional'.[34] It may still be right, then, to assume that following one's intention-embedded plan is a necessary condition of performing an intentional action. Such a view is compatible with recognizing the unpredictable and spontaneous moments in our lives, since it is not assumed that a plan is a complete, unalterable, or fully determinate specification of the requisite means and ends. Anthony Savile makes a related point when he suggests that the absence of a lucid, prior intention should not be taken as implying that the artist's activity was not intentional.[35]

In a range of central cases, intentional action amounts to the execution and realization of a plan, where the agent effectively follows and is guided by the plan in performing actions which, in manifesting sufficient levels of skill and control, bring about the intended outcome. Yet contributing to intentional action is not the only function of intention. As Bratman has emphasized, even those intentions that are not eventually acted on have various roles in an agent's life, such as precluding deliberations related to the other sorts of schemes which were incompatible with the agent's prior plan.

In sum, the account of intention which best captures some of the most salient and important facets of intentional attributions is one in which intention is matter of an executive attitude towards plans, where this attitude is further characterized in terms of the various functions it performs in our lives as temporally situated, deliberating and striving agents. These functions may be summarily delineated as follows:[36]

(1) Intentions not only initiate, but sustain intentional behaviour: for example, if a composer intends to compose a symphony, he intends

[34] Mele and Moser, 'Intentional Action'.

[35] Anthony Savile, 'The Place of Intention in the Concept of Art', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 69 (1968–9), 101–24, at 123.

[36] See Mele, 'Intention, Belief, and Intentional Action', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 26 (1989), 19–30, *Springs of Action*, esp. chs. 7–11; and his *Motivation and Agency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 27–8. Mele resumes some of these points in Livingston and Mele, 'Intention and Literature', *Stanford French Review*, 16 (1992), 173–87, sections 2 and 3.

not only to start doing so, but to keep on working until the project has been completed, or until sufficient reasons for giving up on the composition emerge; various intentions that follow from the overarching intention will issue in episodes of trying to perform the relevant actions.

(2) Intentions guide intentional behaviour once it is in progress: the representational content of the intention directs specific actions towards the realization of the goal. For example, the activation of representational motor schemata guides the occurrence of particular finger motions involved in the composer's tentative sounding out of musical phrases at a keyboard.

(3) Intentions prompt and appropriately terminate practical reasoning: once the musician is settled on the plan of composing a musical work, this intention initiates thinking about how to bring this about, and when the time comes, helps bring closure to these compositional efforts. Should the musician resolutely abandon the intention to write a certain symphony, deliberate work on it will be likely to cease.

(4) Intentions help to co-ordinate an individual agent's behaviour over time: the composer's intention to write a symphony is functionally related to a range of prior intentions—such as that of pursuing a musical career of a certain sort—and influences not only those actions related to the realization of the particular intention, but the acquisition of other intentions, such as that of keeping a work routine, declining certain social engagements, etc.[37]

(5) Intentions help to co-ordinate interaction between agents: for example, publicly declared intentions in an artistic manifesto help artists make their projects known, and in turn help the public in their efforts to categorize and appreciate their works.

As Mele points out, not all episodes of intending necessarily fulfil all of these functions; instead, the point is that these are functions intentions can

[37] This 'diachronic' or dynamic aspect of intentions' functions has been explored by Bratman in *Intention, Plans, and Practical Reason*. I shall have more to say about these Bratmanian considerations below, especially in Chapter 4.

and do sometimes perform. And with regard to the link between intentions and intentional action, the thesis under consideration is that in all cases of intentional action, the advent of a proximal intention (possibly an intention to try) triggers the mechanisms of action (unless they are already operating), and the intention causally sustains their functioning.[38]

OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS AND ISSUES

It is hoped that the account of intentions just sketched will be seen as plausibly identifying salient aspects of the roles of intentions in our lives as agents. Readers who are somewhat familiar with the complex literature on this topic will know, however, that there are rival elucidations of 'intention' on offer as well as a number of outstanding problems and issues not mentioned in this concise survey. I have in mind, for example, additional topics concerning the objects of intentions (such as the putative self-referentiality of all intentions), belief constraints on intention, intention's relation to agent-causation and volition, and various disputes over the species or kinds of intentions.[39] As this chapter is not meant to provide a comprehensive treatise in the philosophy of mind and action, many of these issues will have to be skirted; others will be taken up in my subsequent chapters. For example, the distinction between 'categorial' and 'semantic' intentions is discussed at some length in Chapter 6, and issues related to the analysis of collective or shared intentions are central to Chapter 3. I do think it advisable, however, to linger briefly over one outstanding topic in the present context, namely, the question of what can and cannot be the 'object' of an intention. This is an issue that has a direct bearing on several of the topics taken up in my subsequent chapters, where we will have the occasion to raise questions about the specific nature of the objects of the intentions artists characteristically frame and act upon.

A straightforward and perhaps commonsensical response to the question of the nature of intention's objects has it that someone's intentions

[38] Mele, *Springs of Action*, 140, 192.

[39] See, for example, J. David Velleman, *Practical Reflection* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989). For a critique of prominent theses regarding intentions' self-referentiality, see Mele, 'Are Intentions Self-Referential?', *Philosophical Studies*, 52 (1987), 309–29.

must represent some action (that is, at least one basic action) that that person may subsequently perform.[40] Thus, if the object of an intention is a plan, as Mele proposes, the plan represents at least one of the intending agent's future actions. (Typically, then, a plan is a thought or collection of thoughts about what to do and how to do it.) Some philosophers assert, however, that this straightforward and relatively weak assumption is incorrect.[41] Harman, for example, draws distinctions between positive, negative, and conditional intentions, where only the former category requires that in intending, one intends to perform some action oneself.[42] Someone who forms the intention not to go to a particular party need not have settled on any specific alternative to that action, and since it would be problematic to say that the person plans on performing a 'negative-action' or 'non-doing', we must allow that one can have a purely negative intention. Bruce Vermazen offers additional considerations in this vein. He contends that in some cases a person can have an intention while believing that the object of that intention can be a proposition that in no wise includes any of one's own future actions.[43] The example Vermazen gives in support of this contention is a man who intends that someone he cares for 'be physically comfortable', where the man who has this intention believes that this person is already wholly comfortable, and that he cannot form any intention to do anything to bring this state of affairs about. It is

[40] This thesis has been asserted in print by numerous philosophers, including Bruce Noel Flemming, 'On Intention', *Philosophical Review*, 73 (1964), 301–20, at 301; Annette C. Baier, 'Act and Intent', *Journal of Philosophy*, 67 (1970), 648–58, at 649; Jack W. Meiland, *The Nature of Intention* (London: Methuen, 1970), 35–43; Monroe C. Beardsley, 'Intending', in *Values and Morals*, ed. Alvin Goldman and Jaegwon Kim (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1978), 163–84, at 174; and more recently, Pierre Jacob and Marc Jeannerod, *Ways of Seeing: The Scope and Limits of Visual Cognition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 39. For its denial (on what I take to be inadequate grounds), see Wayne A. Davis, 'A Causal Theory of Intending', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 21 (1984), 43–54.

[41] I write 'relatively weak' here because the thesis stands in contrast to stronger options, such as the contention that one's intentions must be oriented exclusively towards one's own actions, or the thesis that one can have an intention related to someone else's actions only if one believes that one exercizes a high degree of control over that person's behaviour. The weaker thesis allows, then, that in intending to perform some action of my own, I can have the further intention of getting someone else to do something by this means. The weak thesis rules out that I can intend *that* someone else do something, or be in such-and-such a condition, *simpliciter*, that is, without intending to do anything in order to contribute to the realization of that end.

[42] Harman, *Change of View*, 80–2.

[43] Vermazen, 'Objects of Intention', *Philosophical Studies*, 71 (1993), 223–65.

not a matter, for example, of the man intending to get the person he cares about to do something that would in turn promote her comfort. Instead, the man intends *p*, where nothing is to be done by him to promote, achieve or maintain the relevant state of affairs.

There are, however, some plausible rejoinders that can be brought forth in defence of the idea that the content of someone's intention includes a plan involving some action to be performed by that person (and possibly by others too as a result of that action). One can raise reasonable doubts, for example, about the putative cases where someone intends that some state of affairs obtain while believing that he or she can have absolutely no influence over this outcome. Does anyone really have any such intentions? What firm basis is there for making such attributions, which efface the distinction between intending and desiring or wishing—hardly a desirable feature of an account designed to capture useful distinctions ordinarily drawn between types of attitudes? With regard to putative counter-examples based on negative and conditional intentions, many, and perhaps even all such cases may be explicable in terms of the adoption of an executive attitude towards a plan, where the latter includes sub-plans which guarantee the positive, action-oriented status of the relevant intending. For example, my intending not to go to a party may involve my settling on a plan for resisting the temptation I expect to experience as the time for the party approaches. Or if no such temptation is either felt or expected, my intention not to go to the party may involve a sub-plan specifying how I plan to get out of doing so when my stubborn and persuasive friends approach me and recommend the contrary course of action. Or again, in intending not to go to the party, I settled on the plan of deciding on an alternative course of action at the relevant future moment: intending not to go is, then, a matter of positively intending to decide what else to do 'when the time comes'. Someone who is in no way thinking about or weighing *any* options relevant to a given course of action is hardly to be thought of as framing an intention in this regard. In such a case, we should say that the person simply has no intention to go to the party, and not that this person actually intends not to go.[44]

[44] Thanks to Berys Gaut for pointing out a potential ambiguity of scope which may make Vermazen's point seem more plausible than it really is.

The previous paragraph is not presented as having settled this issue, which surfaces again below. Suffice it to say for now that if not all intentions belong to the positive category, many do, and such cases are my primary focus in what follows. And as some cases that at first glance do not seem to involve positive intentions turn out to do so, a good methodological maxim is to try to look for the specific action-plan latent in any intention, as doing so helps us to clarify many murky attributions. For example, consider a basic and prevalent attribution taking the following form: 'the author intends the reader to make believe that *p*'. Applying the maxim leads us to characterize this as circumlocution, for the object of the author's intention is better understood as something the author intends to do herself, such as writing something that will have certain characteristics, and which will lend itself to being read a certain way by certain kinds of persons in a certain context. The point is not that the author's intentions are in no way directed towards the actions of others, but that there must be a primary, action-related intention which is meant to bring about certain results. Consequently, the account of the agent's intentions is incomplete (and sometimes highly misleading) if this action-related intention is not identified. Related issues are discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.

The accounts of intention I have been discussing all arise within the broad framework of intentionalist psychology. This is, I believe, wholly appropriate. Although some critics and theorists suggest that a thoroughly *a-psychological* approach to intentions is feasible, a closer look reveals that this is not really what they go on to provide. Having proposed to refer only to a-psychological intentions immanent in a text or artefact, the critic goes on to attribute mental features and intentional actions to these items, thereby working within a framework of intentionalist psychological attributions.[45]

[45] As an example, consider Michael Baxandall's brief expostulations on his understanding of the term 'intention': 'The intention to which I am committed is not an actual, particular psychological state or even a historical set of mental events inside the heads of Benjamin Baker or Picasso ...' Intention is to be understood as 'the forward-leaning look of things', and the word is supposed to refer 'to pictures rather more than to painters'; *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 41–2. It is far from obvious to me, however, that Baxandall observes these strictures consistently in his various illuminating discussions of works of art, and his approach may be better characterized as an instrumentalist employment of an intentionalist psychology.

As misgivings, serious and unserious, about intentionalist psychology have arisen from various quarters, I shall now go on to address myself to some issues concerning the status of intentionalist psychology as a whole. I must, however, stress in advance that it is not my intention here to provide a comprehensive summary of the state of the art of contemporary philosophy of mind, the metaphysics of the mental, or theories of (mental and other) causation.[46] Instead, my goal in the rest of this chapter is the modest one of responding fairly briefly to the contention that intentionalist psychology is so fundamentally defective or erroneous that it is a mistake to investigate the role of intentions and other attitudes in the arts. Readers who are innocent of, or no longer interested in theoretical doubts about intentionalist psychology are cordially invited to proceed to the next chapter. The topic has received a lot of discussion amongst philosophers, yet cannot simply be overlooked in the context of a study on art and intention.

INTENTIONALIST PSYCHOLOGY AND ITS DISCONTENTS

The most important questions regarding the status of intentionalist psychology taken as a whole concern its truth, explanatory adequacy, and the ontological standing and causal efficacy of such items as beliefs, desires, and intentions. Very broadly, and in keeping with the limited ambitions of this section, three schematic kinds of positions will be discussed in this context:

(1) 'Error theory': intentions, beliefs, and so on have no independent existence, and intentionalist psychology can express no truths).[47]

[46] Good points of entry to this enormous literature include William Lyons, *Matters of the Mind* (New York: Routledge, 2001); John Heil, *The Nature of True Minds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), Jaegwon Kim, *Mind in a Physical World: An Essay on the Mind-Body Problem and Mental Causation* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998), and Joseph Levine, *Purple Haze: The Puzzle of Consciousness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). A number of important papers are reprinted in Neil Campbell, ed., *Mental Causation and the Metaphysics of Mind: A Reader* (Toronto: Broadview, 2003). A fairly recent, fine-grained perspective on the positions on mind-brain relations is offered by Robert Van Gulick, 'Reduction, Emergence and Other Recent Options on the Mind-Body Problem: A Philosophic Overview', *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 8 (2001), 1–34. For an alternative to the physicalist assumptions that dominate the literature, see Harold Langsam, 'Strategy for Dualists', *Metaphilosophy*, 32 (2001), 395–418.

[47] The expression 'error theory' derives from John Leslie Mackie's critique of commonsensical views on the status of ethical judgements; see his *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* (Harmondsworth:

(2) Strong realist views: beliefs and intentions exist independently of attributions or discourse and have genuine causal powers, and intentionalist psychology is true and explanatory (which does not mean, of course, that particular attributions are never erroneous).
(3) 'Quasi' or 'weak' realist views, which diverge from strong realism in various ways (e.g. with regard to the conception of truth or justification), without allowing that intentionalist discourse is on the whole erroneous or that mental states are epiphenomenal.

A second question concerns the policy recommendations attached to these kinds of positions. Realist and quasi-realist theses of various sorts are usually conjoined with the policy of a continued reliance upon intentionalist attributions—the contrary, though logically conceivable, having no sensible motivation. Yet the policy recommendations associated with error theory are not similarly univocal. One prominent option is instrumentalism: doubts about intentionalist psychology's veracity, or even the proposition that it is false, can be yoked to the idea that it nonetheless ought to enjoy an instrumental acceptance—it might, for example, be adopted as an at least moderately useful fiction or 'as if' policy. Another position is to deem the discourse erroneous yet inevitable—a 'necessary illusion' of sorts—though obviously the illusion could not be total and inescapable if this position is to be held and promoted. Alternatively, error theory can be conjoined with the notion that intentionalist psychology ought to be eliminated and replaced with something better—where 'ought' implies 'possibly can at least someday'.[48]

Penquin, 1977), 35. As Mackie points out in this context, the error theorist takes on a heavy argumentative burden and must demonstrate that, and why, so many people have been wrong about such a significant topic.

[48] A number of important papers on this theme are collected in Scott M. Christensen and Dale R. Turner, ed., *Folk Psychology and the Philosophy of Mind* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1993). Early statements of eliminativist views include Richard Rorty, 'Mind-Body Identity, Privacy, and Categories', *Review of Metaphysics*, 19 (1965), 24–54; and Paul M. Churchland, 'Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes', *Journal of Philosophy*, 78 (1981), 67–90. Such eliminitivist *Zukunfstmusik* may usefully be compared to the advocacy of a *possible* (yet never truly complete) intertheoretic reduction in Paul M. Churchland and Patricia S. Churchland, 'Intertheoretic Reduction: A Neuroscientist's Field Guide', in *The Mind-Body Problem: A Guide to the Current Debate*, ed. Richard Warner and Tadeusz Szubka (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 41–54. For additional background, see Robert N. McCauley, ed., *The Churchlands and their Critics* (Oxford: Blackwells,

In sum, the main options just surveyed are: (1) the belief that intentionalist attribution *in is some sense* correct, justified, explanatory, etc., and that it should be employed; (2) error theory with regard to intentionalist discourse, plus the recommendation of an instrumentalist or fictionalist use of the latter; (3) error theory conjoined with the claim that the error is an illusion that should be recognized, even if cannot be *fully* extirpated;[49] and (4) error theory plus eliminitivist urgings: instead of placidly accepting faulty intentionalist theory, we should strive towards its replacement by a genuinely explanatory scientific theory.

The current study is based upon the first of those options; some of my results may be compatible with (2), but they are at odds with (3) and with at least the more strident versions of (4). In what follows I shall identify what I (and many other philosophers) take to be serious problems with options (2)–(4). I shall also mention some arguments in favour of (1) that I do *not* find convincing. My contention is not that we can conclude to the truth of some versions of realism by elimination of the alternatives, but that we have at least a moderate warrant for provisionally adopting the policy associated with (1).

Before I move on to a few of the arguments surrounding these schematic options, it may be worth noting in passing that we can identify two

1996). Here the Churchlands write that 'Of course there exist phenomena to be explained. We are in no doubt that there is a nontrival difference between being asleep and being awake, between being in a coma and being fully functional, between being aware of a stimulus and not being aware of it' (298); and 'The discipline of psychology will still be with us a hundred years from now, and five hundred, and a thousand' (220). They go on to say, however, that eliminitivism is an empirical claim to the effect that the propositional attitudes 'displayed in folk psychology, and in some scientific psychological theories as well (Fodor, 1975, for example), are fated to be swept away in favor of a new set of theoretical notions, notions inspired by our emerging understanding of the brain' (221). For criticisms of eliminativism, see Colin McGinn, *Mental Content* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), ch. 2; for some arguments surrounding more recent versions of eliminativism—which would appear to be a moving target—see Joel Pust, 'External Accounts of Folk Psychology, Eliminativism, and the Simulation Theory', *Mind and Language*, 14 (1999), 113–30.

[49] For the idea that 'error theory 'motivates but does not entail' the possibility of the elimination of error (with regard to secondary qualities), see McGinn, *The Subjective View: Secondary Qualities and Indexical Thoughts* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), 77. One reason why a total elimination might be impracticable is that children normally develop beliefs about beliefs by the time they are 4 years old. For discussion of the developmental perspective with reference to a range of experimental findings, see Janet W. Astington, Paul L. Harris, and David R. Olson, eds., *Developing Theories of Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

rather different sorts of error theory (both of which have many significantly different versions). In its extreme, materialist or physicalist form, error theory complains that behaviour is not correctly explained in terms of attitudes, but in terms of physico-chemical processes in the brain, and ultimately whatever the triumphant physical sciences will have to say about the universe's basic furnishings. Although most people in philosophy of mind never mention it, error theory about individual psychology also has culturalist and historicist versions. Such writings target the illusion of the (bourgeois) subject's intentional action, but instead of contrasting them to the causal processes discovered by physics, they mean to debunk the illusions of subjectivity in the name of other factors said to generate human activity, such as external social conditions and unconscious libidinal processes.[50] Numerous are the literary critics and theorists who have proclaimed that the province of the 'intentional fallacy'—that fundamental error held to have been discovered by Monroe C. Beardsley and William K. Wimsatt in the 1940s—should be radically extended to annex any belief in the accessibility—or even the reality—of authorial and other attitudes.[51]

A first series of considerations hinges on the viability of error theory. The key thought is simple enough and has been restated in the literature quite often: although it may be a coherent thought or proposition that there are no beliefs, intentions, or desires, one cannot live a human life in harmony with such a belief, and so error theorists end up saying and doing things that contradict their doctrines, such as implying that one has thought of good reasons for saying there are no reasons, or asking an audience to

[50] A collection of papers exploring the basically anti-realist and historicist idea that attributions of intentions are determined by the practices of essentially heterogeneous cultures and historical moments is Lawrence Rosen, ed., *Other Intentions: Cultural Contexts and the Attribution of Inner States* (Sante Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1995). Although I found the essays in this volume informative in various ways, convincing evidence for any strong historicist thesis about intentions is not provided. Most of the evidence pertains instead to differing conventional methods of attribution and to ways in which persons' motives and intentions are shaped by interpersonal influence and features of the cultural context.

[51] William K. Wimsatt, and Monroe C. Beardsley, 'The Intentional Fallacy', *Sewanee Review*, 54 (1946), 468–88; reprinted in *On Literary Intention*, ed. David Newton-De Molina (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1976), 1–13. For an example of the extreme conclusions I evoke, see Anne Freadman, 'Remarks on Currie: A Response to Gregory Currie', in *On Literary Theory and Philosophy: A Cross-Disciplinary Encounter*, ed. Richard Freadman and Lloyd Reinhardt (London: Macmillan, 1991), 113–40.

adopt the belief that there are no beliefs.[52] Banished in theory, intentionalist notions continue to orient the theoreticians' practices, the result being a flagrant and undesirable series of pragmatic or performative self-contradictions.[53]

In principle, there are not so many main ways to resolve the discrepancy between anti-intentionalist theory and intentionalist practice: either we must revise the theory to make it square with practice—as realists of various kinds urge; or we could keep the anti-intentionalist theory and somehow get our critical practices to conform to it, as eliminitivism councils. Another option is to attempt to regain coherence by adopting an instrumentalist 'double standard', or a contextualist strategy.

Consider briefly, for example, Willard Van Orman Quine's notorious advocacy, expressed in §45 of *Word and Object*, of a 'double standard'. Quine writes that he will not forswear daily use of intentional idioms, or maintain that they are practically dispensable, yet he wants to declare this practice to be compatible with the dire conclusion that intentional idioms are 'baseless' as far as genuine science is concerned: there are no propositional attitudes but only the physical constitution and behaviour of organisms. Quine goes on to speak of a bifurcation in canonical notation (the one

[52] For examples, see Reed Way Dasenbrock, 'Taking it Personally: Reading Derrida's Responses', *College English*, 56 (1994), 5–23; and his *Truth and Consequences: Intentions, Conventions, and the New Thematics* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), ch. 5. Annabel Patterson seems to have a similar point in mind when she writes that 'It is undeniable that literary critics and theorists do not publish their essays anonymously, and that their own intentions are part of the complex structure of professional practice that contributes to the meaning of the positions they take.' See her 'Intention', in *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 135–46, at 144.

[53] The idea that there can be contradictions between what one says and does is hardly new. The phrase 'practical or pragmatic contradiction' is employed by C. I. Lewis in his critique of moral nihilism; see his *Values and Imperatives: Studies in Ethics*, ed. John Lange (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1969), 67–8. For the expression 'performative contradiction', see Jaako Hintikka, ' "Cogito ergo sum": inference or performance?' *Philosophical Review*, 62 (1971), 3–32; and ' "Cogito ergo sum" as an inference and a performance', *Philosophical Review*, 63 (1972), 487–96. For critical discussion of such contradictions in post-structuralist theory and the issues they raise, see Mette Hjort, *The Strategy of Letters* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993); Denis Dutton, 'Why Intentionalism Won't Go Away', in *Literature and the Question of Philosophy*, ed. Anthony J. Cascardi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987) 194–209; Peter Lamarque, 'The Death of the Author: A Premature Autopsy', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 30 (1990), 319–31; and my *Literature and Rationality: Ideas of Agency in Theory and Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 48–80.

branch austere and intention-less, the other not), adding that which 'turning to take depends on which of the various purposes' happens to be 'motivating us at the time'. We use intentionalist idioms in everyday life while refraining from acknowledging their truth in contexts where our goal is to limn 'the true and ultimate structure of reality'.[54]

It is not so obvious, however, that recourse to a 'double standard' restores coherence. By my lights, talk of purposes, options, idioms, forswearings, motivations, and standards presupposes the intentionalist framework of agents having thoughts and making choices, which implies that the bifurcation extends from one of its own branches, namely, the one said to be 'baseless'. Were it really true that in the true and ultimate structure of reality, there is no such thing as the choice or attitude about 'which turning to take', the 'double standard' approach would dangle incoherently in mid-air. As far as physics is concerned, there is only one explanatory context, which is coextensive with the physicists' domain of enquiry. Quine is elsewhere unambiguous on this score: 'If the physicist suspected there was any event that did not consist in a redistribution of the elementary states allowed for by his physical theory, he would seek a way of supplementing his theory. Full coverage in this sense is the very business of physics, and only of physics.'[55] In short, as far as genuine explanations go, there is only one real standard.

It should be pointed out that Quine's evocation of a double standard is itself meant to imply only a purely provisional and non-committal use of intentionalist idiom, attaching 'scare quotes' to the second standard being proposed. Yet questions can be raised about the overall success of this instrumentalism. When we are effectively caught up in thinking about other persons as responsible or irresponsible agents, or in deliberating over our own beliefs and intentions, the 'scare quotes' have dropped away, and it is far from obvious how one can *believe* there are beliefs and causally

[54] Willard Van Orman Quine, *Word and Object* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1960), 221. Whether Quine was consistent in this regard is not my topic. In *Pursuit of Truth* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), we read that Quine 'acquiesces in' Davidson's anomalous monism: there are no mental substances, but 'there are irreducibly mental ways of grouping physical states and events', 71. In *From Stimulus to Science* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), beliefs et al. are explicitly characterized as '*entia non grata*', 93.

[55] Quine, *Theories and Things* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 98.

effective intentions without thinking that this attitude is true or correct. And if one does hold the latter belief, can one effectively adopt an instrumental, fictionalist, or make-believe attitude to it? The philosopher's own exhortations in favour of adopting the double standard is another instance of the pragmatic contradiction mentioned above. Does the philosopher believe that someone has beliefs other than those expressed in his book? If not, for whom is he writing?

It may be instructive to consider how the friend of intentionalist psychology might also attempt—*unsuccessfully* in my view—to make a contextualist approach serve his or her purposes. Beginning students of philosophy are often taught that philosophers should hold every belief or proposition to be potentially problematic and thus in want of justification in some broad sense.[56] Yet in another sense, it is simply not the case that all assumptions or beliefs constantly stand in need of epistemic justification, or that they could all be subject to doubt at the same time. The effort to respond to any actual request for the justification of a belief requires that some other beliefs or assumptions be taken, at least provisionally and for the sake of the enquiry, as unproblematic. There may, then, be no single, substantive, context-free requirement and standard of justification. Instead, there is a shifting contrast between what is taken as problematic and unproblematic, as well as specific requirements of justification that follow from a given contrast, where such requirements involve target propositions or questions as well as expectations as to what sufficient justification would entail. As far as the ongoing practice of art criticism and aesthetic enquiry is concerned, the discourse of intentionalist psychology upon which these practices inevitably rely requires no justification extending beyond the observation that reliance upon that discourse is a methodological assumption. Any request for another sort of justification, such as a grounding in metaphysics, simply changes the context of discussion. Agnostic or error-theoretic conclusions reached in that context have no

[56] For background, see Michael Williams, *Problems of Knowledge: A Critical Introduction to Epistemology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), especially the survey of contextual constraints on justification in ch. 14; and his *Unnatural Doubts: Epistemological Realism and the Basis of Scepticism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991). I cannot here go into the burgeoning literature on the question whether contextualist epistemology provides any real solution to scepticism. For a good start, see Ernest Sosa, 'Skepticism and Contextualism', *Philosophical Issues*, 10 (2000), 1–23.

direct implications for the former context of justification. It could even be added that this plurality of effective conceptions of justification carries over into the conceptions of knowledge within which they figure. One could in one sense 'know' that intentionalist psychology is correct, while in another sense not 'know' this at all. And as far as the context constituted by the goal of limning the ultimate structure of reality is concerned, agnosticism may be the surest bet (as is so often the case).

There are, however, serious problems with this entire line of thought. One can again worry that the appeal to partitioned contexts does not leave us with a sufficiently coherent theoretical perspective and practical framework. The evocation of a purely methodological justification is not a sufficient response to a critic of the intentionalist scheme who asks why some alternative to it ought not to be preferred. After all, analogous methodological justifications could be given for occult discourses, the warrant of which is by no means of the same order. The question concerning the overall status of intentionalist discourse is motivated by our search for a broad and coherent conception of the world: we want to know, for example, how facts about physical causation can be made to cohere with what we experience as the central facts of agency, such as our thoughts, desires, and intentions bringing about actions having physical results and consequences.

The upshot of the previous paragraphs is that error theory is at least pragmatically incoherent. Double standard and contextualist approaches do not give us an adequate account, either in favour of or against intentionalist realism. A prudent eliminativism that raises an open-ended empirical question about the results of future research is coherent, but incoherence returns if conclusions are drawn about the current status of intentionalist psychology. What, then, about the realist option for restoring coherence, which is to contend that the discourse of intentionalist psychology is in some sense true and explanatory? Can any positive arguments be given to support this family of doctrines?

One salient realist train of thought runs as follows: given that the very idea of 'human practices' involves agency and hence intentionalist psychology, and given that philosophy (*qua* discourse and system of attributions) is a human practice, philosophical anti-intentionalism is doomed to incoherence, and *therefore* philosophers should agree that realism of some sort

must be correct. Yet this sort of 'transcendental' or a priori argument is not valid. To the contention that anti-intentionalist belief is 'always already' self-defeating, an eliminativist can respond that he or she is only using the terms of this discourse in 'scare quotes' so as to promote their eventual abandonment. And even if belief in belief were necessary, not only to philosophy, but to our lives on this planet, it would not follow that this belief is true, since the realist thesis could be at once coherent and false (to echo David Hume's response to common-sense dogmatism). Talk of mental causation, for example, might be shown to be redundant if we had a more comprehensive understanding of the workings of the brain.

Another realist line of thought has been dubbed 'Southern Fundamentalism'.[57] The key idea is this: to the extent that some philosophical proposals entail the distrust and abandonment of anything as obvious and important as our experience of our own agency, it is the conditions being placed on genuine agency that are to be discounted as failing 'to limn the true and ultimate structure of reality'. As Terence Horgan and George Graham put this point, if some putative condition on what it means to be an agent having propositional attitudes entails that there are no such agents, we should conclude that the condition is not, in fact, a genuine condition on being such an agent. Similarly, if the evidence should one day reveal that we cannot satisfy the requirement that intentionalist psychology be 'absorbable', vertically or horizontally, into physical science, then we should deny that scientific absorbability is requirement on there being true believers and doers.

This 'fundamentalist' line of thought may remind some readers of G. E. Moore's attempt to refute scepticism about the external world on the basis of seemingly indubitable, commonplace observations of hands and pens.[58]

[57] Terence Horgan and George Graham, 'In Defense of Southern Fundamentalism', in *Folk Psychology and the Philosophy of Mind*, ed. Scott M. Christensen and Dale R. Turner (Hillsdale, NJ: Laurence Erlbaum, 1993), 288–311.

[58] G. E. Moore, 'Hume's Philosophy' [1909], in *Philosophical Studies* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1922), 147–67; 'Proof of an External World' [1939], in *Philosophical Papers* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1959), 127–50. For a clear reconstruction of the argument, see Scott Soames, *Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century. Vol. 1: The Dawn of Analysis* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 12–24. For background on the dogmatist interpretation of Moore, see Thomas Baldwin, *G. E. Moore* (London: Routledge, 1990), 279 ff. I am not here endorsing this verdict on Moore's argument. In this regard I think we should keep in mind that in his 1909 essay

Hands and pens there are, so if scepticism says there aren't any, so much the worse for scepticism or, more to the point, so much the worse for the constraints a sceptical philosopher tries to place on what counts as knowledge. In the case at hand: agents we are, and if error theory says there aren't any, so much the worse for error theory, and more importantly, so much the worse for the philosopher's favourite conception of scientific acceptability and unification.

The familiar worry about arguments of this sort is, of course, that they are question-begging. Does not an appeal to the 'framework fact' of agency or intentional causation beg the question against those who think there may be a true and explanatory theory that refutes these seeming verities? A 'second-person appeal' to introspective data—such as my drawing your attention to the intentions, beliefs, and experiences related to your reading of these lines—hardly constitutes an independent proof that intentionalist discourse correctly refers to something real and causally effective.

There is, however, another way of couching a *plaidoyer* in favour of realist or quasi-realist options. The point in appealing to the prevalence and entrenchment of the beliefs and practices of agency is not to provide a proof of realism, but to motivate a reasonable assessment of the argumentative burdens in the current debate. In such a context, the sorts of consistency considerations introduced above are complemented by questions about the status of the theorizing employed in judgements concerning the metaphysical status intentional items have within some hierarchy of levels of being. Are worries about the reality and causal power of attitudes actually based on genuinely successful and complete theories of physical (and more specifically, micro-physical) causation and scientific explanation? Or has the verdict that 'folk psychology' is a false theory been delivered by a series of shifting and divisive philosophical speculations as to the nature of bona fide scientific realities and explanations? Just how much confidence is it reasonable to have in such speculations? Strong and quasi-realists can raise plausible worries about the assumptions on which prominent anti-intentionalist contentions are based. One can, for example, entertain cogent

on Hume, Moore writes, regarding a cautious, first-person scepticism about the external world, that 'any valid argument which can be brought against it must be of the nature of a *petitio principii:* it must beg the question at issue' (159).

doubts about the idea that reality has an 'ultimate' structure or level, or that it is a good idea to speak of microphysics as fundamental and causally complete.[59] Is it sufficient to subject 'the marks of the mental' to intense scrutiny while blithely assuming that 'the physical' is an unproblematic notion, conveniently defined as 'the non-mental'?[60] The claim need not even be a matter of rejecting *scientia mensura* as one constraint in metaphysics, but of insisting that it is science, and not philosophy of science, that do the measuring, while keeping in mind the difficulties surrounding the 'demarcation' problem in philosophy of science.[61] Error theorists have yet to shoulder the burden of providing any demonstration establishing that one ought to believe in the epiphenomenal status or unreality of the mental, or that one ought to adopt some incoherent position in an effort to eschew the possible error of all realist options.

In sum, until the theoretical burdens of reductionism, causal completeness, etc. have been shouldered by the philosophical champions of an eliminative reduction of the mental to the physical, we are warranted to carry on in our conviction that we have beliefs and effective intentions, reference to which has at least a modest descriptive and explanatory value. Consistency considerations have an important part in such an assessment of our dialectical situation, as does the thought that part of the value of intentionalism resides in its employment in the description and explanation of the very scientific practices and discoveries to which physicalists must appeal.

I hasten to stress in conclusion to this section that the intentionalist conviction can take several forms, and indeed I have not singled out any specific version of realism. Intentionalist enquiry need not rest upon the dogmatic acceptance of an a priori proof; nor must we assume that everything about our behaviour can be explained along intentionalist lines; even less does it imply that we must know for sure what went on in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's mind as he wrote 'Kubla Khan', a matter to which I turn at the outset of the next chapter.

[59] For contentions along these lines, see John Dupré, 'The Solution to the Problem of the Freedom of the Will', *Philosophical Perspectives*, 10 (1996), 386–402.

[60] As does Kim, *Philosophy of Mind*, 6.

[61] For an able presentation of this line of thought, see Noam Chomsky, 'Language and Nature', *Mind*, 104 (1995), 1–61.

Chapter 2

INTENTION AND THE CREATION OF ART

According to a widespread conception, the creation of great works of art is largely if not entirely a matter of 'inspiration', a mysterious process whereby ideas simply 'pop' into someone's mind. We may dub this the 'Kubla Khan' model of creativity, following Samuel Taylor Coleridge's description of the genesis of his 1798 poem of that title. The words, he tells us, appeared in a vision; the author, a mere conduit of forces sacred or profane, took up pen, ink, and paper and 'instantly and eagerly' began to write down what he had seen in his dream. Yet as he was interrupted by a person on business from Porlock, only a fragment of the whole could be transcribed before the memory dissolved.[1]

Dissatisfaction with the Kubla Khan model has led some persons to swerve to the opposite extreme, according to which creation is the rational

[1] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Of the Fragment of Kubla Khan', in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Poetical Works: I. Poems (Reading Text): Part* 1, ed. J. C. C. Mays (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 511–12. The inspirationist conception of the creative process has a very long history, and appears in many philosophical, popular, and fictional representations of the artist, ranging from Plato's *Ion* to such films as Milos Forman's *Amadeus* (1984) and Rajan Khosa's *Dance of the Wind* (1997). A more recent philosophical echo may be found in Peter Kivy's remark that 'Some people get bright ideas; most people don't. And the people who get them tell us they do not know how or why: they just pop into their heads. The ancients called it inspiration. I prefer that to the creative process'; *The Fine Art of Repetition: Essays in the Philosophy of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 68. For more in this vein, see Kivy, *The Possessor and the Possessed: Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, and the Idea of Musical Genius* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

application of a method or technique. The talented artist is then conceived of as someone who can deliberate over the sort of work to be made, lucidly make a decision, draw up a plan, and then skilfully execute it. The process can, at least in principle, be broken down into a series of simple steps or techniques and modelled as an effective procedure or programme. We need not search the recent publications in artificial intelligence to find an example of this rationalistic conception of art's creation. Consider, instead, Edgar Allan Poe's 1846 essay, 'The Philosophy of Composition', where the author purports to retail with perfect ease the '*modus operandi*' by means of which 'The Raven' was 'put together'. Poe asserts that 'at no point' was his poem the product of either 'accident or intuition'; instead, 'the work proceeded, step by step, to its completion with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem.'[2]

As anti-intentionalists helpfully remind us, artists' reports on their intentions and actions are not always sincere, and when they are, still may not be true. Both points seem germane to Coleridge's and Poe's statements. And even if these two rather extraordinary anecdotes were by some chance perfectly accurate, they could hardly point the way towards a viable, *general* account of artistic activity. Fortunately, other evidentiary sources can be drawn upon as we frame hypotheses about the nature of artists' creative work, starting with the material traces of the compositional process. To mention but a single case, the extant rough drafts of Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1857) amount to some 3,700 large manuscript pages, including plans, scenarios, outlines, notes on reading and research, various summaries, drafts, and fair copies of the text of the novel.[3] It is very hard to believe that these documents could be explained in the spirit of Poe's philosophy of composition: was Flaubert simply inept because he failed to proceed directly to his final draft? Nor do Flaubert's voluminous drafts match the Kubla Khan model, as they flatly contradict the idea that the work emerged from some single, visionary event. No doubt any number of bright ideas 'popped' into Flaubert's mind as he

[2] Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Philosophy of Composition' [1846], in *Essays and Reviews*, ed. G. R. Thompson (New York: Library of America, 1984), 13–25, at 14–15.

[3] Pierre-Marc de Biasi, 'What is a Literary Draft? Toward a Functional Typology of Genetic Documentation', *Yale French Studies*, 89 (1996), 26–58.

worked on *Madame Bovary*, but the novel was nonetheless the product of a long and painstaking process.

Flaubert's case is not unusual in this regard: the evidence we have about many instances of artistic creation in a range of art forms and media contradicts the false choice between inspiration and the rational application of a technique or method. Anyone who has experienced the involuntary 'flow' of creative activity rejects the idea that art-making can be a matter of pure ratiocination or calculation.[4] And at the other extreme, though we recognize that some verse, a brief melody, a story idea, or some other succinct artistic idea or motif can simply 'pop' into someone's head, anything on a grander scale takes time and engagement with a medium or media to complete. And this is the case no matter how great the talent. Anecdotes about W. A. Mozart are often mentioned in support of the Kubla Khan model, yet as Andrew Steptoe remarks, the idea of the composer as '"a divine conduit" funnelling inspiration from the ether on to paper with scarcely the need for thought, concentration or effort' is inconsistent with the manuscript evidence and with what other sources tell us about this musical genius's compositional process.[5]

As neither the Kubla Khan nor rationalistic models is sufficient, a more plausible general conception of artistic processes is wanted. Intentions will, I contend, have an important place within such a conception, and not only as a counterbalance to the excesses of the Kubla Khan model. As we look for a more adequate, general conception, we need not assume that a single psychological process characterizes the making of all works of art, nor even the creation of all innovative and highly valuable ones.[6] We need not

[4] On 'flow' and creativity, see Mihály Csikszentmihályi, *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996).

[5] Andrew Steptoe, 'Mozart's Personality and Creativity', in *Wolfgang Amadè Mozart: Essays on his Life and Music*, ed. Stanley Sadie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 21–34, at 33. See also William Stafford, *The Mozart Myths* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1991).

[6] For criticisms of the idea that a single process can be associated with artistic creativity, see Francis E. Sparshott, 'Every Horse has a Mouth: A Personal Poetics', in *The Concept of Creativity in Science and Art*, ed. Denis Dutton and Michael Krausz (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981), 47–74. Cf. Paul Valéry, who conjectures that the creation of art always includes both 'spontaneous formation' and 'conscious acts'—what varies is their proportion. See his 'L'invention esthétique', in *Oeuvres*, ed. Jean Hytier (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), i.1412–15; and on the spontaneous emergence of ideas, i.311–12.

assume that every aspect of the phenomenon of artistic creation must be readily explicable. David Novitz may have been right in contending that the paths of creativity are too labyrinthine to be covered by anything other than the most abstract and uninformative principles.[7] Even so, we may still entertain hypotheses regarding the invariant or typical features of some paradigmatic cases of artistic production and creation.[8] Another of Novitz's points is pertinent here: not all artistic production is a matter of creativity in the sense of an activity yielding highly innovative and valuable results: artists also grind out formulaic films, songs, dances, and stories. The expression 'artistic creation', then, will be used in what follows to cover exceptional creative breakthroughs as well as more routine and conventional art-making, and even the production of insipid or bad works.

Two questions will be central to my discussion of the link between intentions and creation in this chapter. One question concerns the functions intentions actually play in the making of works. In responding to this question I shall develop some of the contentions of the previous chapter, where the following more general functions of intentions were underscored: the initiation, sustaining, and orientation of intentional activity; the prompting, guiding, and termination of deliberation; and contributions to both intrapersonal and interpersonal forms of coordination. Yet before we seek to investigate the place of these functions in the making of art, a prior question nags: are intentions necessary to the creation of art, and if so, in just what sense?

INVOLUNTARY ART?

According to a prevalent thesis, the creation or production of art is always a matter of intentional action. Assuming that acting intentionally entails the intention to perform that action, or at least the intention to try to do so, it would follow that intentions are necessary to the making of art. This proposition is not to be conflated with the notion that the creation of art

[7] On this theme, see David Novitz, 'Explanations of Creativity', in *The Creation of Art*, ed. Berys Gaut and Paisley Livingston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 174–191.

[8] For background on conceptions of creation and creativity, see Gaut and Livingston, 'Introduction', *The Creation of Art*, 1–32.

entails the intention to create art (which would remain hopelessly circular unless the latter intention were elucidated in other terms). Many philosophers are willing to allow that some artefacts that have been intentionally produced by someone having no concept of art could nonetheless be aptly classified as works of (fine) art.[9] For example, an item created with the intention of producing an image of a deity might be a (constituent of a) work of sculpture even though the person had no intention of making a work of fine art and in fact lacked any such concept. This is, however, a controversial and difficult topic for at least two separate reasons: first of all, significant philosophical problems surround the question of the conditions under which someone has a given concept, and it will not do to assume that the answer must involve the ability to apply specific words in certain ways or to articulate an explicit definition providing necessary and sufficient conditions.[10] Second, controversy continues to reign with regard to the correct elucidation of 'the concept of fine art', and thus with regard to the very nature of the concept which is potentially to be possessed by the art-maker. Yet even if one's preferred solutions to such problems support the conclusion that works of art need not be the product of anyone acting on self-conscious 'art-making intentions', it is coherent to hold as well that works of art are never wholly unintended. In the kind of example mentioned above, it is uncontroversial to note that the artefact or relic was, like all artefacts, intentionally made.

Various philosophers have defended theses to the effect that art-making is an intentional activity. Nick Zangwill, for example, writes that 'a work of art is something created with the intention that it have aesthetic value in

[9] For an excellent survey of a wide range of views, see Stephen Davies, *Definitions of Art* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), esp. ch. 5, and his 'Essential Distinctions for Art Theorists', in *Art and Essence*, ed. Stephen Davies and Ananta Ch. Sukla (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2003), 3–16. For an intentionalist view, see Jerrold Levinson, 'The Irreducible Historicality of the Concept of Art', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 42 (2002), 367–79. For scepticism about the point of a definition of 'art', see Roger Pouivet, 'La quasi-nature des œuvres d'art', *Sats: Nordic Journal of Philosophy*, 2 (2001), 144–65. For a functionalist perspective, see Julius Moravscik's 'Art and "Art" ', in *Philosophy and the Arts. Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, xvi, ed. Peter A. French, Theodore E. Uehling, Jr., and Howard K. Wettstein (Notre Dame: University of Indiana Press, 1991), 302–13. For a functionalist account that correctly emphasizes the centrality of aesthetic value construed along axiological lines, see Gary Iseminger, *The Aesthetic Function of Art* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004).

[10] For some background, see Jesse J. Prinz, *Furnishing the Mind: Concepts and their Perceptual Basis* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002).

virtue of a specific aesthetic character. . . . The existence of such an intention, or set of such intentions is a necessary condition for something to be a work of art.'[11] Zangwill adds a success condition to this thesis, and aptly contends as well that the link between intentions and results must not be a deviant one (as when acting on an intention leads to behaviour which accidentally yields results matching the intention). Many other authors could be cited in this vein.[12]

There are challenges, however, to the general idea that art-making must be intentional. 'Automatic writing' is often quickly evoked in this connection as a decisive counterexample. Yet the point is not in fact so obvious, and the challenge dissolves when the matter is taken up a bit more carefully, which I shall now proceed to do.

Often employed in spiritualist contexts by persons hoping to enter into contact with mystical forces or personæ, various forms of automatic art-making activity were experimented with by an array of literary figures and artists, including William Carlos Williams, W. B. Yeats, Edith Rimmington, and, most famously, various French surrealists and avant-gardistes of the first half of the twentieth century, such as Antonin Artaud, René Daumal, and Marcel Duchamp. I shall focus primarily on the surrealists, as their successes with *l'écriture automatique* are most often touted.[13]

First of all, it is rather far-fetched to assume that these persons were entirely successful in eliminating all intentions from the process of writing,

[11] Nick Zangwill, 'The Creative Theory of Art', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 32 (1995), 307–23.

[12] For example, Wendell V. Harris argues that human beings cannot 'not intend', and that it is hardly surprising that writing works of literature is an intentional activity; see his *Literary Meaning: Reclaiming the Study of Literature* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 91–92.

[13] For background, see Anita M. Mühl, *Automatic Writing* (Dresden: Theodor Steinkopff, 1930); Ernest R. Hilgard, *Divided Consciousness: Multiple Controls in Human Thought and Action* (London: John Wiley, 1977), ch. 7; Wilma Koutstaal, 'Skirting the Abyss: A History of Experimental Explorations of Automatic Writing in Psychology', *Journal of the History of the Behavioural Sciences*, 28 (1992), 5–27. A case that is sometimes presented as being an astounding instance of wholly unconscious and involuntary writing is that of Mrs Pearl Curran's literary output. As the story goes, this untalented and non-literary housewife began her unintentional authorship at the Ouija board, and went on to dictate and pen various remarkable poems and novels under the pseudonym 'Patience Worth'. The latter persona or alter ego is reputed to have dictated these works to Mrs Curran while the latter was in some sort of trance or dissociative state. Yet as Mia-Grandolfi Wall ably documents, the evidence does not really support this legend; see her 'Rediscovering Pearl Curran: Solving the Mystery of Patience Worth'. Unpublished Ph.D. Diss., Tulane University, 2000.

somehow scribbling for hours and days on end in a somnabulistic and totally unreflective trance. As they began their collaborative experiments in this vein, André Breton and Philippe Soupault were purposively trying to find a creative breakthrough, and for a while at least, thought they had done so. Louis Aragon, who engaged in similar experimentations, reached the opposite conclusion, and spoke of the 'oratorical linguistic tricks', 'aggressive conventions', and 'rhetorical tone' of the writings generated in this context.[14] Breton did not consistently contend that these writings were purely spontaneous and unintentional, even in essays in which he sought to promote what he referred to as 'the automatic message'. No surrealist text, he writes in response to a critic in 1933, was ever presented as an example of perfect verbal automatism. Breton goes on to acknowledge that there was always 'a minimal element of guidance, generally in the direction of the text's poetic arrangement'.[15] The passage in the first *Manifeste du surréalisme* (1924) in which Breton recommends that the reader try some automatic writing, conveys a series of instructions as to the guiding intentions and techniques to be adopted, such as the intentional policy of beginning words with the letter 'l' should the process begin to break down.[16] Is this an instruction about what intention to follow in attempting to write unintentionally? Breton and Philippe Soupault's joint experimentation with automatic writing led to the publication of *Les Champs magnétiques* in 1921, the text of which was a heavily edited version of some of their more or less spontaneous writings.[17] And though the ornate phrases of *Les Champs magnétiques* manifest no storytelling or lucid argumentative intentions, they hardly read consistently as the results of involuntary movements of the pen.

Even were we to assume that once the writing was underway it somehow became a completely automatic process, that is, one wholly unguided

[14] Ruth Brandon, *Surreal Lives: The Surrealists* 1917–1945 (New York: Grove, 1999), 227. Another early critique of the surrealists' attempts in this vein was Valéry; see his *Oeuvres*, i.1335.

[15] André Breton, 'Lettre à A. Rolland de Renéville', in *Point du jour* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), 94–101, at 96.

[16] André Breton, *Manifestes du surréalisme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), 42–3.

[17] For the editing of the automatic writings, see Mark Polizzotti, *Revolution of the Mind: The Life of André Breton* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995), 106. On the intellectual orientations of surrealism, see Celia Rabinovitch, *Surrealism and the Sacred: Power, Eros, and the Occult in Modern Art* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2002).

by intentions, prior or proximate, the question would remain whether the results of bursts of unguided scribbling would have been works of literature in the absence of the authorial intentions involved, say, in their selection, editing, and publication. It could be argued, following E. D. Hirsch's idea of 'literature by association', that since André Breton's literary profile is established by his authorship of other literary works, even his unpublished and perfectly involuntary scribblings ought to be annexed to his *œuvre* as related literary items.[18] Yet as a strict application of this clause would bring many patently non-literary items, such as literati's business letters and legal correspondence, into the literary corpus, it cannot be accepted without significant modification. Not everything a writer writes should be classified as literature (good or bad), at least as long as we have a belletristic conception in mind, that is, one referring to *the art* of literature.[19]

If *l'écriture automatique* is not an instance of wholly unintentional artistic creation, are there other, genuine examples? There are, of course, cases of impulsive, thoughtless, and wholly unintended scribbling, singing, rhythmic movement, and the like, and such involuntary behaviour could be of some aesthetic interest. Dreams, I take it, are involuntary, yet can be beautiful and fascinating even if we lack the psychoanalyst's faith that information about one's repressed desires and traumatic childhood is latent in them. Yet it seems wholly implausible to think that a dream is literally to be classified as a work of art, and indeed, in spite of the ceaseless controversy surrounding the extension of that term, the thesis that dreams, parasomnabulistic dances, and the like could have artistic status has few if any proponents. Strict analyticity may not be in the cards, and I am uninterested in trying to imagine what forms art might take on remote possible worlds; but 'art' and its cognates usually carry connota-

[18] E. D. Hirsch, Jr., 'What Isn't Literature?', in *What is Literature?*, ed. Paul Hernadi (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1978), 24–34; Robert Stecker accepts this line of thought with a qualification to the effect that any 'work', as opposed to anything written, by a great writer counts as literature; see his 'What is Literature?', *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, 4 (1996), 681–94. It is not clear, however, whether automatic writing would come in under this clause; nor does such a clause gain everyone's consent. By my lights, Jean-Paul Sartre is a literary author of some merit, yet in spite of its Stendhalian moments, *L'Être et le néant* is not a work of literature.

[19] For a survey of definitions and concepts associated with 'literature' and related terms, see my 'Literature', in the *Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*, ed. Jerrold Levinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 536–54.

tions of skill, workmanship, and intentional achievement that run directly contrary to the thesis of *purely* involuntary art-making. This is a point allowed even by philosophers who think (rather implausibly) of art as being essentially the product of spontaneous, expressive imaginings. R. G. Collingwood, for example, distinguishes categorically between technique-guided forms of production and the process of genuine creation, contending that whereas the former involves the realization of a prior plan, the latter does not. Yet Collingwood still allows that works of art 'are made deliberately and responsibly, by people who know what they are doing, even though they do not know in advance what is going to come of it'.[20]

The thesis that there is no wholly unintended creation of art should not be conflated with the misleading idea that the artistic and other features of a work of art have all been intended. Another surrealist exercise—*le cadavre exquis* or exquisite corpse—illustrates this point. This is a matter of art-making in accordance with a procedure whereby each artist completes one segment of a work, with any parts previously finished being concealed from that person. Even though the artists cooperatively act on a shared scheme of taking turns in completing the image or poem, they do not see the products of the others' efforts, and so cannot have intentions with regard to all of the emergent figure's features (though they do share some intentions on this score). In the context of industrial cinematic production, there are cases where the many persons contributing intentionally to the process of creation share no overarching collective scheme or plan. The final product is sometimes best characterized as what the French sociologist Raymond Boudon called '*un effet pervers*' [a perverse effect], that is, an undesirable and unintended collective consequence of actions that members of a group undertake with wholly different ends in view.[21] The traffic jam generated by people's desire to take a pleasant Sunday drive is a paradigmatic example, and in the sphere of the entertainment arts the movie *Waterworld* (1995) would be a salient candidate. It should be recalled that under luckier circumstances, the appropriate metaphor becomes that

[20] R. G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938), 129. Objections to this and related definitions of art are prevalent in the literature. See Stephen Davies, 'Definitions of art', in *Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, ed. Berys Gaut and Dominic McIver Lopes (London: Routledge, 2001), 169–80.

[21] Raymond Boudon, *Effets pervers et ordre social* (Paris: PUF, 1977).

of the 'invisible hand', since uncoordinated collective art-making can give rise to something having valued aesthetic qualities. Yet even these are not cases where no intentional actions contribute directly to the work's genesis: a lot of intentional doings were at work, it is just that they were not coordinated in any of the ways we associate with joint or collaborative activity. I return to a range of issues raised by collective art-making in Chapter 3, where I provide additional support for these claims about joint art-making.

To sum up this section, I do not believe we have found any convincing counterexamples to the broad thesis that art-making is an intentional activity, and this given a very wide range of positions with regard to the definition of 'art' and the ontology of works of art. Yet this is a purely negative defence of the thesis, and one may ask what more positive grounds—other than the appeal to common sense and the citation of philosophical 'authorities'—may be provided. One, positive strategy for justifying the intentionalist thesis in question is to contend that being intentionally created is a necessary condition of an item's status as an artefact, and that the latter is in turn a condition on being a work of art.[22] Although such a contention is hardly controversial with regard to *many* works of art, which are, or at least include as constitutent parts, intentionally produced artefacts, it is far from obvious, given the history of conceptual and performance art, that this argument succeeds for all works of art, unless any intentional performance or doing is construed as 'an artefact', which is a patently arbitrary and self-serving move.

An alternative approach to providing a positive justification of the broad intentionalist thesis is axiological. Flint Schier, for example, has argued for an 'aesthetics of agency', a central tenet of which is that the quality of the artist's activity is an essential object of the aesthetic reception of a work of representational art.[23] Schier gave this thesis a rather strong, Gricean twist

[22] Sophisticated presentations of this line of thought are provided by Risto Hilpinen, 'On artifacts and works of art', *Theoria*, 58 (1992), 58–82; and by Roger Pouivet, *L'ontologie de l'œuvre d'art : une introduction* (Nîmes: Jacquelines Chambon, 1999), 183–8; for Pouivet's account of intention, see 64–7.

[23] See Flint Schier, 'Hume and the aesthetics of agency', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 87 (1986–7), 121–35; and 'Van Gogh's Boots: The Claims of Representation', in *Virtue and Taste: Essays on Politics, Ethics and Aesthetics*, ed. Dudley Knowles and John Skorupski (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 176–99.

by adding that the creation of an object has artistic significance and value if its maker intends part of the object's aesthetic impact to be a function of a recognition of the intention that the object should have just this impact. Schier contends that this sort of value, while being supervenient upon other sorts of value, is the unique species of artistic value. This thesis is, I think, overly strong, as Schier does not provide sufficient grounds for ruling out the possibility of other, specifically artistic values. A weaker and more plausible axiological proposal specifies that the work of art being (the result of) an intentional activity is necessary to at least one, distinct kind of artistic value (and corresponding evaluative concern), which can be evoked by the term 'artistry' (and in a related but different vein, 'virtuosity'), that is, a value linked directly to (our admiration of) the skill with which a work or performance has been created or realized in a given context of achievement. The claim is not that artistry is the only artistic value, nor even that all valuable works of art must instantiate this sort of value. Rather, the contention is that to be a work of art is always to be *evaluable* in terms of artistry. It is easy to document a focus on artistry—and on its contrary, artistic ineptitude—by many scholars, critics, and other appreciators of art.[24] For various writers, the concept of skill is indeed essential to the arts, a claim which is compatible with the thought that in some instances, such as Apelles' lucky splash, inadvertent effects enhance a work's value.[25]

It is one thing to hold that art-making is always (but not only) an intentional activity, where intentions are necessary to the latter; it is

[24] See e.g. Roman Ingarden, *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art* trans. Ruth Ann Crowley and Kenneth R. Olson (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 245: 'The way in which this artistic intention is carried out in the individual case constitutes the specific nature of this work and plays a part in the aesthetic effects which can be achieved in its varied aesthetic concretizations.' A similar opinion is expressed by Raymond W. Gibbs, Jr., *Intentions in the Experience of Meaning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). In a more critical vein, Friedrich Nietzsche notes that when we contemplate a work of art, 'the piece itself is not enough, its maker is praised'—but he then goes on to say that the activity of praising is best understood as a projective manifestation of the will to power. See his *Writings from the Late Notebooks*, ed. Rüdiger Bittner, trans. Kate Sturge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 152.

[25] David Novitz, *Boundaries of Art* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press, 1992), 15; Novitz in turn cites Francis Sparshott, *The Theory of the Arts* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), ch. 2. The idea that appreciation involves attunement to a specific achievement or performance in a context constituted in part by levels of prior achievement and skill is emphasized in the ontologies of art developed by Gregory Currie, *An Ontology of Art* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1989), and David Davies, *Art as Performance* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004).

something else entirely to provide an informative account of the specific roles played by intention in the making of art, and it is to this latter issue that I now turn.

THE ROLES OF INTENTION

Writing a literary text, fabricating a sculpture, and staging a performance of a play are intentional actions. So are finishing a given work and presenting it to the public. Such deeds are usually prompted, guided, and informed by intentions, the contents of which are the author's or artist's plans—it being understood that the latter can emerge on the spur of the moment, often quite unconsciously, in the process of the artist's active engagement with artistic media or materials.

Debates over intentions in aesthetics often become sidetracked by the idea that only 'conscious intentions' could be the target of intentionalist attributions. The thought seems to be that artists are not fully aware of everything they are purposefully doing, and that it follows that intentionalist attributions have a crippling blind spot. Yet there are serious problems with this line of thought. Attempts to analyse the notion of 'consciousness' tend to collapse into a series of more or less happy synonyms and rhetorical appeals to one's first-hand experience, as when we are told that to be conscious of some X is to know 'what it is like' to experience X, which is only informative for those who are not uninformed.[26] I can do little or no better here, and shall not begin to survey the burgeoning philosophical literatures on consciousness and self-knowledge. Suffice it to say, however, that in our ordinary and unanalysed sense of the term, not all intentions are 'conscious' in that some are not the object of any occurrent belief and do not 'register' in the agent's mind in the sense of being noticed or made the object of some factual belief or awareness.[27] So much for the synonyms; now for the rhetorical appeal: you may have

[26] The 'what it is like' locution does not translate very readily into various other languages and thus would appear to be an English-specific crutch. It should not, in any case, be taken literally, since the point is not that consciousness of X is knowledge of similarities between X and something else.

[27] See Fred Dretske, 'Conscious Experience', *Mind*, 102 (1993), 263–83, for the contention that consciousness of some thing or event does not entail having beliefs or awareness of related facts.

intentionally turned the pages of this book while reading and yet remained blithely unaware of any such intention; on the other hand, circumstances sometimes make the action of page-turning rise into our awareness, and as you read this phrase, you ought to be consciously thinking about page-turning now (or for the reader of some e-text, mouse-clicking). You know 'what it is like' to become aware of the need to find the right page in a book when you have inadvertently lost your place. The conscious/unconscious distinction is a sound one, then, but neither of its terms admits of the sort of analysis which enables one to 'do without' the analysed notion. Intentions fall on both sides of the broad contrast between conscious and unconscious mental states and events, and there may be various important distinctions to be drawn within the domain of consciousness.

To revert to a broad contrast sketched in the previous chapter, both future-directed intentions and proximal intentions play a part in the making of art, and both sorts of intentions fulfil a range of characteristic functions in the artist's activities. Artists are hardly likely to set to work suddenly with a blank, unspecified intention to 'make some art', or even just to write, paint, sculpt, etc. More typically, the proximal intention to do some painting or writing is more specific, and follows from a scheme framed at some earlier point in time. And as the time comes for that scheme to be executed, even more specific plans are entertained and settled upon. For example, when a writer puts words on the page, an executive attitude—a settledness on writing now—is adopted in relation to a particular plan that specifies to some extent what sort of thing is to be written. Or to adopt a term introduced by Kendall L. Walton in an important paper of 1970, the artist at least provisionally adopts one or more 'categories of art' to which the projected work is to belong.[28] Such a category, Walton points out, specifies both standard and variable features of works, so that in

[28] Kendall L. Walton, 'Categories of Art', *Philosophical Review*, 79 (1970), 334–67. Walton does not say, by the way, that the relevant or appropriate category of art is always one intended or chosen by the artist, but he does acknowledge that sometimes this is the case. For detailed literary analyses guided by the insight that authors' intentions regarding genre, subgenre, and mode are crucial to adequate interpretations, see John T. Shawcross, *Intentionality and the New Traditionalism: Some Liminal Means to Literary Revisionism* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991); helpful approaches to genre which emphasize authorial intention include Jean-Marie Schaeffer, *Qu'est-ce qu'un genre littéraire?* (Paris: Seuil, 1989), and Peter Swirski, 'Genres in Action: The Pragmatics of Literary Interpretation', *Orbis Litterarum*, 41 (1997), 325–42.

adopting a category for a work in progress, the artist at least provisionally settles on the intention of fashioning something having those standard features, while also taking on the task of finding a way of filling in the variable ones. Familiar everyday cases mesh well with Walton's point: people who sit down and begin writing a business letter do not find that a lovely sonnet somehow emerges on the page or computer screen, and that is because the intention guiding the writing involved no such plan. When someone has written a sonnet, this action can usually be explained in part by reference to the intention and plan involved (which does not imply that one could not accidentally or unwittingly write something that does not violate the rules of the Petrarchan sonnet form).

The contents of artist's intentions, conscious and unconscious, can be usefully characterized in terms of a broad distinction between *macro-* and *micro*-plans. As an example, we may say that the latter effectively guide such actions as typing a capital 'T' first, an 'h' second, a 'u' and then an 's' in order to begin one's phrase with the word 'Thus'. Some intentions incorporating microplans that effectively guide the typing or writing arise from long-standing habits. For example, an author always tries to spell 'Thus' with (tokens of) the same four letters, and no practical deliberation is required.[29] If Breton and Soupault were in fact able to engage in successful stints of automatic or quasi-automatic writing, such microlevel intentions must have been involved in the inscribing of correctly spelt words in French—no mean feat in such *phrases recherchées* as 'Ophtalmies des jeunesses stériles' and 'Comètes postiches, éruptions falsifiées, clefs des songes, charlatanismes obscurs'.[30] Should the author fail to realize this sort of micro-intention in some particular instance, an editor or reader may be able to recognize and correct the typographical error, changing the actual inscription to make it align with the writer's intention. The prevalence of this editorial practice suggests that we are less interested in the often unconscious (motor) processes that actually generated the inscription than the author's higher-level writerly intentions to conform to the relevant lin-

[29] Intentions of this kind are often acquired by default'. On intentions by default, see Mele, *Springs of Action*, ch. 12.

[30] André Breton and Philippe Soupault, *Les champs magnétiques* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), 53.

guistic conventions. I return to related questions pertaining to the identity and individuation of texts in Chapter 5.

The contents of artistic intentions involve any number of longstanding and punctual macroplans, beginning, for example, with the plan to write a literary work of fiction (as opposed, say, to a letter of recommendation), the plan to write a poem and not a novel or a prose poem, the plan to write something comic, and more precisely, satirical, the plan to take up a particular theme or themes, the plan to situate the action of a fictional story in one kind of setting as opposed to another, and so on. Many crucial artistic decisions are partially based on these high-level plans, and if Walton's arguments are accepted, a viewer's ability even to recognize a work's aesthetic properties depends upon perceiving the work as belonging to the relevant artistic category. Whether this is true of all aesthetic properties of all works of art is an issue that need not be debated here.[31]

My emphasis on the role of the artist's plans should not be taken as entailing the idea that prior to beginning a composition a writer or musician knows exactly what the final product will be like. Nor do I want to support the misleading idea that artists are fully rational and lucid beings who enjoy complete foresight and control over the creative process. Sometimes plans emerge in and through the artist's activity. The contrary view, which is implicit in many statements of anti-intentionalism, ignores, among other things, the differences between proximal, distal, and temporally mixed intentions. An artist's distal intentions, those formulated before beginning the literal making of some artefact, are schematic, indicating crucial guiding ideas as well as some key details, but leaving many other factors open. For example, as a writer begins to fill in and alter the initial schematic ideas by developing a specific outline and constructing sentences, paragraphs, and longer segments, specific, *proximal* intentions arise, guiding the process of writing. Acting on the initial intention to write a sonnet, the author thinks of a clever deviation and settles on that alternative.

Similar remarks may be formulated with regard to creative activity involving non-verbal media. For example, film-makers tell us about how the idea for a film, codified in a more or less detailed shooting script or story outline,

[31] For argumentation on this issue, see Nick Zangwill, 'In Defence of Moderate Aesthetic Formalism', *Philosophical Quarterly*, 50 (2000), 476–93.

gets concretized, developed, and overturned in the complex collective process of shooting on location, and then again in the crucial stage of editing and remixing in the studio. Some film-makers, such as the Hong Kong director Wong Kar-Wai, rely heavily on improvisation. The shooting for his celebrated 2000 film *In the Mood for Love* (the Cantonese title of which translates literally as 'The Age of Flowers') was begun without a script and lasted for a period of fifteen months, during which time story ideas were explored, acted upon, and in crucial cases, subsequently abandoned. Wong Kar-Wai's elimination of a number of scenes that had been painstakingly shot and edited gave rise to an elliptical and ambiguous work which corresponded to his emergent decision to capture a nostalgic mood, as opposed to conveying a detailed, and ultimately hackneyed, story of adultery.

An emphasis on the functions of the art-maker's intentions should not be taken as an endorsement of the idea that the creative process is wholly calculated and deliberate, the artist's every activity being the result of an intention generated by the most lucid forms of practical reasoning. Ideas and motifs have a way of 'coming' to an artist or author in an unforeseeable way, often at times when the person is not the least bit aware of working on a piece. A writer often wakes up in the morning with new ideas, and may be in a hurry to write them down before they are forgotten. This is the kernel of truth in the 'Kubla Khan' model of creation. Yet if these unconscious and relatively uncontrolled moments of creativity are to contribute to the realization of a work of art, they must be prepared for and informed by intentions and actions resulting from reasoning or deliberation. Were it truly the case that the Romantic poet could dream in highly structured, finely wrought verse, this could only have been the result of years of practice with the relevant poetic forms. A film-maker with no prior experience directing actors, devising dialogue, story ideas, and cinematic 'blocking' would not be likely to improvise successfully on the set. Thus, even if the spontaneous moments of 'popping' turned out to be fundamentally inexplicable, it is an error to see them as standing wholly external to the voluntary and deliberate dimensions of creative work, as spontaneous creative moments are significantly influenced by earlier and subsequent episodes of planning and reasoning.[32]

[32] Nor need we concede that 'popping' is, like 'inspiration', essentially mysterious. Psychologists do offer models of the moment of 'illumination' or popping, and the thesis that they are all

Here we may advert to the 'four stages' of creativity that constitute a sort of *locus classicus* of the sprawling literature on creativity.[33] The first of these stages is *preparation*. This is a matter first of all of the sometimes lengthy process of apprenticeship during which the agent acquires knowledge and skills relevant to a given practice or domain, eventually leading to a situation in which the agent is in a position to attempt some task characteristic of that domain. For example, by seeing artists at work and by looking at pictures, someone acquires a knowledge and love of painting, and having learnt about techniques and traditions, begins to work on a still life. Preparation also involves the development of various specific plans with regard to a given artistic project, such as the kernel idea for a story, a mood to be evoked, or perhaps some more concrete scheme for employing certain techniques or materials. The second stage is *incubation*. At one or more points in the process of creation, the agent's attention is diverted away from the problem at hand. Yet unconscious work on the problem continues, perhaps in a freer and more associative mode. For example, having struggled with the composition of the picture for a significant period of time, the painter stops working on it and attends to other things. The third stage comprises *illumination*. Suddenly the artist becomes aware of promising ideas and possible solutions which seem to have 'popped' into view. For instance, our painter wakes up one morning with a new idea for a motif at the centre of the composition. The fourth and final stage is

doomed to failure wants arguing. A priori arguments on both sides of this issue have been floated, but their stalemate leaves us with the task of assessing particular models on offer in the literature. See, for a start, the essays in Steven M. Smith, Thomas B. Ward, and Ronald A. Finke, eds., *The Creative Cognition Approach* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995).

[33] The stages are often attributed to Graham Wallas, *The Art of Thought* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1926). Hans Eysenck contends that Wallas's key source was Helmholtz's 1896 reflections on his own creative experiences, yet the latter's indications are rather sparse in this regard; see Eysenck's *Genius: The Natural History of Creativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 170. Francis E. Sparshott attributes this model of the creative process to Robert Graves, T. S. Eliot, and 'a host of romantic writers', in his 'Every Horse has a Mouth: A Personal Poetics', in *The Concept of Creativity in Science and Art*, 62. (One plausible source Sparshott does not mention is Valéry's 1919 'Note et Digression' on his 1894 essay on the method of Leonardo de Vinci; *Oeuvres*, i.1205.) Sparshott also denies that the model has any veridical empirical content, holding that it in part reflects a set of necessary conditions for creativity, and in part is grounded on a metaphor of giving birth, propped up by selective use of evidence. A good example of the many applications and elaborations of Wallas's stages is George F. Kneller's *The Art and Science of Creativity* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1965).

verification and elaboration. The ideas acquired in the moment of illumination are subjected to critical evaluation and improvement; e.g. the painter rejects some of the inspired insights while retaining and revising others. I discuss the question of the artist's completion of a work of art in a separate section below.

It has frequently been added that these distinctions are 'ideal-typical' and that in actual episodes of creativity, such moments overlap and blend. What is more, instead of involving four successive stages, the process would normally be recursive, particularly if one were to examine any significantly extended period in the life of a creative artist.[34] An example is the rather late apprenticeship in counterpoint undertaken by Erik Satie at a stage in his career when he had already composed distinctive and highly original works in a style of his own.[35] Although the four-stage model abstracts from the complexities of this and other cases, it helps to correct the 'Kubla Khan' image of creativity. In light of the romantic emphasis on creativity as pure inspiration, psychologists' talk of preparation, incubation, and verification provide a needed balance to the picture.

It may be added that a similar rationale can be given for the notorious passage in §50 of Kant's 3rd Critique where he writes that taste must provide the discipline ['*Disziplin (oder Zucht)*'] of genius and 'clip its wings' closely ['*beschneidet diesem sehr die Flügel*'].[36] That the creative imagination has produced something does not entail that the result is a finished work of art, and even less that it is worthwhile; the artist must use critical judgement.[37] Failing that, the artist might call on someone else's critical judgement, Ezra Pound's severe wing-clipping of T. S. Eliot's manuscript of *The Waste Land* (1922) being a good example.[38] Of course there is the danger of this

[34] Catharine Patrick, 'Creative Thought in Artists', *Journal of Psychology*, 4 (1937), 35–73.

[35] Steven Moore Whiting, *Satie the Bohemian: From Cabaret to Concert Hall* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[36] Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, ed. Karl Vorländer (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1924), 174. I thank Thomas Schwartz for his helpful discussion of this topic.

[37] In Donald Crawford's reading of §50, the subordination of genius to taste is necessary to assure the realization of art's ultimate aim, which is the communication of aesthetic ideas. See Crawford, 'Kant', in *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, ed. Berys Gaut and Dominic McIver Lopes (London: Routledge, 2001), 51–64, at 62.

[38] For an informative discussion of this case, see Jack Stillinger, *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), ch. 6. Whether Pound should be recognized

critical moment overshadowing the artist's spontaneous creativity, the extreme case being illustrated in *La Peste* (1947) by Albert Camus's characterization of Joseph Grand, a civil servant who spends his evenings rewriting the first sentence of the novel he will never complete.

An artist's spontaneous creative moments and more deliberate art-making activities are functionally related. A writer who sets out to do some automatic writing adopts a framework of guiding intentions to that end, perhaps by following Breton's advice. If the writer is lucky, some spontaneous creative activity ensues. When a painter has been trying for days or even months to find a way to complete a picture, it is no accident that her mind stays on the problem even when she does not deliberately formulate an intention to work on it. This is how Virginia Woolf characterizes Lily Briscoe's work on her painting in *To the Lighthouse* (1927), the closure of which is provided by the painter's unexpected discovery of a solution: 'With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the centre. It was done; it was finished. Yes, she thought, laying down the brush in extreme fatigue, I have had my vision.'[39]

The artist's hard, *intentional* work may stimulate creativity, even if she is in no position to predict what will later issue forth. On the other side of the coin, creative moments can prompt solitary deliberation and planning. A writer is not likely to publish a phrase simply because it 'effortlessly' popped into her mind: good writing is rarely (if ever) produced in an unreflective gush. Moments of unforeseen and spontaneous invention often serve to prompt deliberation about how these new phrases or ideas could be incorporated into, or provide the basis for, a larger work.

WOOLF AND THE WRITER'S LABOUR

Reference to an actual case may help to illustrate and flesh out some of these points. In a famous entry in her diary, Virginia Woolf reports on her experience of writing the final pages of her 1931 novel, *The Waves*:

as a co-author of *The Wasteland*, as Stillinger asserts, is a rather complex question; for related matters, see Chapter 3.

[39] Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* [1927] (London: Hogarth, 1999), 198.

Here in the few minutes that remain, I must record, heaven be praised, the end of The Waves. I wrote the words O Death fifteen minutes ago, having reeled across the last ten pages with some moments of such intensity & intoxication that I seemed only to stumble after my own voice, or almost, after some sort of speaker (as when I was mad). I was almost afraid, remembering the voices that used to fly ahead. Anyhow it is done; & I have been sitting these 15 minutes in a state of glory, & calm, & some tears.[40]

This passage seems to confirm the common notion that genuinely creative writing is anything but a matter of planning, cool deliberation, and rational control. Instead, the passage may seem to recommend the *Tel Quel* idea of 'the subject in process', or in other words, the notion of a subjectivity in the grip of, or dispersed within the 'signifying practice' of textual production. Barthes, for example, tells us that it is impossible to identify who is speaking in any instance of writing because 'writing begins, on the contrary, at the moment when we can only observe that it [*ça*—the Id] begins to speak'.[41] The idea that a number of voices contribute to a text's production has found favour among contemporary critics, as does the notion that creativity echoes a form of madness in which the self or 'subject' is divided. Yet before we leap to any such conclusions, we should note that Woolf twice qualifies her remarks with 'almost', and only refers to *moments* of intoxication. When the authoress was truly in the grips of her intense depressive and psychotic episodes, she may have heard voices, yet if they dictated any literary texts, she seems to have been incapable of recording them.[42]

Woolf's diary informs us that in creating her novels, she went through several drafts, labouriously typing out and correcting one handwritten draft before beginning the next. Pages that were written in states of intensity and intoxication were later typed and edited in a calmer frame of mind. Woolf's manuscripts, essays, and diaries also show that her bursts of intoxicating creativity were preceded by years of painstaking deliber-

[40] Entry dated 7 February 1931, in *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Anne Olivier Bell (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982), iv.10.

[41] Roland Barthes, 'Analyse textuelle d'un conte d'Edgar Poe', in *Sémiotique narrative et textuelle*, ed. Claude Chabrol (Paris: Larousse, 1973), 29–54, at 53–4.

[42] For background, see Thomas C. Caramagno, *The Flight of the Mind: Virginia Woolf's Art and Manic-Depressive Illness* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992). I am not endorsing the details of Carmagno's diagnosis.

ation, planning, and effort. There is good evidence to suggest that in the case of *The Waves*, the period of planning began as early as 1925 and that the writing of the first draft only commenced four years later.[43] Woolf had slowly elaborated a basic conception of the sort of experimental novel she wanted to create, and she checked the products of her moments of inspiration against these ideas, ceasing to create and revise her work only when she was satisfied that her results realized—and perhaps even surpassed—her initial ambition or 'vision'.

Woolf's diary contains other valuable indications concerning the place of intentions in her creative work. For example, in the following diary entry of 7 October 1919, Woolf asks herself whether her diary was worth continuing:

> I began reading the first volume of my diary; & see that its second anniversary is now reached. I dont think the first volume makes such good reading as the last; a proof that all writing, even this unpremeditated scribbling, has its form, which one learns. Is it worth going on with? The trouble is, that if one goes on a year or so more, one will feel bound on that account to continue. I wonder why I do it. Partly, I think, from my old sense of the race of time 'Time's winged chariot hurrying near'—Does it stay it?

Like most authors, Woolf did not think uniquely about the task at hand, but reflected on her past endeavours and engaged in long-term planning of future work. Here she ponders the wisdom of a previously framed intention to devote a significant amount of her time to the keeping of a diary. Her prior investment in keeping a diary could somehow eventually constrain her to continue doing so, she suggests, the implication being that one cannot simply disregard one's prior investments and standing intentions; instead, one feels 'bound' to continue. Even so, Woolf pauses to reconsider the wisdom of her diary-keeping habit, knowing that rigid adherence to a scheme fixed earlier could perhaps stifle creativity and be a waste of time.

The cited diary entry shows us a Virginia Woolf attempting to navigate a course between the Scylla of overly resolute commitment and the Charybdis of hopelessly momentary or last-second decision-making.

[43] For detailed evidence supporting this point, see Virginia Woolf, *The Waves: The Two Holograph Drafts*, ed. J. W. Graham (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), especially Graham's informative introduction, 13–48.

Authors must negotiate what I should like to call 'Bratman's dilemma', the horns of which are the horrors of unpremeditated scribbling, and the disaster of trying to execute prior intentions that prove inappropriate or unworkable.[44] An author cannot foresee all future contingencies, which include not only the unpredictable events of the world at large, but the unforeseeable results of her own creative activities. As a consequence, previously laid schemes sometimes turn out to be inappropriate when the time to execute them arrives. So a strong tendency to make irrevocable commitments can lead to a lot of unwise actions. Nor is the world kind to those who make no plans: in Jean de la Fontaine's fable, wisdom is on the side of the ants, not the grasshoppers. Even if plans do not irrevocably dictate what is to be done, they may have a certain inertia and contribute to the coordination of efforts by orienting creative activities in a constructive manner.

One of the functions of an artist's intentions is to contribute to coordination, beginning with the coordination of the person's own creative activities. Artists' long-term intentions have an important dynamic (temporal) dimension, involving the coordination of activities related to a single work as well as longer-term schemes concerning the relations between two or more works. This is the theme to which Chapter 4 is devoted; at this point I shall only briefly discuss the coordinative functions, both short-term and dynamic, of Woolf's diary-keeping intentions.

The cited diary entry may be read in light of Woolf's own previous intention to go on keeping a diary, but also in relation to her subsequent renewal or updating of this diary-keeping intention. In the end, we know, she continued to keep her diary, a decision justified by the many different functions the diary fulfilled, some of which she herself describes and updates in various entries, and others that she did not mention.[45] Here we can see how an author's different intentions and schemes can interact. It would seem that keeping a diary helped her make progress on her other

[44] Michael E. Bratman, *Intention, Plans, and Practical Reason* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987); for commentary, and scepticism about a detailed theory of rational planning, see my 'Le Dilemme de Bratman : Problèmes de la rationalité dynamique', *Philosophiques*, 20 (1993), 47–67. On artistic creation and constraints, see Jon Elster, *Ulysses Unbound: Studies in Rationality, Pre-Commitment and Constraint* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

[45] See, in particular, the entries of 20 January 1919; 7 October 1919; 9 March 1920; 8 April 1925; 7 December 1925; 8 February 1926; 3 February 1927, 7 July 1933; 27 March 1935; 17 August 1938; and 17 December 1939.

projects in a number of different ways. Woolf wrote that keeping a diary was useful because it amused her to read it from time to time; it 'cools' her mind and helps her to uncramp. The diary was to serve as a source for writing her memoirs. At one point she says she needs this transition between working on a novel and doing something else. On other occasions she deems the diary a place for stylistic experiments and for jotting down ideas for other works, as well as her ideas about the relations between her various projects. Woolf's diary-writing may have had various other, unmentioned functions—both intended and unintended—within her overall writerly efforts. If the diary's many harsh judgements of others are any indication, she spills out a great deal of interpersonal venom in its pages, perhaps thereby avoiding the consequences of doing so elsewhere, such as in her fiction. Writing diary entries also seems to help her cope with the anxiety that accompanied the publication of each new novel. In various entries she anticipates critical reviews of her novels, as if trying to defuse the negative responses she feared. This in turn allowed her to get on with other projects while waiting for the critical responses to a work that was about to appear in print. The diary, in other words, was a tool for engaging in forms of reflection fostering self-control. And finally, the diary is a place where she could write about her ongoing activity of keeping a diary. Eventually, re-reading several volumes of accumulated diary entries, she suggests that in an edited form they would stand as an independent volume worthy of publication (and this was the intention that her husband later acted on in publishing *A Writer's Diary* in 1953).

INTENTIONS AND THE COMPLETION OF A WORK

So far, my account of the place of intentions in processes of artistic creation has focused on the initiation, orientation, and coordination of the artist's activities. I turn now to issues related to the termination of that process, and once again, intentionalist notions turn out to contribute to an elucidation of a number of well-entrenched discriminations and practices.

It is quite common to draw a distinction between complete and unfinished works of art. For example, it is uncontroversial to think that Johannes Vermeer had actually completed *View of Delft* (1660–1) before inept restorers added layers of coloured varnish to give the picture an

antique quality, and there is very good evidence to support the related claim that the artist had not finished the work before he effected several *pentimenti*, including the painting over of a figure in the foreground on the right.[46] Such beliefs oriented a costly and elaborate restoration that was begun in 1994 and terminated two years later.[47]

Although the distinction between complete and unfinished works is quite well-entrenched in the worlds of art, when we take a closer look, the matter turns out to be rather complicated. To say that a work of art is finished can mean at least two very different things, depending on whether we are focusing primarily on some of the item's aesthetic features, or whether attention is drawn to an aspect of the creative process. On the one hand, a work can be said to be complete or finished in the sense that the item in question, when appreciated in light of the relevant artistic categories, manifests certain features that are positively valued within those categories, such as coherence, resolution, the right sort of *dénouement*, the possession of all of the essential or characteristic elements of the genre or form, and so on. I shall call this sort of completion 'aesthetic' completion, without, however, taking on board the idea that the recognition of this kind of completion is purely a matter of *aisthesis*, or a sensual attending to some object's or structure's or performance's perceptible features.

Aesthetic completion does not seem to be the only, or even the most important notion of completion involved in critical discourse. One decisive reason why it is not is that in many cases, we want to say both that a work is finished, *and* that it lacks aesthetic completeness. So-called romantic and baroque fragments and ruins provide striking examples of complete, self-standing works that have deliberately been made to resemble a part of some larger, missing whole. An architectural example is the imitation Roman temple built in 1766 by Carlo Marchioni at the Villa Albani in Rome, the fragmentary nature of which does not warrant the conclusion that the architect's plan was somehow never fully realized, or that a once completed structure has since fallen into disrepair.[48] As paradoxical as it may seem, the work was complete even though it looked like parts of the

[46] For background, see my 'Pentimento', in *The Creation of Art*, 89–115.

[47] Jørgen Wadum, *Vermeer Illuminated* (The Hague: V+K/Inmerc, 1996).

[48] For background and an array of examples, see Reinhard Zimmermann, *Künstliche Ruinen: Studien zu ihrer Bedeutung und Form* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1989).

structure were missing. One may be tempted to say, with regard to such a case, that the work is aesthetically complete *qua* ruin, yet it is hard to see how any structural or formal conditions in fact determine this sort of completion. Instead, such cases underscore the importance of another sort of completion, which I shall label 'genetic' completion. Roughly put, a work is genetically complete only if its maker or makers decide it is so. Clearly, we do not want to say that any such decision necessarily results in the creation of a work of art, and even less, in a good one; the idea, rather, is that such a decision is a necessary condition of the successful completion of a work. This claim has a high degree of intuitive appeal: after all, it is up to the artist to decide when he or she is done, and we are not sympathetic to any producer, critic, or patron who tries to forestall or overturn such a decision.

If we try to slow down and explicate the conditions under which the relevant actions have been performed, it turns out that the matter is rather complicated, which is not surprising given the complexity of the individuation and identification of actions more generally. In the simplest case—and many cases are not so simple—genetic completion is a matter of the artist reaching a second-order decision regarding his or her own creative work with regard to a specific piece. This decision has both a retrospective and a prospective dimension. It is prospective in that the artist chooses to refrain from further creative or productive activity with regard to the piece in question. Refraining from intentionally doing anything that could change the work's artistically and aesthetically relevant properties, the artist does something else instead, such as laying down the brushes, turning the computer off, or thinking about another project. It may not be entirely clear what is meant when we say that someone does one thing instead of doing another, but to put it roughly, this can be a matter of intentionally performing one action that is a perceived alternative to some other, salient possible action the performance of which it is meant to exclude.[49] When an artist intentionally refrains from making further changes on a work, the relevant intention is directed both to the artist's

[49] For background, see George M. Wilson, *The Intentionality of Human Action*, 2nd edn. rev. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1989), 138–43, and Myles Brand, 'The Language of Not Doing', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 8 (1971), 45–53.

activities in the proximal moment, but also and more crucially, to all future moments when the artist might be inclined to make changes to the text or structure. Thus the decision that a work is complete is another manifestation of a 'temporally extended agency' in which particular decisions or intentions are embedded within larger patterns of action, planning, and deliberation.

It is important to note that the decision to refrain from future creative work on a given piece takes two significantly different forms. In one case, the artist gives up working on a piece, deciding that it is unfinished; in the other sort of case, the second-order decision concerning the cessation of creative activity is accompanied by a decision that what has been realized is a completed work. In some of the latter cases, the relevant judgement holds that the artist's task is finished in the sense that the completion of the work will involve no further interventions on the part of the artist, but that other events are expected to give the item some additional features, at which point it will then be a finished work. For example, certain topiary ruins, such as that of Elvaston Castle in Derbyshire, were not complete until the shrubbery had grown to the size and shape the artist had envisioned.[50] Here we can see that the artist's judgements are both prospective and retrospective, ranging over possible future changes, but also involving a backward-looking assessment of the sequence of actions to which the artist's decision provides a terminus. The creative action that this decision terminates and completes has involved the agent's self-monitoring, and the decision to stop working is normally motivated and informed by the results of this ongoing assessment of the activity that it draws to a close.

To sum up, my idea is that in a range of relatively simple cases, the decision to stop working is not enough to constitute a completed work unless it is accompanied by a retrospective judgement that this work and its creation are thereby complete, at least as far as the artist's own contributions are concerned. This sort of complex genetic attitude is, I suggest, a necessary but not a sufficient condition of the making of a work of art in a range of standard cases. There are some cases, situated at the borderline of the fine arts and sporting events, where the kind of

[50] Barbara Jones, *Follies and Grottoes* (London: Constable, 1974), 129.

decision I am invoking may not be even a necessary condition of a work's completion. I have in mind those organized speed-painting and rapid novel-writing contests where the entrants know in advance that, for the purposes of the competition, whatever they have finished when the allotted amount of time is up will count as a completed work. That some of the contestants stop working even before the whistle is blown suggests that a more normal form of genetic completion can persist within such an unusual and highly suboptimal art-making arrangement, but for the other contestants, the moment of termination was decided upon in advance with the agreement that a work would be made within a specific temporal frame. Perhaps it should be added so as to forestall misunderstandings that the sort of decision I have been describing need not be reached consciously by the artist or result from some lucid process of explicit deliberation. Nor must the artist publicly avow that the work has been finished once and for all. A fine anecdote in this vein is reported by Herschel B. Chipp, who relates, with regard to *Guernica* (1937), that 'Picasso had said he did not know if it was finished or not but that Sert should pick it up when he was ready.'[51] And some artists, while making punctual decisions to the effect that a given piece can be presented to the public, reserve the right to withdraw it at some point in the future so as to make significant changes. In some cases, the artist works with a deep scepticism concerning the very idea of a work's ever being definitively completed.[52]

My claims about the genetic completion of works of art should be taken as neutral with regard to various outstanding issues concerning the definition of art and the place of art-specific intentions therein. The decision that the item in question has been completed *qua* work can be given a referentially opaque or transparent reading; on the latter, the artist's indexical decision that some item is done need not entail any thought that the item or action in question has art status at all, let alone art status as specified by

[51] Herschell B. Chipp, *Picasso's* Guernica: *History, Transformations, Meanings* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 135.

[52] Valéry is an important example; see his fragments on this theme in *Oeuvres*, ii.553. Valéry writes that the idea of a beginning and an end intervenes only when creation takes on the character of 'fabrication', i.1413. More recently, the movie-maker George Lucas declares that 'A film is finished only when the director's gone', interview in *South China Morning Post*, 25 December 2001, Features, 1.

one's favoured concept of art. Of course in many important cases, artists decide that what has just been completed is a work of art, and the relevant and effective attitude includes some viable concept of art.

The artist's decision that a work is complete is related to, but logically distinct from the artist's beliefs about the text's or structure's various properties, including its possession or lack of aesthetic completeness. The artist's decision to refrain from further work on a piece is also distinct from a mere belief or prediction about his or her own future activities. An artist can believe that adverse circumstances will prevent him from doing any more work on a piece, even though he has not decided that his work on it is finished and fully intends to renew his creative efforts should circumstances change. There may be artists who decide that a work is done, but who suspect that they will at some later point engage in an *akratic* episode of deletions and revisions. It is also important to note that the decision concerning a work's genetic completion is not equivalent to the artist's intentionally displaying some artefact or making it public: artists sometimes keep their completed works in the *atelier*, and others put drafts, trials, and roughcuts on display. What is crucial to genetic completion is rather the artist's second-order attitude regarding his or her own relevant past and future creative activities. The decision to display or publish a work can, of course, provide evidence that an artist has deemed something complete, but such evidence is not always indicative of the work's actual genetic completion.

That the artist's decision is a key element in a work's completion is easily illustrated by reference to the many cases where an artist's activity is interrupted and terminated involuntarily. Death, illness, and various external events and circumstances can put a stop to the creative process, leaving the work unfinished, and we deem it relevant to distinguish all such cases from those where it is the artist's judgement that settles the matter. Robert Musil's death in April 1942, we are told, interrupted his work on *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* [*The Man without Qualities*], and so it is legitimate to wonder how he might have completed the work, or even some of the unfinished parts he left behind, had he lived past the age of 62 and continued working. Analogous questions are not legitimate with regard to a romantic fragment left by Novalis, who presumably decided that he was finished with the lacunary work.

Even my rough sketch of genetic completion makes it possible to discern a number of distinct ways in which an artist's creative activities can fail to result in a completed work. So far I have touched upon three different senses of 'fragment': the first refers to what is left behind when the action of creating a work is externally interrupted; the second is the item left behind when an artist abandons a work as incomplete, as opposed to the happier case where the decision to stop working is motivated by the decision that the result is a completed work; a third kind of fragment is the romantic fragment, which satisfies the intentionalist condition of genetic completion, while imitating or depicting one of several other sorts of fragments.[53] Most typically, the romantic fragment is an imitation of a kind of fragment that has not yet been mentioned, and which can be called the fragment proper. Speaking quickly, we can say that some text or structure is a fragment proper when the item is correctly taken as a part of some previously existing yet lost whole work, that is, a work that was once genetically complete. Yet we must recognize another kind of fragment if we allow that there is a difference between cases where there actually once was a complete work, and cases where what is mistaken as a shard or part of a lost whole never in fact belonged to such whole, either because the thing was abandoned by its maker or because the creative activity was interrupted. So the decision that some text or structure is a fragment proper involves an epistemic condition and is always a matter of a special sort of hypothesis, since we must have adequate evidence that the work was completed, yet in a situation where one sort of evidence is necessarily out of reach, namely, our possession of at least one single, intact token of the artefact, text-type, or structure in question. In such a context, it is external evidence about the artist's activities and decisions that to some degree justifies the idea that some work once existed as a whole but now persists only in vestigial form. Examples of what I have called the 'fragment proper' are depicted in Lisa Milroy's striking painting of 1987, 'Fragments' (depicted on the jacket cover of this book), which is part of a series of her works that includes representations of intact and aesthetically complete

[53] For background on romantic and other ideas about '*das Fragment*', see Eberhard Ostermann, *Das Fragment: Geschichte einer ästhetischen Idee* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1991). Having worked my way through this volume I must report that I find it dubious that the rather disparate speculative ideas Ostermann surveys are plausibly construed as being about a single concept or phenomenon.

Greek vases. Although it shows us fragments from such vases, Milroy's carefully balanced picture is not a fragment in any of the senses surveyed above.

Once we have drawn a distinction between genetic and aesthetic completion, it becomes obvious that they can combine to yield four general kinds of cases. What could for the sake of convenience be called the 'classical' conception of a completed work manifests both genetic and aesthetic completion; 'romantic' fragments are genetically complete yet display diverse forms of aesthetic incompletion.[54] Then there are the various sorts of artistic structures and texts that happen to remain when the artist has stopped working on them, but in the absence of the kinds of decisions and judgements that I have associated with genetic completion. Most frequently, these items are incomplete in various formal or aesthetic ways. There are also cases where, curiously enough, a structure or text manifests aesthetic completion relative to some genre, but for one reason or another was never judged complete by its maker. Perhaps the artist would have reached such a decision, but was prevented from doing so as a result of unfortunate circumstances, but in such a case we are still left with something that is distinct from the classically complete work of art. We can say, however, that had the artist had time to reach a conclusion, he or she would have deemed the item complete, and so the artefact enjoys a kind of conditional completion.

I shall conclude this brief survey of the several senses of 'fragment' by evoking an even more curious example. In October of 1829 the Danish author Steen Steensen Blicher published the first instalment of a story entitled 'Letacq' in his monthly literary magazine *Nordlyset*.[55] The subscribers to this journal had been promised—and had already paid for—a total of twelve issues, each of which, for financial reasons, was to have exactly the same number of pages. Two months later Blicher was hurriedly trying to complete the final issue of the journal, and while he was writing the last part of the story, his typesetter informed him that there was less than half a page left. Blicher could not afford to expand this final issue of

[54] The intentional making of fragmentary works is not an exclusively European or romantic phenomenon, of course. For Zen-inspired examples, see Saito Yuriko, 'The Japanese Aesthetics of Imperfection and Insufficiency', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 55 (1997), 377–85.

[55] Knud Sørensen, *St. St. Blicher: Digter og samfundsborger* (Copenhagen: Gyldendals, 1985), 140–1.

his periodical, so he decided to end the story by having the narrator address the readers directly and inform them about this unfortunate state of affairs. The narrator says that although it pains him to do so, he must leave off; he then goes on to sketch a rationalization of this decision. Someone else can provide a conclusion later, he adds, or else the reader can think of one himself. The story, he tells us, is *et Brudstykke* or fragment, a tale with a beginning but no end. Yet this is somehow appropriate because actual life is one as well, a fragment labelled 'to be continued'. And indeed, the story was to be continued. Five years later, when Blicher included the story in one of his volumes of short stories, he added another eight pages in which he gave the tale's plot a more traditional closure. Most modern editions follow the second printed version, but they do so at the price of failing to present us with the rather unusual sort of fragment that Blicher originally created.

The Blicher anecdote has the merit of belying the idealized image of the perfected and definitive work of art determined by a simple and sovereign authorial intention: the circumstances and factors involved in art-making and its results are far messier than that image allows. In the chapters that follow, I shall investigate a number of ways in which the picture must be complicated, beginning with the collective dimensions of artistic production.

Chapter 3

AUTHORSHIP, INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE

It is sometimes complained that intentionalism in aesthetics both relies upon and promotes the individualist dogma that a genuine work of art—as opposed to products of the 'culture industry'—must be the achievement of a sovereign individual author or artist.[1] It may be rejoined, however, that a recognition of the role of intentions in art-making is in fact crucial to understanding its diverse collective forms, which range from spontaneous cooperation amongst equals to various hierarchical organizations and divisions of labour, such as the 'serial manufacture' described by David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson in their discussion of the modes of production of contemporary commercial cinema.[2] The making of a novel or film, for example, is not a matter of genuine artistic cooperation simply because more than one person is involved. Instead, the nature of individuals' contributions, and of the relations between them, makes a difference to authorship. Or so I shall contend in this chapter, the primary goal of which is to identify central aspects of both individual and collective

[1] As Jack Stillinger puts it, 'At present, critical appreciation of a masterwork requires it to be the product of a single organizing mind.' As evidence, Stillinger adduces critics' desperate efforts to downplay a wide range of cases of what he calls 'multiple authorship', an example being the significant role played by Ezra Pound in the creation of *The Waste Land*; see his *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 138.

[2] David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction*, 4th edn. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993), 30.

authorship. I hasten to point out that I do not make the mistake of thinking that authorship and art-making are the same thing, because one can author utterances that are not works of art. Nor do we usually speak of the 'author' of a painting, building, or sculpture, even if works in a wide range of other art forms, including literature, cinema, and music, are commonly said to have authors. Yet as I contend below, a general, schematic account of authorship is worth having, and can contribute to our understanding of artistic creation, given the appropriate adjustments. I take as my point of departure, then, Michel Foucault's famous question, but I shall be arguing for some rather different answers from those he seems to have had in mind when he authored his influential 1969 essay on the topic.

WHAT IS AN AUTHOR?

Ordinary usage of 'author' (and related terms in other languages) is extremely diverse. People are said to be the authors of such disparate items as letters, schemes, mischief, disasters, poems, philosophical treatises, cookbooks, someone's demise, instruction manuals, and so on. The diversity is even greater if we turn to earlier English usage, including those times when a so-called 'traditional' conception of literary authorship supposedly got constructed and reigned supreme. According to the second edition of *The Oxford English Dictionary*, both Alexander Pope and William Thackery would have allowed that one's father could also be called one's author. 'Author' could refer not only to a writer, but to that person's writings. The editor of a periodical was its author. And in another now obsolete usage, 'author' designated the person on whose authority a statement was made, such as an informant. So it is safe to say that 'author', '*auteur*' and other cognates have quite a variegated usage. It follows that if the term 'author' is to serve as a helpful descriptive or explanatory tool in a context of systematic enquiry and scholarly debate, we need a consensus on a more limited and cogent usage. The absence of such a consensus, accompanied at times by a false belief that such a consensus in fact obtains, has fuelled confusion in the theoretical literature on authorship.[3]

[3] For a sampling of that literature, see Maurice Birotti and Nicola Miller, eds., *What is an author?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993); Seán Burke, ed., *Authorship: From Plato to Postmodern: A Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995); and William Irwin, ed., *The Death and Resurrection of the Author?* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2002).

A case in point is Michel Foucault's influential essay, '*Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?*', in which he raised a number of important and difficult questions about authorship while sketching some historicist and anti-realist claims about the emergence or construction of the 'author-function' in early modern Europe.[4] Many of Foucault's readers may have been surprised to read that ordinary personal letters have writers, but not authors, for as Foucault puts it (in my translation): 'A personal letter may well be signed by someone, but it still has no author; a contract may have a guarantor, but it has no author. An anonymous text that one reads on a wall when walking down the street will have a writer, but it will not have an author.'[5] Yet in everyday French, English, and various other languages, the writer of a letter or contract is indeed its author. When a French schoolteacher finds an insulting slogan painted on the wall in the schoolyard, '*Qui en est l'auteur?*' is a question she may well ask. And her doing so would not be the reflection of some superficial linguistic fact: she has reason to want to know who has painted the slogan and to what end this gesture has been performed. Even if the slogan is just a generic insult, the specific event of the authorship of this particular inscription of the slogan can still be of interest to its victim. Why, then, does Foucault propose such a counter-intuitive stipulation, and what reasons could there be for accepting it?

It is generally agreed that the interpretation of Foucault's position on authorship, or any other major topic, for that matter, is no simple task.[6] One problem is that there are significant differences between the published version of the original lecture and the earliest English translations. The

[4] Michel Foucault, 'Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?', *Bulletin de la Société Française de la Philosophie*, 63 (July–September 1969), 73–104; reprinted in *Dits et écrits* 1954–1988, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), i.789–821. Subsequent citations are to the latter edition.

[5] Foucault, 'Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?', 798. The original reads: 'Une lettre privée peut bien avoir un signataire, elle n'a pas d'auteur; un contrat peut bien avoir un garant, il n'a pas d'auteur. Un texte anonyme que l'on lit dans la rue sur un mur aura un rédacteur, il n'aura pas un auteur.'

[6] The last time I checked the catalogues, there were hundreds of author studies on Foucault. For this there are no doubt many reasons. Foucault's complex rhetoric and shifting stances certainly give the interpreter a fascinating challenge, and many of the books on him are presented as guides and introductions designed to help students find a way into such a difficult corpus. Many of Foucault's commentators explicitly raise the question of how their own author-oriented exegetical efforts can be squared with their respect for Foucault's methodological recommendations, but I have not found any cogent responses to that very basic question.

lecture was presented in February of 1969 to an audience that included such imposing theoretical elders as Jacques Lacan and Lucien Goldman, and Foucault was relatively tentative in his claims, explaining that his exploration of authorship was motivated primarily by his effort to rectify his own unreflective use of proper names in his book, *Les Mots et les choses* (1966), published in English translation as *The Order of Things*. He says that he does not have any positive theses to present, only some avenues for future research. The earliest English translation of the lecture he later gave to audiences of scholars in the United States lacks such self-criticisms and nuances, and includes assertive passages absent from the French original, including phrases rather bluntly stating that 'the author does not precede the works' and is an 'ideological production'.[7]

To risk a few generalizations about Foucault's views on authorship in the late 1960s, Foucault probably did not think he was arbitrarily stipulating a new meaning for the word '*auteur*'; on the contrary, he suggests that his technical usage refers to what he calls the 'author-function' as constructed in early modern Europe. It is, I think, relatively uncontroversial to say that Foucault meant to draw attention to the historical emergence of some particular ways of treating texts or discourses; ways which are not, he contends, either natural or necessary. Herein resides a substantive historicist thesis to the effect that authorship, or at least one kind of authorship, depends essentially on certain sociohistorical conditions: the author-function comes into existence with the emergence of early modern institutions and changes, or ceases to exist altogether, when or if those conditions themselves are altered fundamentally. As Peter Lamarque has shown, Foucault is contradictory on this last issue, sometimes claiming that the great historical framework-shift has already occurred, but also saying that one may hope that a new discursive formation might some day come into existence.[8] It is hard to say which attribution is correct. Charity,

[7] Foucault, 'What is an Author?', in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*, ed. and trans. Josué V. Harari (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979), 141–60, at 159; and in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow, trans. Don Bouchard and Sherry Simon (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 118–19; cf. Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?', in *Dits et écrits*, 811.

[8] Peter Lamarque, 'The Death of the Author: An Analytic Autopsy', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 48 (1990), 319–31. Another insightful critical discussion of this theme is provided by Wendell V. Harris in his *Literary Meaning: Reclaiming the Study of Literature* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 27 ff.

and an emphasis on some of Foucault's implicit critiques of the *Tel Quel* group's hyperbole, support the latter interpretation.[9]

Foucault's substantive historical theses about the conditions of the emergence of the author-function in early modern Europe have been criticized quite thoroughly, even by historians who claim to have been otherwise greatly illuminated by his essay. The distinguished French historian, Roger Chartier, is an example. Having rather amply praised Foucault, he focuses on the claim that the author-function in Europe emerged at the end of the eighteenth century with the enactment of a system of strict rules regarding ownership and punishment. Chartier presents a carefully documented list of counter-examples, beginning with Petrarch and moving on to Furetière, La Croix du Maine, and Du Verdier. Chartier shows that it is rather misleading to say that authorship—or even an honorific notion of literary authorship—only emerged with the early modern institutional conditions that Foucault mentions. A similar argument has been made by Martin H. Abrams, who focuses on the example of Horace, an author who clearly falls outside the early modern social context stressed by Foucault. In light of such critiques, it seems fair to say that Foucault's substantive historical claims are incorrect: even if we are willing to follow him in restricting our scope to European history (which is quite unacceptable), authorship—not even an honorific conception of literary authorship—does not begin or end where Foucault says it does.[10]

Foucault does not offer any sustained defence of the substantive, historical claims sketched in his essay, and in fact he begins with a puzzling disclaimer to the effect that he is not going to propose a sociological and historical analysis of the author's persona. Instead, he develops a kind of epistemology of the author-function, the principal theme of which is an

[9] Perhaps an even more charitable way to read this essay is to follow Daniel T. O'Hara in speaking of it as a form of self-parody that ironically undermines its own seemingly innovative gestures; see his 'What was Foucault?', in *After Foucault: Humanistic Knowledge, Postmodern Challenges*, ed. Jonathan Arac (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 71–96. Yet it is very hard to understand the argumentative passages of the essay consistently as an elaborate parody.

[10] Roger Chartier, *L'Ordre des livres: lecteurs, auteurs, bibliothèques en Europe entre le XIVe et XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Alinéa, 1992), 35–67; Martin H. Abrams, 'What is a Humanistic Criticism?', in *The Emperor Redressed: Critiquing Critical Theory*, ed. Dwight Eddins (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1995), 13–44. For insight into Foucault's use of the notion of 'discursive strategy', see Mette Hjort, *The Strategy of Letters* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993).

anti-realist idea that authorship—or more precisely, the author-function, if there is a difference to be noted here—is not a fact about the causal history of texts or discourses, but the product of an interpretative or readerly operation or construction. This assumption merits some scrutiny, especially if we are inclined to take the opposite tack in thinking that the question of a work's authorship is best investigated by finding out who was actually responsible for its genesis. Foucault writes:

> [The author-function] is not spontaneously created as the attribution of a discourse to an individual. It results from a complex operation that constructs a certain rational being called the author. Of course, critics try to give a realistic status to this rational being, discerning, in the individual, psychological 'depth', 'creative' power, a 'project', and the originating site of writing. But in fact, what in the individual agent is designated as author (or what makes an individual an author) is but our projection, in more or less psychological terms, of the treatment to which we subject texts, the connexions that we make, the traits that we establish as pertinent, the continuities that we recognize, the exclusions that we practice. All these operations vary according to periods and types of discourse.[11]

I shall have a lot to say about various anti-realist approaches to authorship in Chapter 6, but I want to raise one objection right away.[12] If the psychology of the author is a projection and never a discovery, how can Foucault coherently claim that the psychology of readers and interpreters is any different? How can he confidently move on in the next paragraph to give us a picture of the operations that generations of readers are supposed to have performed in constructing authors or author-effects? Should not Foucault speak only of reader-*functions* or interpreter-*effects*, generated as a result of a theoretician's constructive operations? Yet here a regress lurks, for if the minds of readers are the constructed products of a theoretician's interpretative operation, who constructs what may be called the theoretician-function? Either there are 'spontaneous' cognitive processes—perhaps even genuinely rational ones—that are not the product of someone else's projection, or there is an endless regress of projections. The former option opens the way to some kind of realist conception of authorship; the

[11] Foucault, 'Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?', 800–1. My trans.

[12] For a version of this argument applied to claims of Stanley Fish, see Mele and Livingston, 'Intentions and Interpretations', *MLN*, 107 (1992), 931–49.

latter leads to an absurdity. The only way out of this dilemma would be to justify the strong asymmetry in the status of authors and readers. An honorific concept of authorship serves that end, yet it cannot plausibly be generalized. One might have recourse here to the idea that the 'author-function' is conceptually distinct from empirical authorship, and I have already presented textual evidence for this distinction in Foucault, yet the question of possible factual correlations between the two smoulders. If one accepts at least some modest form of realism about agents' psychologies, why break the symmetry by espousing a starkly anti-realist account of authors?

AUTHORSHIP AND EXPRESSION

I turn now to an exploration of an alternative notion of authorship. What I am after is a semi-technical notion of authorship that avoids at least some of the confusion and ambiguity of ordinary language without merely stipulating a usage that is theoretically self-serving or historically inaccurate. The failure to find such a notion makes theoretical debate over authorship a rather arbitrary game. Do we want to claim that discourses never have authors? Then let 'author' refer to the unmoved mover who is alone responsible for every property a discourse has, and it follows that no discourse has an author. Do we want to claim that each discourse 'always already' has multiple authors? Then let 'author' refer to anyone who plays any sort of causal role in endowing a discourse with any of its properties, and the authors of any given discourse become as numerous as the figures in a medieval master's picture of the Last Judgement. With the goal of proposing an alternative to these pointless options, I shall sketch a provisional definition of 'author' as a term of art. The goal of such an analysis is not to reproduce surface-level usage, but to elucidate a concept that is part of an important practical and theoretical framework of attribution and responsibility. It is important to insist here on the latter motivation of the concept: behind the question of authorship lies the interest we take in knowing who, on a specific occasion, has been proximally responsible for the intentional production of a given utterance. And 'it matters who is speaking' not only because we want to know whom to blame or praise, but also, to whom our response to the utterance might be addressed, should

the circumstances permit; we might also want to know what else this same author has done, and in what specific sociocultural network the utterance was situated. Ascertaining facts about actual, empirical authorship need not, then, be part of an operation designed to support individualist myths; it can, on the contrary, lead to a better understanding of the complex social network within which an author has been active, and thereby contribute to the debunking of mystifications surrounding the relevant 'author-function'. Consider, then, the following definition, which will obviously need some unpacking and amplification:

> author = (def.) an agent who intentionally makes an utterance, where the making of an utterance is an action, an intended function of which is expression or communication.

According to the proposed definition, anything that is not an agent, that is, anything that is not capable of action, cannot be an author. For an action to occur, a system's (e.g. an organism's) behaviour must be oriented and proximally caused by that system's meaningful attitudes, such as its desires, beliefs, and intentions. Thus, if a computer is not capable of genuine action because it literally has no meaningful attitudes, then it cannot be an author, even though some of the configurations on its monitor are highly meaningful for some interpreter. The same would be true of the meaningful noises made by a parrot, as long as the bird does not intend to express or convey any attitudes by means of its sentence-like squawks. Note as well that given this definition, being an author requires at least a modest measure of success in the production of an utterance, which means managing to generate some publicly observable artefact or behaviour having some expressive features.

The proposed definition is compatible with various assumptions about the nature of expression and communication, and there is no dearth of options on the market. My own inclination is to adopt Wayne A. Davis's subtle proposal. Expression, he has argued, is the performance of observable actions as the undisguised indication that the person doing the expressing occurrently has a given mental state or attitude.[13] In Davis's

[13] Wayne A. Davis, 'Expression of Emotion', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 25 (1988), 279–91; *Meaning, Expression, and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), ch. 3. The condition that Davis signals with 'undisguised' is rather subtle and may not be sufficiently motivated, but the issue need not be delved into here.

usage of the term (which diverges from other usage, such as Fred Dretske's), someone 'indicates' a mental state when there is a causal or statistical relation such that a suitably placed observer could have a reason (but not necessarily a veridical or reliable reason) to expect that person to have the state in question. Indication, then, is a matter of the production of fallible evidence. For example, someone's publishing an essay provides an indication, for persons able to read the essay, that the person holds certain beliefs. In some, but not all cases, the evidence the essay provides in this regard is reliable, and the beliefs expressed are actually held by the person who wrote the essay. Expression need not, however, be sincere, and an indication can be misleading.

To forestall some predictable misunderstandings, I should like to underscore the fact that 'expression' in the sense employed here embraces the full range of 'parasitic' utterances which speech act theory has been accused of unduly victimizing. Authors, then, always endorse attitudes as their own, even if the endorsement is insincere, misleading, or only a matter of a purely imaginative or make-believe entertaining of the thoughts expressed, as in the case of fictional utterances.[14] I return to the analysis of the fiction/non-fiction distinction, with reference to authorial attitudes, in Chapter 7. For now, consider that the author of a fiction minimally expresses the attitude 'I have imagined, and invite you to imagine, that such-and-such'. This is what you do when you tell the children a bedtime story, and somehow they understand perfectly well what is going on.

In making an utterance, an author acts on an expressive intention, the content of which is a schematic representation of some attitude(s) to be indicated, and of some means of so doing (such as saying or writing words having such-and-such a linguistic meaning, so that anyone who knows the language has evidence about the attitudes to be expressed). The content of the relevant intention can be referred to as a 'plan', and in this sense, following a plan—even a very schematic one that subsequently gets fleshed

[14] A student can be the author of an answer to an examination question even if it is common knowledge between the student and examiner that the answer proffered is not actually believed by the student, as the attitude expressed is more accurately characterized as 'knowledge that such-and-such is what counts here as the right answer to the question'.

out and altered—is a necessary (but not a sufficient) condition of all intentional action, including the authoring of any utterance. This condition should not be misconstrued as requiring authors to have a perfect mental image of the final utterance in mind, prior to the beginning of the productive process. What the condition does require is that an author have at least a schematic idea of some of the attitudes he or she aims to indicate by means of the utterance, as well as an idea of the processes by means of which this utterance is to be realized. This same condition will play an important role when we come to the question of who should and should not be counted as one of a work's joint authors.

Expression, which is a matter of indicating attitudes by means of some publicly observable behaviour or product thereof, need not be sincere or skilful for an instance of authorship to occur, but authorship does entail that the expressive utterance is an intentional action.[15] We are not, then, the authors of our dreams or of things muttered in our sleep, because these are not utterances. Communication differs from simple expression in that the agent not only intends to provide some indication of an attitude, but tries to get this attitude, as well as the relevant intentions, recognized by some audience in the right sort of way. Note that my proposed definition of authorship rules out perfectly secretive or private authorial acts, such as composing a poem in one's own head and never performing any publicly observable actions indicative of its contents. As soon as the solitary author writes something down or utters the words aloud, his or her linguistic activity becomes publicly observable 'in principle', and so satisfies the stated conditions on expression. Had Franz Kafka never published a line and had all of his manuscripts been burnt by Max Brod, Kafka would still have been the author of a number of literary works and fragments.[16]

The usage of 'author' I have identified belongs, then, to a pragmatic framework in which the term is used to pick out the agent or agents who function as the proximate cause of utterances conceived of as intentional,

[15] For the analysis of intentional action, see Alfred R. Mele and Paul K. Moser, 'Intentional Action', *Noûs*, 28 (1994), 39–68.

[16] Perhaps there is room for another way of construing the term 'authorship' (we could call it 'small "a" authorship') in which mentally thinking up or deciding on the words of a new poem is sufficient to constitute the authoring of a poem. This sort of private authorship is not my focus in what follows.

expressive actions: the author is the person who generates a given utterance, and whose attitudes are fallibly indicated by it. This definition is close, but not identical, to one published earlier by Monroe C. Beardsley, who writes that he will 'use the term "author" for anyone who intentionally produces a text: that is, a syntactically ordered sequence of words, spoken or written, in a natural language'.[17] This is not quite right, I think, first of all because one could intentionally produce a text (in a minimal, syntactical sense, which I discuss—but do not endorse—in Chapter 5) without thereby making an utterance or intentionally expressing anything. Someone who does exercises when learning to type can intentionally produce lots of texts, for example, but does not author anything as a result. Nor is the production of a *text* a necessary condition if one allows for authorship in non-verbal media, as I think we should (though of course it is not unusual to refer metaphorically to the 'text' of a film or painting. I discuss diverse ways of construing 'text' at some length in Chapter 5). A better option is to follow H. Paul Grice's lead in using 'utterance' to designate any number of different expressive or communicative actions *or products thereof*, assuming that such products (e.g. objects or artefacts) are identified with reference to the relevant features of their context of production.[18] For example, in the *Daimonji Gozan Okuribi* festival traditionally held on 16 August in Kyoto, huge fires outlining *kanji* characters blaze on the slopes of five mountains surrounding the city. The intentional burning of these rather large, fiery words constitutes an utterance following the proposed definition, whereas fires of the same size and shape accidentally caused by a stroke of lightning would not.

The broad definition of 'author' just surveyed diverges from some aspects of ordinary linguistic usage in that it allows that most people are authors a lot of the time simply by virtue of performing unremarkable expressive and communicative actions. I acknowledge that it can seem odd to think that one is an author just because one has left a banal message on a

[17] Monroe C. Beardsley, 'Intentions and Interpretations: A Fallacy Revived', in *The Aesthetic Point of View*, ed. Michael J. Wreen and Donald M. Callen (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982), 188–207, at 189.

[18] H. Paul Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989) p. 92. For an incisive overview, see Stephen Neale, 'Paul Grice and the philosophy of language', *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 15 (1992), 509–59.

colleague's answering machine. Yet the intuitive basis of this approach is simple, and I think provides good reasons for preferring it over other possible ones. It makes good sense to think that one is the author of one's utterances, even when they are a matter of banal, practical statements, because in principle one exercises a significant degree of direct control over such expressive behaviour and because one is, as the proximate causal source of that behaviour, in some sense responsible for it, and because it is indicative (in the specified sense) of some of one's attitudes. Saying something at what one deems to be an appropriate (or inappropriate) moment, as opposed to saying some other phrase or nothing at all, is normally something one does on purpose, even if this action does not result directly from an episode of careful, conscious deliberation; to perform such an action intentionally, it is necessary to activate one's linguistic and social know-how. Yet to be the author of a particular utterance of 'good morning' addressed to one's co-workers, one need not have invented the phrase or the social practice it fulfils. So 'authorship' entails no requirement of originality. This squares with the commonplace idea that authorship is compatible with at least a certain amount of plagiarism. (For example, we acknowledge that Samuel Taylor Coleridge is the author of the work *Biographia Literaria* in an overall sense even though about one fourth of the text is comprised of unacknowledged translations from works by F. H. Jacobi, F. W. J. Schelling, J. G. E. Maas, and others.)[19]

In spite of the advantages of accepting this broad notion of authorship, some critics and theorists promote a narrower definition, such as one restricted to some subset of expressive activities, and in particular, certain kinds of writings and performances. The danger with this kind of approach, however, is that such stipulations are too narrow and are open to obvious counter-examples. It seems wrong to say that ordinary, non-artistic utterances, such as office memos and e-mail messages, have no authors, or to claim that great literary works have authors while pieces of pulp fiction do not. If there is a high, honorific sense of 'author', which, like 'maestro' and '*sensei*', involves certain types of public acclaim, it is best to see this as a subset of authorship, and not as its very essence. Only a broader notion of

[19] For documentation, see Stillinger, *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius*, ch. 5.

authorship can be squared with our more general framework of attribution and responsibility.

Once we adopt a pragmatic approach to authorship, it is important to make sure that no strong version of aesthetic or hermeneutic intentionalism is built into the very definitions of 'utterance' and 'authorship'. Something's being an utterance should not be held equivalent to its having a meaning entirely determined by its author. Sometimes those who oppose this sort of intentionalism accept that this kind of strong or absolute intentionalism is entailed by authorship, and they deem it important to attack authorship as part of their opposition to that doctrine. This is, I think, one of the main appeals of Foucault's essay, since he usefully challenges absolute intentionalism and at least implicitly stresses the significance of the interpreter's role (which always comes as good news to members of the exegetical guild). It is crucial to see, however, that the cogency of such attacks depends entirely on the soundness of the prior assumption whereby authorship entails some form of overly strong intentionalist constraint on interpretation. If one recognizes that an utterance can be both intentionally produced by someone and have meanings that are not those intended by that person, then it follows that strong intentionalism is not entailed by a broad conception of authorship (I return to this topic in Chapter 6). In other words, the success condition on authorship pertains in the first instance to the utterance's being intentionally produced by someone, not to the successful expression of a set of particular, intended meanings or attitudes.[20]

Finally, it should be pointed out that the proposed elucidation of authorship entails no commitment to the dubious idea that the individual author is the sole pertinent unit of analysis in cultural and historical research. Foucault was right, then, to express worries about an historiographic approach depending massively on the names of outstanding individuals. Yet it should also be clear that on my definition, authorship has

[20] I hardly intend for this paragraph to be taken as the final word on absolute intentionalism, the proponents of which argue for a different stipulation regarding 'text', as well as a distinction between meanings and significance, where the former is necessarily intended by the author, while the latter is not. For additional comments, see Chapter 6. For a recent (and in my view unconvincing) defence of this type of account, see William Irwin, *Intentionalist Interpretation: A Philosophical Explanation and Defense* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1999).

existed as long as there have been creatures capable of the intentional production of expressive utterances, which means that no specific social formations, even less institutions, are necessary conditions of authorship, even if it is important to add that in various contexts institutional frameworks and social conventions have conditioned and influenced authorial practices in highly significant ways.[21] It is likely, for example, that genre-specific conventions weigh specific conditions on types of authorship and joint-authorship in particular sociocultural contexts.

FROM INDIVIDUAL TO COLLABORATIVE AUTHORSHIP

R. G. Collingwood assailed what he called 'aesthetic individualism' and contended that all artistic creation was collaborative—the contrast being that of a perfectly self-sufficient creative individual who generates everything—including the artistic medium, language, and art form—by himself.[22] Clearly, the latter assumption is untenable, and Collingwood was correct in his emphasis on the individual artist's debt to tradition.[23] Yet there remains a significant conceptual gap between the two extremes Collingwood marks off, and I think we want to draw a number of distinctions in this domain. More specifically, I want to argue that some item can be collectively *produced* in the sense of being the result of the efforts of more than one person, without having been collaboratively or jointly *authored*. And though Collingwood was no doubt right to reject the thesis he called 'aesthetic individualism', the falsehood of that rather far-fetched thesis does not entail that of the more reasonable conception of individual authorship sketched above. In other words, although all art-making and literary creation is collective or social in the sense that it is situated in a sociohistorical context and can only be achieved by socialized and socially dependent agents, this far-reaching social condition is distinct from a more proximate and specific type of *collaboration*, taken in the original sense of

[21] For explorations of this topic, see Martha Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi, eds., *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994).

[22] R. G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938), 316–18.

[23] For a thorough treatment of this theme, see Noël Carroll, 'Art, Creativity, and Tradition', in *The Creation of Art: New Essays in Philosophical Aesthetics*, ed. Berys Gaut and Paisley Livingston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 208–34.

'co-labouring' or working together. And what I want to call 'joint authorship' is dependent on the latter species of social action, and so can be contrasted to various sorts of cases where persons contribute to the making of an utterance or work without performing the role of co-author.

An example may be used to illustrate this first point about the specific nature of joint authorship and the shortcomings of an overly broad conception of collective making. A volume entitled *Renga* published in 1971 contains poetry written by four poets, composed in keeping with a set of rules they devised.[24] As its title clearly conveys, this work draws upon and is inspired by the centuries-long tradition of Japanese linked or *renga* poetry, which in turn arguably has its roots in even more ancient Indian and Chinese practices. The creation of a work of this sort in 1971 is clearly dependent on its makers' understanding of the *renga* tradition. Yet it is hardly helpful to say that any of the particular figures in that tradition, such as Nijō Yoshimoto (1320–88) literally collaborated in the creation of the book jointly authored by Octavio Paz, Jacques Ribaud, Edoardo Sanguineti, and Charles Tomlinson in the twentieth century. Nor does it seem appropriate to acknowledge Nijō as one of the book's co-authors, even though it would be mistaken to deny that the work taken as a whole is the product of a collaborative effort. Nor does it make much sense to speak of some ancient literary type or genre simply 'instantiating itself' in the twentieth century, as the authors' actions must figure in any plausible account of the work's genesis.

Is it possible to describe the conditions under which authorial and artistic collaboration obtain? Contemporary philosophical analyses of the nature of collective action are an invaluable resource in this context, if only because they underscore the diversity and complexity of the cases to be accounted for. It is important to note that the many contributions to this sophisticated literature do not point to anything resembling a consensus on the key issues, partly because agreeing with other philosophers is not part of the philosopher's job description, but also, and more importantly, because philosophers have worked with divergent background premisses and have focused on strikingly different paradigm cases.[25] For example,

[24] Octavio Paz, Jacques Ribaud, Edoardo Sanguineti, and Charles Thomlinson, *Renga* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971).

[25] Michael E. Bratman, *Faces of Intention: Selected Essays on Intention and Agency* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Margaret Gilbert, 'Walking Together: A Paradigmatic Social

while Margaret Gilbert and Michael E. Bratman focus, respectively, on the highly cooperative actions of taking a walk together and singing a duet, Christopher Kutz aims at devising an analysis that will cover far less intimate and reciprocal collective actions, such as participating in an election by filling out a ballot in a voting booth. Joint actions at one end of this spectrum are said to require the satisfaction of a number of complex conditions, such as the participants' common knowledge of each other's plans, mutual monitoring and a commitment to mutual support, meshing sub-plans, and more controversially, the instantiation throughout the group of an irreducibly collective intention of the form 'We intend that we perform act A.'[26] At the other extreme, the individual agents each do their own bit with the further intention of contributing to, or participating in, the possible realization of some collective goal, doing so in ways that manifest significant degrees of independence in relation to the efforts of the others.

Where is collaborative authorship to be located on the spectrum ranging from minimally participatory collective action to maximally cooperative, interactive joint action supported by mutual knowledge and reciprocal monitoring and assistance? For reasons that will become apparent below, I shall reserve the term 'joint authorship' for cases situated towards the latter extreme on the spectrum. I also think it useful to note that there are cases where more than one person contributes to the making of some product, but where there is no significant sense in which these parties have worked together on the project. In other words, the fact that more than one person's actions contribute to the making of an utterance, even if these contributions are relatively direct, does not entail that all—or even any—of these persons have jointly authored this utterance. There are, then, distinct types of collective activities or courses of events issuing in

Phenomenon', in *Philosophy of the Human Sciences. Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, xv, ed. Peter A. French, Theodore E. Uehling, Jr., and Howard K. Wettstein (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 1–14; Christopher Kutz, 'Acting Together', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 61 (2000), 1–31; and Raimo Tuomela, *The Importance of Us* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1995).

[26] See John R. Searle, 'Collective Intentions and Actions', in *Intentions in Communication*, ed. Philip R. Cohen, Jerry Morgan, and Martha E. Pollack (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 401–15. See also J. David Vellman, 'How to Share an Intention', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 57 (1997), 29–50.

utterances or works: one is joint authorship, the conditions of which are outlined below; in another sort of case, there is joint authorship, but the contributions are not all ranked equally as far as authorship is concerned; then there are cases of individual authorship where the author's work is abetted by the efforts of others whose contributions do not amount to authorship; and there are also cases of collective production in the absence of co-authorship (as in the ongoing writing and rewriting of the *Wikipedia* encyclopedia on the Internet). I do not contend, by the way, that this list is exhaustive, and acknowledge that other sorts of cases may need to be recognized.

What, more precisely, is required for more than one person's production of an utterance to be an instance of what I am calling 'joint authorship'? In familiar cases, the co-authors of a work engage in lengthy face-to-face discussions, arrive at a reciprocal understanding of their common stance on the subject they will write about, and then take turns correcting and trying to improve upon each other's drafts until they have a text or document which they agree is satisfactory, and which will be made public as the expression of their shared attitudes. Although this sort of thing may be fairly paradigmatic, I do not claim that this is the only form that joint authorship can take, as only an overly narrow conception of the latter would require us to rule that a group of neo-surrealists communicating on the Internet cannot collectively author a *cadavre exquis* or *renga*-like poem manifesting their disparate efforts. Joint authorship straddles, then, Bratman's distinction between what he calls 'full-blown shared cooperative action' and shared action that involves both cooperation and significant elements of competition.[27]

For example, two or more persons can co-author a book even though each author writes his or her chapters with the intention of decisively refuting all of the positions espoused by the co-author, it being apparent that these opposing polemical intentions cannot both be realized in a single work. Yet if such a book is to be jointly authored, that is, if it is to emerge as the product of a form of collaboration, the writers must successfully act on various harmonizing or convergent intentions with regard to the overall conception of the book they plan to write together. They intend, for

[27] Bratman, *Faces of Intention*, 107.

example, to reach some agreement with regard to the distribution of the chapters, the title of the book, etc., anticipating fully well that the project will not get off the ground if they cannot frame and act upon intentions of this sort. And the book's joint authors collectively take credit for the work as a whole, even though their respective parts stand in polemical opposition to each other: one can imagine a reviewer congratulating them for having jointly taken the initiative of making the arguments surrounding the book's theme better known. Traditional Japanese *renga* or linked poetry composition sessions also had a milder, but important competitive element, as the different poets vied for points awarded by a judge, while the proceedings were governed by intricate rules that the participants agreed upon in advance.[28] And in the case of the *cadavre exquis*, the participants must all take their places within the pre-established scheme that frames their spontaneous, individual efforts. The *Wikipedia*, however, is farther along the spectrum: here the entries have been written and freely edited by various Internet users, often at cross-purposes, the result being whatever 'survives' until the next stint of editing and rewriting is undertaken by another 'visitor' on the site 'www.wikipedia.org'.

Minimally, then, joint authors must share the aim of contributing to the making of a single utterance or work for which they will take credit (and blame); acting on that intention, they share in the making of relevant decisions and exercise control over the shape of the final product; and they must *intend* to realize their shared goal by acting in part in accordance with, and because of what Bratman calls 'meshing sub-plans'. Basically, plans mesh when they are compatible in the sense that it is possible that they could be simultaneously realized, a constraint which does not exclude significant differences between participants' plans.[29] The motivation for this meshing condition on joint authorship becomes apparent when we consider cases in which something gets collectively made in the absence of authorship, for it is precisely the meshing of plans which is lacking in salient examples of chaotic production in which there is no genuine collaboration.

[28] Donald Keene, *Seeds in the Heart: Japanese Literature from Earliest Times to the Late Sixteenth Century* (New York: Henry Holt, 1993), ch. 24. Thanks also to Ron Toby for helpful pointers about *renga*.

[29] Bratman, *Faces of Intention*, 98–103.

Consider, for example, an extreme case in which a film gets made by a number of professional film-makers who are hired and fired in succession by warring producers who themselves have no overarching scheme for the organization of these individuals' disparate contributions. One person's story idea is sent to someone else who writes a script, which then gets doctored by several other parties; in the process of shooting and editing the film, drastic changes get made by a series of directors and producers who have little or no interest in, or even awareness of, each other's plans. Results achieved by various technicians get appropriated by one team, but are then taken over by another, until finally the money runs out and the investors demand that the results be put together and marketed, a task which is then given over to other parties. The emergent product resembles a traffic jam in that many of its final features were never the object of anyone's intentions and can be attributed to no one; what is more, these features emerge from an aggregate of uncoordinated intentional actions. And most crucially, the creative activities themselves were not guided by even the most schematic, shared plan. The upshot, I contend, is an author-less product, a result of social forces and activities, no doubt, but not of collaborative or joint action. Such a case may usefully be contrasted to that of a surrealist *cadavre exquis*, where it is part of a shared plan that individual artists will in succession take over and freely make their own contributions; no such scheme obtains in the making of 'traffic jam' movies, where individual contributors are oblivious to the activities of many other participants and deeply hostile to those of others. I hope it has become obvious that my point is not that joint authorship requires totally harmonious intentions, but that the successful collaborative making of an utterance requires a significant level of compatibility in the plans on which the various agents act, as well as mutual beliefs to that effect. To illustrate this point even more schematically, if Jacques vetoes everything John writes and John vetoes everything Jacques writes, the two will never manage jointly to author the treatise they had planned to co-author. If a third party obtains the drafts from this abandoned project and publishes them, this would still not be a matter of joint authorship. Individual authorship of parts of the work could be recognized—as when someone familiar with Jacques's self-indulgent stylistic mannerism of ponderous

battology revealed which section he wrote—but the work *as a whole* would have no author (but instead an editor or compiler).

Cases where someone's intentional production of an utterance is influenced by coercion introduce additional complexities, a brief discussion of which will bring forth another motivation behind the conditions on joint authorship to be proposed here. Coercion occurs when the recognition of a credible threat leads someone to make a choice that he or she would not otherwise have made, e.g. not doing something that would otherwise have been done.[30] Coercion is, I take it, a matter of degree. An assessment of the severity of a case of coercion involves comparisons of contrasting situations and their perceived values for the coerced party; in other words, we have to look at how this party assesses what would have happened had there been no coercion, as well as the contrast between the results of compliance and the results of non-compliance. Coercion increases in severity along two dimensions, that is, with the gravity of the threatened punishment for non-compliance, and with the perceived losses entailed by compliance, as measured in contrast to what would have been the case in the absence of coercion. Given such an account of coercion, we can go on to say that coercion vitiates authorship to the extent that the coercion is severe.

Imagine, for example, that a political prisoner is coerced into making a videotaped speech in which he echoes the coercers' views on some political topic. Imagine as well that the speech is the product of their collective actions, involving various meshing sub-plans: eager to avoid torture, the prisoner collaborates actively and skilfully in the production of the video. This is not a case of joint authorship, however, because the coerced person does not participate in the making of an utterance with the further intention of expressing his attitudes; in fact, he reasonably expects that well-placed observers will not take the video as informative in this regard. Unless the act of coercion remains a perfect secret, the public dissemination of the videotaped speech does not offer even a partial or misleading indication of the coerced party's attitudes. (That someone has been coerced into producing a statement to the effect that she believes *p* does not even

[30] Robert K. Nozick, 'Coercion', in *Socratic Puzzles* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 15–44.

indicate that she believes not-*p*, as the act of making public one's heartfelt opinions could be what is coerced.) Such a case stands in contrast, then, to one where someone communicates deceptively, freely proffering an utterance indicative of attitudes which he or she does not actually have, as this still counts as expression: liars try to conceal their actual attitudes while giving unreliable indications of ones they lack.

(An actual example of a work created and distributed under coercive circumstances is the 1974 film, *General Idi Amin Dada*, the contents of which were drastically altered when Amin held 150 French citizens hostage and threatened to have them killed if Barbet Schroeder did not remove various scenes from the documentary he was making. The director complied, but distributed leaflets saying that the work had become a film by Idi Amin Dada, with Barbet Schroeder as an assistant.)

Intentionally acting on meshing sub-plans is a necessary but not a sufficient condition of co-authorship, as some of these sub-plans must also be the object of some measure of reciprocal awareness or mutual belief amongst the contributors. Each poet participating in a linked poetry scheme has good reason to believe that the other poets intend to act in accordance with the rules which govern their individual efforts, and they may even entertain some higher-order beliefs regarding those first-order mutual beliefs.[31] In the making of 'traffic jam' movies, on the other hand, there is no system of widespread mutual belief with regard to the others' plans, and the absence of such beliefs converts *de facto*, emergent meshing of efforts into a happy accident. This mutual belief condition must not be misconstrued as requiring that every participant have a detailed, mutual knowledge of every other participants' intentions and identities, as such a clause would rule out cases where those partaking of a shared authorial scheme lack some information about the identities of the other contributors and about the specific nature of their expressive intentions with regard

[31] Much ink has been spilt on the question whether some 'common knowledge' or 'mutual belief' conditions involving an infinity (or potential infinity) of levels is required in the analysis of such social phenomena as conventions. On this topic I adopt the solution advanced by Kent Bach and Robert M. Harnish, who allow that only a few higher-level beliefs are psychologically possible, and that the account should therefore be amended to require that there be no false, higher-order beliefs in the relevant group; see their *Linguistic Communication and Speech Acts* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1979), 309, n. 1.

to their respective sections or chapters. For example, contributors to an encyclopedia or reference work may not know who is writing the other entries or what exactly those persons intend to write, yet they are mutually aware that an overarching scheme organizes all of the contributors' efforts. Such meshing sub-plans have, for example, been made known to them in an editorial missive setting forth the project's primary aims and various authorial guidelines, and the participants therefore have a good idea about some of the others' relevant plans.

I indicated above that some intersection of intention with regard to expressive content was requisite to joint authorship. As the reader will also have gathered from my discussion of the example involving two rival co-authors, joint authorship allows for major disagreement, and in some cases, agreeing to disagree within a work of a given genre can satisfy the requirement on intersecting expressive intent. Genre-specific constraints of a stronger nature should also be countenanced. For example, a scholarly monograph in which no separate authorship of specific sections or chapters is indicated is usually taken as expressing the views of all of the writers, and the intention to participate in the co-authorship of such a work therefore targets a high degree of consensus.

To sum up, the following conditions on joint-authorship have emerged in my discussion. First of all, if two or more persons jointly author an utterance or work, they must intentionally generate or select the text, artefact, performance, or structure that is its publicly observable component; in so doing, they act on meshing sub-plans and exercise shared control and decision-making authority over the results; furthermore, in making the work or utterance, they together take credit for it as a whole, a condition that can be satisfied even in cases where parts of the work can be attributed to one of the individual contributors.

To restate these points a bit more formally, joint-authorship requires that two or more contributors, $A_1, \ldots, A_n$, intentionally make an utterance or work for which they take shared responsibility or credit, and they do so by acting on the following intentions:

(1) A_1 intends to contribute to the making of utterance *U* as an expression of A_1's attitudes.

(2) A_1 intends to realize (1) by acting on, and in accordance with sub-plans that mesh with those of the other contributors, including sub-plans relative to the manner in which the utterance is to be produced and to the utterance's expressive contents.

(3) A_2 intends to contribute to the making of utterance *U* as an expression of A_2's attitudes.

(4) A_2 intends to realize (3) by acting on, and in accordance with sub-plans that mesh with those of the other contributors, including sub-plans relative to the manner in which the utterance is to be produced and to the utterance's expressive contents (and so on for other contributors).

(5) $A_1, \ldots, A_n$ mutually believe that they have the attitudes (1)–(4).

Consideration of a few examples may help to illustrate the proposal and indicate how these schematic notions are meant to be applied.

1. Virginia writes her autobiography, and her husband John serves as a diligent proof-reader, correcting misspellings, typographical errors, and faulty punctuation. At times he offers some minor stylistic advice. Virginia defers to John on all these matters. Are the two joint authors?

We certainly want to say that John helped Virginia write her book, but as the work is only intended, by both John and Virginia, to be a work indicative of *her* attitudes, he merits acknowledgement for editorial assistance, but not joint authorship. Control remains hers, as does primary credit in the sense that she is to be praised or blamed for the work's properties.

2. Andy has an idea for a series of silk-screen pictures, and providing detailed descriptions to some aspiring young artists in his employment, gets them to set to work producing these images. Andy supervises their work and grants his approval to the prints he finds successful, condemning others to the waste bin. At no point does Andy draw anything or lay a finger on any of the materials, and at no point do his apprentices introduce any artistically significant innovations or changes.

Andy is the sole 'author' here, as control and credit are his throughout.

3. Tom generates hundreds of pages of verse but is unsure about his achievement. He asks his friend, Ezra, himself an accomplished and self-confident poet, for advice. The friend ferociously edits the manuscript, cutting out many lines and even entire sections, but at no point drafting

new lines. When Tom gets the heavily marked manuscript back, he defers to almost all of his friend's recommendations in preparing the last draft of the poem. Is Ezra to be credited as jointly authoring the latter?

Honest and informative editions should acknowledge the second poet's drastic editing of the manuscript, which editing contributes significantly to the artistic qualities and content of the work. Yet the fact that the work was initially published only under the first writer's name is significant as well—and not because such indications are never misleading. It may be surmised that the friend's editorial advice was provided with the intention of helping Tom to perfect 'his' poem, and not with the aim of participating in a joint publication venture expressive of both poets' artistic and other ideas. It is also significant that Tom's decision-making control over the final text remained sovereign. The author is Tom, though Ezra's help should be acknowledged.

4. At an orchestra conductor's instigation, George starts to write a jazz piano concerto. He thinks of a title, but when his brother comes up with an alternative idea, he opts for it instead. He writes a two-part piano score, but gets a talented friend to do the orchestration. They consult each other throughout, and George's advisers and helpers defer to him at every point when it is time to opt for one of several competing suggestions.

In this case there is a significant degree of co-authorship, because the orchestration is no trivial facet of this piece. Yet we also have a primary locus of expressive control, so that we might find it important to speak of joint authorship with George playing the role of 'first author'. It might be relevant to note, for example, that if the proposed orchestration had not pleased George, he would have vetoed it and sought another solution.

5. Ingmar directs a film. The idea for it was his, and he wrote the script unaided. He has chosen his crew and cast, directs the actors and supervises the shooting and editing. The many talented persons involved take many initiatives along the way and make many suggestions, but at no point is Ingmar's discretion challenged.

Ingmar has clearly not devised all of the film's artistic and expressive qualities, but his contribution and control are decisive and overarching, and he should be recognised as the sole author of a work which expresses his sensibility and attitudes so vividly. This claim is compatible, however, with recognizing the artistic contributions made by Ingmar's crew, and in particular, the actors whose performances are crucial to the work.

6. Paul and John write a song together, starting with a simple melodic line which popped into John's head one morning. Each contributes ideas for the lyrics and music, which get selected as they check on each other's assessments and arrive at mutual consent. Each of them more or less vetoes some of the other's proposals while applauding and urging the adoption of others.

This is harmonious and cooperative joint authorship, with meshing plans and shared expression. And if there were cases where both Paul and John were officially credited as co-composers whereas in fact only one of them did all of the work on the song in question, this is a misleading attribution, as the fact of their longstanding collaboration does not in itself suffice to generate a particular instance of collaboration in the absence of actual joint activity.[32]

7. Vanessa gets a group of forty-five women to assemble in a gallery space, naked except for the black high-heeled boots she has chosen for them to wear. The women are instructed to obey three rules: they must not move abruptly, contact the audience in any way, or speak. Otherwise their movements during the performance are up to them.

Vanessa is the 'first author' or primary artist of these performance pieces, even though she can hardly foresee or control some of the specific artistic effects that emerge, a fact foreseen and accepted by her, and she takes credit for the results as a whole.[33]

8. A politician hires a 'ghost' or hack writer to write a speech for him that will advocate a certain position. Unbeknownst to the hack, the politician actually disagrees with this position, but endorses it publicly for opportunistic reasons. As it turns out, the hack actually holds the opinions he has been paid to articulate, and so can wholeheartedly write the sort of speech his employer requires. It is understood from the outset, however,

[32] Thanks to Stephen Davies for raising this issue. In his *Musical Works and Performances: A Philosophical Exploration* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2001), 81–2, Davies reaches a different conclusion about this sort of case, contending that the attributions of 'composer' status may depend on conventional, social factors. I agree with Davies that the fact that two or more artists view themselves as part of a team can be important, but do not see how such attitudes can substitute for actual engagement with the relevant material.

[33] I did not make this one up. For documentation, see www.vanessabeecroft.com; and for a discussion of Vanessa Beecroft's performance works, see Karel Cisař, 'Unveiled Beauty', *Umělec*, 4/1 (2001), 42–9.

that the hack writer will not be publicly acknowledged, and that the politician will read the speech as his own, which the politician does, thereby making a public utterance. When the hack has finished writing the speech, the politician goes over it and accepts it without making any changes. Had he found the text inappropriate to the speech he wants to make, he would have asked for changes. Who, then, is the author of the speech?

Although the politician and his helper both intend to contribute to the making of an utterance, and both act on some shared sub-plans, in reading the speech the politician publicly expresses, albeit insincerely, his own attitudes, not those of the secret helper. Of course the 'text' of the speech (where the latter is the specific verbal formulation) is created by the hack, and not the politician; but authorship of the speech, identified as a specific utterance or speech act performed in public to political ends, is the politician's, but not the hack's, so there is no joint authorship of the latter. The clause the hack does not satisfy is (1). Decision-making control and the taking of credit and responsibility fall on the side of the politician, while the hack effectively produces the text in keeping with the politician's initial instructions.[34] Of course to understand this episode fully we must also know that the politician should get no credit for any of the specific verbal formulations the hack has come up with.

9. A lazy student pays another student to write a paper for him.[35] They do not collaborate on the actual drafting of the text; all the lazy student provides is the required topic and payment. The lazy student does, however, intentionally present the essay to the teacher as expressing his attitudes about the topic.

Here we want to say, of course, that the lazy student is guilty of plagiarism, that is, of passing himself off as the author of an essay he did not write, and this in a context where actually generating the prose is essential to the exercise. In fact the student has not authored the paper since he has not participated in its writing at all. He has not intentionally made an utterance, but did intentionally have one made, while concealing

[34] As an anonymous reader suggests, this example could be altered so as to have the hack's contributions amount to a form of collaboration.

[35] I thank an anonymous reader for asking how my analysis of authorship would be applied to such a case.

this fact. The same would be true of an athlete who publishes an *autobiography* that was secretly written by a ghost writer.

It may be helpful to conclude this section by pointing out that the conception of joint authorship sketched here adopts what Berys Gaut labels the 'sufficient control' and 'restriction' strategies.[36] These strategies or conditions are implicit in my definition of individual authorship, since I require of the authorship of an utterance that the utterance be made intentionally (implying a measure of control) and with expressive aims (implying a restriction with regard to ends). Gaut usefully coined these terms in the context of his critique of prevalent efforts to employ these and other strategies to defend the idea that many or even all films have a single *auteur*, whereas Gaut contends that multiple authorship is widespread in the production of cinematic works of art. It may be noted, however, that Gaut's proposed manner of determining who is to be counted amongst a work's multiple authors itself implicitly relies on the application of the two strategies, as he contends that the artist's contribution must be non-accidental (which requires sufficient control) and must contribute something of artistic relevance (a restriction on the nature of the contribution). I agree with Gaut that the term 'multiple authorship' can usefully direct attention away from the paradigm of a sovereign individual artist. Yet I also contend that 'multiple authorship' has the disadvantage of being ambiguous between cases where a work as a whole has two or more joint authors, and cases where multiple parties' contributions, while significant, do not count as authorship of the whole, either because there was predominant, single or joint authorship in which these participants were not included, or because there was no authorship at all of the work taken as a whole. Gaut would probably classify case number 4 above as an instance of multiple authorship, and though I would be quick to agree that George's helpers made contributions that ended up in the final work, I would not allow that this is an instance of joint authorship because of the degree to which George exercises decisive control over the creative process and takes credit for the work. Similarly, the women who display themselves in case 7 freely contribute to the shape of the performance, but as the overarching expressive

[36] See Berys Gaut, 'Film Authorship and Collaboration', in *Film Theory and Philosophy*, ed. Richard Allen and Murray Smith (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 149–72.

scheme is to be credited as Vanessa's, and not theirs, this does not classify as an instance of joint authorship in my view, and it seems misleading to call these *figurantes* 'authors' of the piece. Yet given what I have said above about the sloppy semantics of 'author' and its cognates, my disagreement with Gaut on this point is largely verbal; I agree, for example, that appreciation of a performer's artistic contribution to a film can be at least as crucial as appreciation of the director's achievement. Whereas Gaut and I readily agree on the classification of case 6, he would classify 5 as an instance of multiple authorship, whereas I want to emphasize the extent to which Ingmar has exercised individual authorship control and expressivity, which is at odds, I contend, with the idea that the actors and others jointly authored the film. More importantly, Gaut and I agree that a realist conception of authorship is to be preferred, and we acknowledge that works can have more than one author, and in some cases, no author at all, though we disagree as to the conditions under which the latter option occurs.

FROM AUTHORSHIP TO ART-MAKING

As indicated above, the analysis of authorship defended here covers a broad variety of cases, including artistic and non-artistic ones. As Gaut and others point out, it is implausible to assume that all works of art must have expressive qualities, at least on the assumption that some aesthetic and artistic qualities, such as aesthetic unity, elegance, and harmony, do not express mental attitudes. Given that expression plays a central role in my analysis of authorship, the latter would, then, be inadequate as an account of attributions in the artistic domain. The solution to this problem is at once very simple and difficult, for reasons I shall now explain.

The solution is simple in that all that must be done is to replace the emphasis on the expression of attitudes by means of utterances or works with an emphasis on the intentional creation of works having artistically relevant qualities. Thus the creator of art is someone who intentionally makes a work of art that possesses artistically relevant qualities, where the intention is that the work is the maker's own doing. In cases of joint art-making, the latter, overarching goal must be shared and must provide the object of mutual belief, just as the contributors' plans subordinate to that

end must mesh sufficiently. In this manner, analyses analogous to the ones discussed above can be set forth, *mutatis mutandis*.

Yet this proposal is at the same time difficult to work out in theoretical detail because we lack any informative or detailed analysis of the distinction between artistically relevant and irrelevant qualities. It is easy enough to identify paradigmatic artistic qualities, and there is even some agreement with regard to categories or groups thereof, which is already sufficient for many purposes. For example, in a range of central cases, artists intend to make things having aesthetic value, in the sense of items that occasion intrinsically valuable experiences under the right circumstances.[37] Artists also seek to exhibit skill in the manipulation of a range of expressive media; artists also use various media to express attitudes; and so on. Yet a sharp analysis of a general artistic/non-artistic contrast is another matter, which is not surprising in light of perpetual controversy surrounding the definition of (fine) art—which includes controversy, not only over various specific proposals, but over the very idea that a definition is possible or desirable. To illustrate this difficulty, though it seems plausible enough to observe that the property of being poisonous is not an artistic one, some avant-garde performance artist in Beijing may someday provide a counter-example, and if one's definition of art is broad enough to embrace popular spectacles, artists in Thailand have already done so by intentionally incorporating the bites of venomous insects into their performances. Though it may be tempting to say that artistic qualities are those qualities works of art have *qua* works of art, it should be recognized that this '*qua*' locution presupposes the very contrast it is used to illuminate. Yet as indicated above, this familiar theoretical problem does not stand in the way of distinctions between individual, joint, and cooperative art-making in a range of central cases, so the proposed approach to the attribution remains viable in a suitably modest sense.

[37] C. I. Lewis, *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation* (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1946), 388–92; for commentary, see my 'C. I. Lewis and the outlines of aesthetic experience', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 44 (2004), 378–92. For a sophisticated, contemporary approach, see Gary Iseminger, *The Aesthetic Function of Art* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004).

Chapter 4

INTENTIONS AND *OEUVRES*

People often take an interest in more than one work by a single artist or author, attending to various kinds of relations between this person's different artistic productions, as well as to the place of a particular work, or group of works, within the life-work or *oeuvre* as a whole, as when certain pieces are classified as juvenilia.[1] Sometimes critics ask questions about the quality and significance of an artist's overall achievement, attempting to appreciate an entire corpus; on other occasions critics investigate the contours of an artist's or author's ongoing development. Some life-works are said to be cleaved by a single *coupure*, turning point, or conversion, while others manifest multiple metamorphoses, or would appear to be continuous or even repetitious.

These are, I trust, truisms about the interpretation and appreciation of art. When we turn to some post-structuralist theories, however, it seems that the practice of attempting to interpret and evaluate works in terms of their place within the writer's *oeuvre complet* can have little or no legitimacy, since advocates of impersonal notions of discourse and textuality imply that there is no good reason to 'privilege' the boundary and internal structure of the individual artist's or writer's corpus. Is the idea of the

[1] I use the terms '*oeuvre*' and 'life-work' interchangeably. In French '*oeuvre*' is ambiguous between an individual work or works (*une oeuvre*, *les oeuvres complètes*) and a single life-work (*un oeuvre*, as in *l'oeuvre complet*).

life-work, and of relations between works and the life-work to which they belong, theoretically uninteresting, or worse, unjustifiable?[2]

It is quite reasonable to express reservations about some schematic and global treatments of life-works. Sometimes people make misleading claims about large and complex corpuses, rigidly applying simple, developmental schemes. It is also wrong to espouse a 'great man' view of history, and an exclusive focus on the life and works of 'the creative personality' can obscure other historical patterns and factors from view. Economic factors and social norms can place so many constraints on an individual's real and perceived options that it is grossly misleading to focus on that person's decision-making process taken in isolation. For example, we cannot properly understand the story of Paul Gauguin's artistic career, and ask whether his was a case of so-called 'admirable immorality', if we ignore the social conditions that made it so very difficult for him to support a family on his earnings as an artist.

Yet the life-work topic does not entail such errors, and there are some worthwhile lines of enquiry that can be explored only when we take an interest in relations between works and life-works. Or so I shall try to show in this chapter. My point of departure is Jerrold Levinson's insightful discussion of what he calls 'intra-oeuvral' relations. Although I am in agreement with many of Levinson's groundbreaking remarks, I want to show how a perspective on the dynamic intentions of temporally situated agents can reveal additional patterns of critical interest.

LEVINSON AND RETROACTIVISM

Levinson's discussion of work/life-work relations is situated within his articulation and defence of a view he calls 'traditional historicism'.[3]

[2] For an influential example, see Roland Barthes, 'Texte (théorie du)' [1973], in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Eric Marty (Paris: Seuil, 1994), ii.167–9, trans. Ian McLeod, 'Theory of the Text', in *Untying the Text: A Poststructuralist Reader*, ed. Robert Young (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 31–47. For a surprising recent affirmation of the 'old-fashioned' concept of '*oeuvre*', see Jacques Derrida and Maurizio Ferraris, *A Taste for the Secret*, ed. Giacomo Donis and David Webb, trans. Giacomo Donis (London: Polity, 2001), 14–15.

[3] See Jerrold Levinson, *The Pleasures of Aesthetics: Philosophical Essays* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 'Work and Oeuvre', ch. 13. I refer the reader to Levinson's essays for an extensive critique of the radical historicist inclination.

Levinson sensibly rejects the 'radical historicist' idea that a work's *artistic content* (as opposed, say, to its more general significance) can change as a result of the subsequent creation of new works by other artists. Our knowledge of the work of James Joyce may play the heuristic role of helping us *discover* aspects of the prose of Herman Melville, but the latter could not *acquire* any new artistic content when James Joyce published *Ulysses* in 1922. An important premiss here is the denial of retroactive causation in the determination of a work's artistic content and features: for the non-prophetic historian, no proleptic property or meaning belongs to an event or action at the time of its occurrence, and an event, once past, cannot acquire new non-epistemic properties (for the definition of 'proleptic', see footnote).[4] Subsequent events can make it possible for established features of an artistic achievement to become known for the first time, which means that *epistemic*, relational properties, unlike other sorts of properties, can be acquired *post hoc*. Given Levinson's ontology of art, according to which a work of art is a structure (or structural type) *as indicated* by some artist(s) within a specific art-historical context, the ban on proleptic properties applies to a work's artistic content, which is taken to be fully determined within the context of creation or 'indication'.[5]

Levinson contends that in the case of some relations between works falling within a single author's *oeuvre* we should, however, countenance certain forms of 'retroactivism'. Levinson labels a modest variety of the latter 'backward retroactivism', which is a matter of our taking an interest in how the artistic content of a later work is affected by its interpretative juxtaposition to an earlier work *by the same artist*, where the earlier work is interpreted in light of the advent of the later work. For example, if we

[4] I use the term 'prolepsis' (Gk. 'anticipation' and 'preconception') to refer to the predication of the existence of some property at a time when that property's instantiation or existence is dependent on some event or state of affairs that does not yet obtain. If x occurs at t_1 and y occurs at t_2, we can say at t_2 that x prefigured y; but at t_1, y has not yet happened, and x does not have the property of prefiguring y. Levinson does not discuss the metaphysical assumptions (about temporality and determinism) subtending this classification of properties, and I shall follow his lead in this respect. No doubt there is a possible metaphysics according to which the distinction between proleptic and non-proleptic properties is spurious. Similarly, metaphysical issues about personal identity could be raised in relation to the life-work topic, but I shall not pursue them here. For background, see Raymond Martin, *Self-Concern: An Experiential Approach to What Matters in Survival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[5] For Levinson's ontology of art, see the papers gathered in Part III of *The Pleasures of Aesthetics*.

think of Molière's farce, *Le Medecin malgré lui* [*The Doctor in Spite of Himself*] (1666) as a source for the moribund author's comic masterpiece, *Le Malade Imaginaire* [*The Hypochondriac*] (1673) and then focus on the special features such a later work has in relation to an early one so conceived, this is an instance of backward retroactivism.[6] But the point of such a critical operation is neither to say that the early work 'anticipated' the later one, nor to contend that the later work somehow changed the earlier one. The more virulent or extreme variety of retroactivism, which may be thought to entail proleptic properties and hence a break with traditional historicism, is what Levinson dubs 'forward retroactivism', in which the features of an earlier work *are* inflected and made determinate by some later work by the same artist or author. For example, if we think of the early farce as a prefiguration or anticipation of themes to be explored more fully in *Le Malade Imaginaire*, we are focusing on a 'forward retroactive' relation.

It may be legitimate to distinguish between both sorts of 'retroactive' relations identified by Levinson and other more straightforwardly retrospective relations. In the latter, a work is discovered to have certain features relative to an earlier work in the same corpus, where this earlier work is *not* seen differently in light of the later work. For example, one need not interpret Molière's early farces in terms of his later plays in order to understand that the tragedy *Dom Garcie de Navarre* (1661) was a generic departure from the dramatist's earlier works; this is a retrospective relation, but not one involving the relations Levinson labels as backward or forward retroactivism. The analysis of such common retrospective relations, which is an important facet of life-work appreciation, poses no problems for the framework of traditional historicism: one reads later works in light of earlier ones, and not vice versa. An example is Philip Kolb's discussion of Proust's *Recherche* in light of the drafts for the unfinished *Jean Santeuil*.[7]

To recapitulate, three different kinds of work/life-work relations may be schematically described as follows: given works W_1 and W_2 in a life-work, where W_1 is completed (significantly) earlier than W_2:

[6] Ibid., 243.

[7] See Luc Fraisse, 'Philip Kolb behind the Scenes of the Recherche', in *Proust in Perspective: Visions and Revisions*, ed. Armine Kotin Mortimer and Katherine Kolb (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 19–31.

(1) In a *retrospective* relation, W_2 merely possesses certain artistic features relative to W_1 (e.g. W_2 is the author's first attempt at tragedy).
(2) In *backward retroactivism*, the artistic content of W_2 bears certain features relative to W_1, where such features in turn depend on W_1's standing in a particular relation to W_2 (e.g. W_2 is the culmination point of a development that began in W_1).
(3) In *forward retroactivism*, the artistic content of W_1 bears certain features relative to W_2 (e.g. W_1 contains an early and incomplete expression of a theme to be developed in W_2).

Presumably, only the third type of relation can reasonably be taken as threatening traditional historicism, since in backward retroactivism, the inflection of the earlier work by the later may be purely a matter of an epistemic relation or appreciative focus, the point being that our knowledge of a later work helps us notice features the earlier work already had at the time of its completion. The same cannot, however, be said of forward retroactivism, as it is a matter of features the earlier work can have only in relation to a work that did not yet exist when those features were historically determined.

Levinson nonetheless contends that forward retroactivism may be held to function without violating his strictures against radical historicism's proleptic ontologizing. He couches his thesis as follows:

> [T]he totality of an artist's pieces—the oeuvre—constitutes his or her *work*, in a broad sense, and this work can, at least in many cases, be seen as, or as the upshot of, *a single artistic act*. Such an act, which might even stretch over eighty-some years, is one of the artist, in his or her own unique historical context, saying, expressing, or accomplishing something as a whole. Where each piece is an element or phrase in an overarching artistic act—say, one of implicitly articulating a worldview—the spirit of the principle of not interpreting present work in terms of future work, central to traditional historicism, is thus not really violated when we in part understand earlier works in light of later ones by the same artist, because both belong to a *larger* artistic endeavor of the artist involved.[8]

In his elucidation and defence of these claims, Levinson identifies two different ways in which a moderate retroactivism may be articulated and

[8] Levinson, *Pleasures*, 245.

reconciled with traditional historicism. The first is an intentionalist tack: what makes the temporally distinct works part of a single artistic project or utterance is the artist's second-order intention to the effect that members of an audience should view an earlier work in light of later ones. This line of thought is illustrated by means of an example from ordinary conversation, where an utterance of 'He's coming today . . . or he said he was' can be read as beginning with a flat-out prediction which is then decisively reframed as a second-hand report. Clearly, the speaker wants the earlier words to be interpreted in light of the end of the phrase. By analogy, our respect for an artist's overarching intention can effectively instruct us to take note of relations between early and later works within an *oeuvre*. The key thought here is that since this intention was framed at a time prior to or during the creation of the earlier work, the property, 'having meaning to be determined in relation to later works by the same author', is not proleptic and so does not violate traditional historicism.

There are, I think, serious problems with this contention, but before I discuss some of them I should point out that Levinson goes on to say that reference to such second-order intentions may not be necessary to warrant retroactivism in any case. His appeal to intentions does, however, merit discussion in our context.

First of all, there are questions that arise with regard to the content of the putative second-order intentions. Levinson seems to describe these intentions as the artist's instructions to some audience concerning the way they are supposed to interpret a work: roughly, then, in making W_1, the artist intends that some audience interpret that work in such-and-such a way. Yet as I indicated in Chapter 1, plausible doubts may be raised with regard to the idea that we simply intend that someone else do something; instead, we do something with the intention that this action of ours have various results, one of which may be someone else performing actions of a certain type—perhaps because of their recognition of this intention. Artists often make works with the goal of having these works subsequently be interpreted in certain ways by certain audiences, and presumably a relevant subset of those ways would be in keeping with the work's actual content or meaning, the determination of which does not depend upon any actual events in the history of the work's reception. If the work's meaning is constituted by the artist's creative action in a context, it need not depend

on any subsequent uptake by members of the actual audience. One way, then, of schematically identifying the utterance-meaning determinative intention in question would be as follows:

> The artist creates W_1 with the further intention of subsequently making additional work(s) $W_2, \ldots W_n$, to which W_1 will be related in such a manner that the meanings of W_1 will be inflected by the meanings of these subsequent works. The audience is thereby invited to discover these semantic facts as they are progressively determined through the creation of the subsequent works.

Does it follow from such a metasemantic intention that W_1 actually has non-proleptic, first-order semantic properties relative to some subsequent W_n? The most one could say is that at the time of its completion, W_1 has a determin*able* meaning relative to the non-existent future work. What is more, the second-order intention is, like all intentions, fallible, and its realization depends on the artist's successful completion of works which indeed resonate semantically with the prior work in the right sort of way. (And with regard to the latter point, Levinson downplays or rules out radical discontinuities: 'The type of content change typically encountered when setting a work in its oeuvral context is on the order of refinement, disambiguation, or shift of emphasis rather than, say, reversal or negation.'[9] And in the same context, Levinson adds that reading backwards for content cannot be justified in cases where an artist's career breaks into distinct stages marked off by significant discontinuities or conversions.)

Another problem is simply the empirical one that prospective, second-order intentions do not always obtain at the time of the making of W_1 and so do not always warrant interpretations attuned to intra-*oeuvral* relations that emerge in its wake. For example, in making an early farce using the traditional Italian mask of *dottore*, Poquelin may not have framed the intention that spectators of his later works should one day reinterpret the farce as a prefiguration of his subsequent characterizations of doctors. Perhaps it was his burning ambition to leave comedy behind and establish himself as a tragedian capable of rivalling both Corneille and Racine. Were this the case, he could hardly have worked with a second-order intention

[9] Ibid., 247.

of the sort Levinson describes. Levinson appears willing to forestall this problem by deciding that it is not the author's actual intentions that are in question in any case, but an optimal hypothesis about utterance meaning, as opposed to utterer's meaning.[10] Yet this move has the consequence of making the concept of the overarching utterance analytically prior to that of actual artistic intention, in which case the latter cannot provide an independent warrant for the decision to treat two distinct works as parts of a single *coherent* utterance or artistic act. And as Levinson points out, there are cases where a *coupure* or conversion sunders an artist's corpus, the result being that the latter is not plausibly construed as a single endeavour or artistic act bound together by second-order intentions.

As I indicated above, Levinson drops the thesis that only second-order intentions must warrant critical interest in life-work relations: two or more works by the same artist can be aptly apprehended as parts of a larger utterance without it being supposed that the artist actually intended for them to be understood in this manner. Now, just how actions and utterances are to be individuated is no trivial matter, yet I think it relatively uncontroversial to assume that we need a finer-grained perspective than one in which two acts performed years apart are parts of 'a single artistic act' simply because they are thematically or expressively 'similar' and performed by the same agent. It seems incorrect, for example, to contend that *Dom Garcie de Navarre* and a play written and performed twelve years later, such as *Le Malade Imaginaire*, actually are parts of a single utterance, that is, a single expressive or communicative action performed by a particular agent (or group of agents).

One way in which this facet of Levinson's proposal could be defended would be to take it as part of a fictionalist interpretative strategy: we look at an artist's diverse works as if they constituted the elements of a single utterance, which places the relevant relations within an imaginary frame. It is not clear to me, by the way, that this is the line Levinson wants to take, though a few of his formulations could be taken in this spirit. Such a fictionalist interpretative strategy has, in any case, some unattractive consequences, some of which will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 6. Critical discourse about life-work relations splits into two categories:

[10] Ibid., 246.

earnest assertions about artistic content that was historically actual, and 'as if' imaginings about related, yet unreal life-work relations. It is hard to see how a critical appreciation or interpretation divided in this manner is to be integrated into a coherent and workable whole. Nor is it especially clear what is and is not involved in thinking that complex works produced years apart are part of 'a single utterance', especially with regard to the attribution of intentions. If we imagine that the works in a life-work belong to a single, intentional utterance, do we apprehend the life-work from the end as a single, finished accomplishment, where all work-to-work relations are part of a deliberate scheme governed by one overarching second-order intention? This violates the Kierkegaard dictum about living life facing forwards but only understanding it facing backwards. Must we imagine a young author having a supernatural foresight with regard to his own future artistic output and personal trajectory? Such a fictionalist approach does not correspond to the interest we take in the actual difference between intended and unintended groupings and relations. And how can we cogently imagine plays written and performed by an aspiring young comedian and a moribund theatricalist to be parts of 'the same utterance' or a single artistic act?

To illustrate this problem, consider an example which at first glance would appear to support the proposal that we might appreciatively engage with a series of works as the fruits of a single, intentional scheme. As is well known, Émile Zola settled on the plan of writing a long series of interrelated novels—'*une grande machine*' (as he put it), and more specifically, a novelistic depiction of the natural and social history of a family in the Second Empire.[11] This grandiose plan, which was framed with Balzac in mind, motivated and guided an enormous amount of creative activity. Zola's commitment to his naturalist scheme had various positive functions in his authorship. Having settled on the goal of writing a long series of interrelated novels, Zola could channel and organize his efforts. For example, seeing that his work on *Nana* (1880) was soon to be completed, he knew he should begin to develop some ideas for the next book. What he

[11] For background, see Henri Mittérand, *Zola et le naturalisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1986), and Émile Zola, *Les Rougon-Macquart*, 5 vols., ed. Henri Mittérand (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1964).

knew about his intentions concerning the overall design of the series helped constrain and guide his thinking about possible topics, themes, and settings. Yet it is also clear that many of Zola's attitudes and intentions changed as *Les Rougon-Macquart* emerged over the years. For example, the initial idea was to write ten novels for the series, but he went on to complete twenty; in *La faute de l'Abbé Mouret* [*Abbé Mouret's Sin*] (1875), Zola broke somewhat with his programme and did not explicitly situate the story in the same historical and political setting.[12] Although interpreters are free to read the latter features of the novel as if no change of mind lay behind them, such a reading dulls one's uptake of significant artistic events and of distinctive features of both the earlier and later works.

To sum up, although artists and authors often frame and act on second-order intentions that one or more works are to be created and appreciated as parts of a larger whole, such intentions may be neither necessary nor sufficient to the creation of artistically meaningful relations between works within a life-work. They are not sufficient if there are cases where such intentions, though acted upon, fail to be realized in the works constitutive of the *oeuvre*; and they are not necessary, not because appreciators always fill in as if intentions in their factual absence, but because artistically significant life-work relations need not all be intended. Yet intentions are invariably relevant to work/life-work relations, and it can sometimes make a difference whether a feature of a life-work was intentionally created or not. What is more, it is possible that certain life-work relations can be discovered only when we adopt a genetic perspective that embraces both the retrospective and prospective attitudes informing an artist's creative activities.

To motivate this claim, we may recall what in Chapter 2 was called the 'Kubla Khan' model of artistic creation: a literary work (or series of works) is something that happens in a moment, a dreamlike vision that an author then transcribes. This image of creativity as an unintended event is contradicted by the more familiar scenario in which momentary bursts of inspiration are preceded and followed by periods of hard, deliberate work, including such actions as thinking about and deciding on what to write at some later point in time; building, revising, and rebuilding sentences; rereading previously written parts of a work; and trying to form a reliable

[12] Henri Guillemin, *Présentation des Rougon-Macquart* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), 74.

judgement about the quality of what has been written. Crucial to this sort of work is the establishing, maintenance, and revision of standing policies and intentions, such as the policy of working on one's next novel in the morning and keeping a diary after tea, or the policy of writing one's stories first in English and then in Danish.

Here we return to the Bratmanian issues broached in Chapter 2 with regard to the coordinative functions of intentions within the individual artist's ongoing activities. With reference to Virginia Woolf's diaries, I suggested that plans and policies can play a crucial role in enabling a writer to organize her efforts across time. In my next section I shall explore this topic in a bit more detail with an eye to identifying some of the prospective and retrospective relations characteristic of a life-work.

THE GENESIS OF LIFE-WORK RELATIONS

In a minimal and schematic version, an author's planning may take the following form: at one moment in time, the author intends to write one work at some future point, and another, related work at some point subsequent to that. This initial, future-directed intention provides a schematic representation of some of the intended artistic relations between the two works (including, for example, the kinds of relations identified above as retrospective and retroactive ones). Yet plans of this sort are not so irrevocable or detailed as to make the subsequent history of the life-work's creation a simple unfolding of a preconceived scheme. An author not only forms an intention to write a work, or series of works; the author also reconsiders or fails to reconsider, this prior intention; such an intention can either be revised, or maintained as an updated intention; it may then be either executed or abandoned. And this and any other intention on which the writer acts can misfire or be successfully realized.

Suppose that a particular retroactive relation holds between two works (or features thereof) in a corpus. Given the different possible episodes of planning, deliberation, and action just evoked, we may distinguish between a number of significantly different courses of events that could have led to the situation where the works display this artistic relation. Consider, for example, the following kinds of cases:

(1) The relation was initially intended by the author, who subsequently reconsidered, maintained, and acted on it, successfully realizing the intended relation between the different works.
(2) The relation was not initially planned by the author, but was intended at a later time, e.g. after the completion of the first work, but prior to the making of the second one; the newly formed intention did, however, orient the making of the second work and was successfully executed.
(3) The relation was initially planned by the author, who subsequently abandoned this intention and replaced it with another one; however, in acting on the latter, the artist was unsuccessful, and unintentionally created two works bearing the initially intended relation.
(4) The retrospective relation in question was not intended by the artist at any point in the creative process, but should still be interpreted as part of the work's artistic contents.

I shall now briefly sketch some examples intended to illustrate the artistic significance of these different scenarios (readers who disagree with my treatment of specific examples are invited to think of more appropriate ones; readers who do not think there are any such cases are invited to explain why that would be the case).

(1) In March of 1965, Mishima Yukio (the pen name of Hiraoka Kimitake) announced to the press that he was about to start writing a work that would take him six years to write and that would comprise a total of 3,000 pages. The work would be a cycle of four novels bearing the global title of *The Sea of Fertility* [*Hōjō no umi* in romanized Japanese]. Mishima went on to act on this stated intention, and after five years the completed tetralogy added up to some 2,800 pages.[13] The first novel, *Spring Snow* [*Haru no yuki*], was published in serialized form from September 1965 to January 1967, and was followed by *Runaway Horses* [*Honba*], serialized from February 1967 to August 1968, *The Temple of Dawn* [*Akatsuki no tera*], serialized September 1968 to April 1970, and *The Decay of the Angel* [*Tennin gosui*], the serialization of which began

[13] Mishima Yukio, *Spring Snow*, trans. Michael Gallagher (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972); *Runaway Horses*, trans. Michael Gallagher (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973); *The Temple of Dawn*, trans. E. Dale Saunders and Cecilia Segawa Seigle (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973); and *The Decay of the Angel*, trans. Edward G. Seidensticker (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974).

in July 1970 and continued after the author's suicide in November that same year.[14] Here the intention that the novels were to be read in a particular order and in relation to each other was explicit and programmatic. It is clear that Mishima knew very well when he wrote the first novel in his tetralogy that he meant to write four interlaced books. Finishing his tetralogy and killing himself, Mishima intended for the remaining instalments of the last novel to be published posthumously, and this intention was realized in the months following his death. As a result of his successful planning, themes and characterizations sketched in the first novel are developed as we move along in the series. For example, the central character's rational arguments against doctrines of reincarnation in the first novel must be re-evaluated in light of that figure's acceptance and detailed investigation of such beliefs in the subsequent volumes; one of his ways of detecting a specific reincarnation in the second and third novels is cast in a different light by the subsequent failure of this method in the fourth volume; and so on.

No doubt Mishima had many occasions to ponder the wisdom of his initial scheme, and it is most likely that many aspects of the later novels were not foreseen when the initial plan was framed. Yet at least some of the retrospective relations between later and earlier features of the novels—such as the guiding, ever-widening thread of the reincarnation motif—were included in the initial conception and then subsequently realized. Whatever flaws we may find in the tetralogy, we must credit Mishima with his rigorous planning and execution of a large-scale scheme, a feat that many great novelists have attempted unsuccessfully.

(2) When Ingmar Bergman wrote and directed *Såsom in en spegel* [*Through a Glass Darkly*] (which premiered in Sweden in 1961), he did not yet plan to

[14] See John Nathan, *Mishima: A Biography* (Tokyo: Charles Tuttle, 1974), esp. 201–2, 265–6. Nathan comments on Mishima's life-long tendency to set and keep precise deadlines for the completion of his writerly projects; 108–9. Here is a case where the death of the author has real implications for our reading of the texts: the fact that the author committed *seppuku* around three months after he had completed the last novel in the series has relevance for our understanding of his treatment of the young protagonist's fascination with ritual suicide in the second novel, which Mishima had completed over three years earlier. For valuable background and commentary on Mishima's suicide and its relationship to his authorship, see Alan Wolfe, *Suicidal Narrative in Modern Japan: The Case of Dazai Osamu* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), esp. 40–7.

make it the first work in a trilogy. But as work on his subsequent film progressed, he conceived of particular thematic relations between *Through a Glass Darkly* and his next two films, and retroactively included it in a trilogy along with *Nattvardsgästerna* [*Winter Light*] (1962) and *Tystnaden* [*The Silence*] (1963). Various relations he identifies are successfully expressed in this trilogy.[15] Most importantly, the 'God is love' theme which provides the positive resolution of *Through a Glass Darkly*, is explicitly challenged with the next two works, so that in this respect the trilogy takes the form of a negative dialectic, the movements of which Bergman himself had not foreseen when he made the first work in the series.

(3) After she had completed *To the Lighthouse* (1927), Virginia Woolf recorded in her diary that she was exhausted and had decided to postpone her previously planned attempt at another major experimental novel ('The Moths'—ideas for which would one day be recruited for *The Waves*). Instead, she had an idea for a fantasy: 'I feel the need for an escapade after these serious poetic experimental books . . . I want to kick up my heels and be off', she wrote in her diary, later adding that the book was 'all a joke', 'a "writer's holiday".[16] The escapade was to become *Orlando: A Biography* (1928), her first major commercial success and arguably one of her most important works. In spite of Woolf's stated intention that this work would be a radical departure from her serious poetic experiments, the stylistic and thematic explorations (involving, for example, history, gender, and personal identity) that she realized in *Orlando* make it a genuine continuation of the innovative and experimental vein that runs from *Jacob's Room* (1922) to *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) and *To the Lighthouse*. *Orlando* stands in many artistically significant retroactive relations to the earlier works, including some that had been initially planned, subsequently postponed, and then realized. Seeing these aspects of the work in this temporal sequence allows us to appreciate it as a case of creative serendipity, as opposed, say, to the kind of long-term foresight and planning exhibited in case (1), or the shorter-term intentional creation of life-work relations exhibited in case (2).

[15] For background, see Vilgot Sjöman's detailed documentation of the making of *Winter Light* in his *Dagbok med Ingmar Bergman* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1963).

[16] *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, 5 vols., ed. Anne Olivier Bell (London: Hogarth Press, 1977–84); entries of 14 March 1927 and 18 March 1928.

(4) Case four is a matter of unintended life-work relations. These may take two logically distinct forms. An artist can have no intention whatsoever with regard to a relation which nonetheless emerges in the movement from work to work; on the other hand, an artist can frame and even act on a negative intention to the effect that certain life-work relations *not* obtain, intending, instead, that some other, incompatible relations hold. Yet actions flowing from the latter intention need not succeed, while the unintended relation turns out to obtain. The next section illustrates these abstractions with reference to a somewhat more detailed discussion of a particular case.

BLIXEN'S SELF-TRANSLATIONS

As is well known, Baroness Karen Blixen published a number of fictional works, such as *Seven Gothic Tales* (1934) under the *nom de plume* Isak Dinesen.[17] What is somewhat less well known is that this Danish author initially wrote many of her literary works in English and subsequently did her own Danish translations of them (sometimes making use of one or more unpublished draft translations prepared by others).[18] When we now look at Blixen's life-work as a completed whole, various English originals stand on one side, faced in many instances by Danish versions written or authorized by Blixen herself. Monolingual English and Danish readers may enjoy and understand Blixen while looking at only one side of this

[17] Blixen had used the pseudonym 'Nozdrefs Kok' in various early manuscripts, and the Isak Dinesen pen-name appears in a youthful fragment ('Perdiccas and Sibylla', of which we have only a title page and list of characters). Other *noms de plume* she used were 'Pierre Andrézel', 'Osceola', and 'Peter Lawless'.

[18] Prior studies focusing on Blixen's bilingual authorship include Elias Bresdorff, 'Isak Dinesen vs. Karen Blixen: *Seven Gothic Tales* (1934) and *Syv fantastike Fortællinger* (1935)', in *Facets of European Modernism*, ed. Janet Garton (Norwich: University of East Anglia, 1985), 275–9; Lise Kure-Jensen, 'Isak Dinesen in English, Danish, and Translation: Are We Reading the Same Text?', in *Isak Dinesen: Critical Views*, ed. Olga Anastasia Pelensky (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1993), 314–21; Ute Klünder, *"Ich werde ein großes Kunstwerk schaffen . . . .": Eine Untersuchung zum literarischen Grenzgängertum der zeisprachigen Dichterin Isak Dinesen/Karen Blixen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), and Knud Sørensen, 'Studier I Karen Blixen's engelske og danske sprogform', *Blixeniana* 1982, ed. Hans Andersen and Frans Lasson (Copenhagen: Karen Blixen Selskabet, 1982), 263–309. I specially recommend Klünder's rigorous and detailed study. For more general background, see Leonard Forster, *The Poet's Tongues: Multilingualism in Literature* (Dunnedin: University of Otago Press, 1970).

diptych. Yet there is also a third, bilingual public that is capable of looking at both sides of the picture. Such readers are in a position to note that the author chose to make many significant changes as she prepared her Danish texts, which raises the question of the relations, intended and unintended, between these 'counterparts'. Are the Danish and English works or versions part of a single, expressive project, in which case various retrospective and retroactive relations would hold between them? What were Blixen's intentions in this regard, and do they matter?

The story of Blixen's bilingual authorship is quite complex. Initially, Blixen seems to have thought of herself as writing uniquely for an English-language readership. When she at last decided to address herself to a Danish public, she initially wanted to have a professional translator do the Danish version of *Seven Gothic Tales*.[19] Later she changed her mind. In a letter to Blixen's lawyer, the editor Frederik Hegel had written that there was something affected or arrogant about a Danish writer being translated by a well-known professional translator. Insisting that Valdemar Rørdam should nonetheless do the translation, Blixen asked her lawyer to break off negotiations with Gyldendal Press and to approach Reitzels. Later, she claimed that Rørdam's translation was a 'corruption' of the original, and she approached Jesper Ewald to do the job. She was dissatisfied with his results and with trials by Emily Pritchard, and in the case of 'The Dreamers', Ulla Rask. So in the end she took the various translations in hand, editing, collating, and rewriting until she was satisfied with her own final version.[20]

[19] For documentation, see Grethe Rostbøll, 'Om Syv fantastiske Fortællinger. Tilblivelsen, udgivelsen og modtagelsen af Karen Blixens første bog. En dokumentation', in *Blixemiana* 1980, ed. Hans Andersen and Frans Lasson (Copenhagen: Karen Blixen Selskabet, 1980), 29–264; on the translation question, 180–208.

[20] For example, in preparing her Danish version of 'The Poet', Blixen worked with Danish translations already done by Emily Pritchard and Jesper Ewald. On p. 23 of the former's typescript (in the Blixen archive of the Danish Royal Library, Copenhagen), I observed various pencilled corrections in Blixen's own hand, including, at one point, the indication 'Herfra Jesper Ewald oversættelse' [from here on, Jesper Ewald translation]. From that point in the story on, Blixen makes her pencilled corrections on the Ewald typescript, but subsequently she returns to the Pritchard typescript. Sometimes the final version follows the one or the other; very frequently, it diverges significantly from both as Blixen turned the page over and engaged in a stint of strenuous rewriting.

In her author's preface to *Syv fantastike Fortællinger* (1935), Blixen claimed that when she wrote *Seven Gothic Tales* in English she did not think the book would be of any interest to Danish readers. Once the book had been translated into other languages, it had become 'natural' that it should also be published in her own country. But she wanted it 'to be published in Danish as an original Danish book and not in any—no matter how good—translation'.[21] This phrase supports the hypothesis that the author had settled finally on the idea that the two books should be thought of as wholly distinct works, in which case it could follow that features of the Danish edition should not have any implications for our reading of the earlier, English work, and vice versa. Should such an intention be respected? Did Blixen herself consistently act in keeping with this intention? I think a negative response to both questions is warranted, but I also think that knowledge of Blixen's intentions in this regard is relevant.

Even if we were to accept Blixen's claim that the Danish publication is not in any sense a *translation* of the original English work, the fact remains that it has a special status as a Danish book closely based on a work initially published by the same author in English. Our knowledge of the way in which this 'original Danish book' was created, and our awareness of the massive similarities between it and the English original on which it was based, amply warrant such a perspective. The book's special status in relation to the original English work is highlighted if we compare Blixen's Danish book to the Swedish or Norwegian translations, which were also based on the English edition.[22] Had either the Swedish or Norwegian translators of *Seven Gothic Tales* written prefaces calling their 'rewritings' of that work an 'original' novel, the result could not have had the same status as a work penned by the same author.

The situation is even more clearly cut in the case of the versions of Blixen's well-known story, 'Babette's Feast', which she initially wrote for publication in an American women's magazine.[23] Jørgen Claudi subsequently translated

[21] Author's preface to *Syv Fantastiske Fortællinger* (Copenhagen: Reitzels, 1935); my trans.

[22] Isak Dinesen, *Sju romantiska berättelser*, trans. Sonja Vougt (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers, 1934); and *Syv fantastiske fortellinger*, trans. Alf Harbitz (Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk, 1935).

[23] Clara Svendsen reports that an English ethnologist had told Blixen that Americans were very interested in food; the editors of *Good Housekeeping* rejected the story, however, saying that the kind of food described in it could only interest the rich; see her *Notater om Karen Blixen*

the story into Danish, but in spite of its earlier date of publication, this translation now stands in the shadows of Blixen's own subsequent Danish rewriting of the tale.[24] The latter inflects the English version in significant ways (revealing, for example, its treatment of the characters' relations to be tamer than those of the Danish rewriting). Claudi's translation does no such thing, even when it departs significantly from the original.

Blixen's Danish rewritings of her own works are I think, aptly referred to as self-translations.[25] Our interest in the original work can motivate us to want to see how its author handled the same (or analogous) expressive and artistic problems when writing in a different language. And evidence about subsequent handlings of a problem shed light on the same writer's earlier expressive actions, it being understood, however, that the writer's expressive and other aims may have shifted in function of perceived changes in the audience.

When we look at the many choices that Blixen made when she rewrote stories in Danish, we find that many of them are clearly related to her sense of the differences between her Danish and anglophone readers' beliefs, attitudes, and background knowledge. Blixen emerges as an author who is often willing to elaborate and explain when writing for her Danish audience, making explicit what was only implicit in the English version, sometimes at the cost of a loss of concision, but more often with the benefit of a fluency and grace that surpasses the original English. When

(Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1974), 45. The editors of *Ladies Home Journal* thought otherwise, and printed the story in the June 1950 issue, where it figured alongside such items as 'Dos and Don'ts for Sewing Nylon Fabrics'.

[24] Isak Dinesen, *Babettes Gæstebud*, trans. Jørgen Claudi (Copenhagen: Fremads Folkebibliotek, 1952); Karen Blixen, 'Babettes Gæstebud', in *Skæbne-Anekdoter* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1958), 29–74.

[25] Self-translations are rarely mentioned in what I have seen of the vast literature of translation theory. A few authors suggest that they do not count as genuine translations; see, for example, Philip E. Lewis, 'The Measure of Translation Effects', in *Difference in Translation*, ed. Joseph F. Graham (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 31–62; and Friedrich Schleiermacher, 'Über die verschiedenen Methoden des Übersetzens', in *Sämmtliche Werke* (Berlin: Reimer, 1838), ii.207–45. Armin Paul Frank, however, contends that self-translations should be accounted for in any general theory of translation; see his 'Systems and Histories in the Study of Literary Translations: A Few Distinctions', *Proceedings of the XIIth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association*, ed. Michael de Graat and Ruprecht Wimmer (Munich: Iudicium, 1990), i.41–63.

writing for Danes, Blixen was eager to provide Danish place names and cultural references absent from the English versions; when we look back at the latter in this light, we notice the use of more generic terms and specific references aimed at an English audience.

For example, in rewriting 'Alkmene', one of the *Winter's Tales* (1942), Blixen deviated significantly from her original in order to include an allusion to an old and fairly obscure Danish idiom. The relevant phrase from the first American edition reads as follows: 'It was a hot day in midsummer; there was a quivering air and great mirages over the moors.' And the Danish version reads: *'Det var en brændende hed Dag, midt paa Sommeren. Loke saaede sin Sæd langs Synsranden, og store Luftspejlinger stod op over Heden.*'[26] Rendered quite literally, the latter phrase runs: 'It was a burning hot day in the middle of the summer. Loki sowed his seed along the horizon, and great mirages rose up over the moors.' When we consider that the context is a man's recollection of his pursuit of a young adopted girl who has run away from her foster parents, the relevance of the added sexual and mythical connotations of the Danish version is apparent.

Blixen's Danish versions often show us what Blixen was trying to say, but did not fully manage to underscore, in her English texts. In the case of 'Alkmene', Blixen added a long paragraph about the young Alkmene's friendship with a young madman, and she has the farm people fear not only that Alkmene herself is mad, but a witch.[27] In the English version, the narrator tells us that there was a deep understanding between Alkmene and himself, even though they at times quarrelled and she once threw a stone at him in anger. But in the Danish tale, the stone strikes him, draws blood, and the wound leaves a scar. And perhaps most importantly, in the Danish version, the narrator at first gets lost when years later he tries to visit Alkmene at her remote farm. When he does find the farm, Alkmene is not home, and he learns that had he taken the right way, he would have met her on the path. The narrator's failure to find Alkmene underscores the more general pattern whereby his limitations and interests form a screen between him and the unfortunate young woman who is the subject

[26] Isak Dinesen, *Winter's Tales* (New York: Random House, 1942), 204; Karen Blixen, *Vinter-Eventyr* (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske, 1942), 155.

[27] Cf. *Winter's Tales*, 223: 'people were a little afraid of her; they held her to be mad', to *Vinter-Eventyr*, 173: 'og Folk var lidt bange for hende, som for en vanvittig eller en Heks'.

of his narration. These and numerous small changes sharpen the conflicts, solitude, and misunderstandings that structure this tale. As a result, the Danish version appears more stark compared to the more diffuse English original. Although in a few, relatively trivial ways, the two versions are strictly incompatible (e.g. in English, Gertrude is twelve years younger than her husband; in Danish, it is ten years), on the whole the Danish version serves to amplify the story and themes of the original.

Blixen's stated intentions to the contrary, her Danish stories and her English originals stand in a special relationship to each other because the Danish rewritings were based on the English ones and provided an implicit refinement and reworking of them. In rewriting her own stories, Blixen could not help but make the English and Danish tales parts of a single, unfolding *oeuvre* displaying various retrospective relations. What is more, Blixen's intentions evolved as her own bilingual authorship became an established practice. She eventually found her trusted translator in the person of Clara Selborn, who was charged, for example, with writing the Danish version of 'The Immortal Story'.[28] As time went on, Blixen seems to have settled on the intention of leaving behind a bilingual *oeuvre*.

In sum, various work/life-work relations need not have been intended at any point by the author in order to be realized in the works and have artistic significance. When Blixen wrote 'The Dreamers', she had no intention of later refining aspects of its artistic content by rewriting the work in Danish. Had her coffee plantation in Kenya not failed, she might never have removed to Denmark and attempted to establish herself there as a Danish writer. When she did finally undertake the Danish rewriting, it was not her intention to make a retroactive change of her earlier artistic utterances. Yet when she has the narrator characterize Baron Guilderstern as 'den adrætte og utrættelige Jagthund' [the agile and unflagging hunting dog], the Danish version subtly departs from and inflects the English

[28] Svendsen, *Notater*, 80. A few works, including *Gengældelsens Veje* (*The Angelic Avengers*) were written first by Blixen in Danish, then translated into English by Blixen and Selborn working in tandem. And according to the latter, both Danish and English versions of a work would sometimes be under way at the same time (*Notater*, 63). There is also evidence in the unpublished papers in the archive that Blixen at times used both English and Danish when initially conceiving of a story; for example, a draft of 'A Consolatory Tale' (in the Karen Blixen archive at the Royal Copenhagen Library) switches back and forth between the two languages.

original, which lacks this detail, as did Emily Pritchard's draft translation of the story.[29]

CONCLUSION

The upshot of my discussion is that we can and should sometimes attribute artistic significance to facts about the genesis of a given work/life-work relation. In other words, it can make a difference to us whether such a relation emerged as an instance of the sorts labelled above as (1), (2), (3), or (4). The point is not that such differences are always decisive with regard to every interpretative or appreciative project, but that they are relevant to some of them. Whenever we take an interest in works as artistic achievements, differences between planned and unplanned, skilled and lucky performances are relevant. Obviously in many cases there are serious difficulties involved in knowing which kind of genesis a given relation had, but that is another story; as long as such epistemological problems are not always insurmountable, the distinctions remain pertinent.

Adoption of an actualist, genetic perspective on work-to-work relations squares best with the sort of traditional historicist framework Levinson defends. And as Levinson suggests, when they happen to obtain and are successfully acted upon, prospective, second-order intentions can contribute to the coherence of a series of works as parts of an overarching artistic endeavour. Yet when such conditions are not in place, the traditional historian must eschew retroactive relations of the forward-leaning variety. The early works do not literally 'prefigure' the later ones, yet this does not prevent an array of significant retroactive relations from emerging, and the latter provide a legitimate and sometimes rewarding focus of critical enquiry and appreciative interest.

[29] 'Drømmerne', in *Syv fantastiske Fortællinger*, 279; cf. 'The Dreamers', in *Seven Gothic Tales* (New York: Harrison Smith & Robert Haas, 1934), 295; the change is written in pencil in Karen Blixen's hand on the typescript of Emily Pritchard's translation (Karen Blixen archive, Danish Royal Library).

Chapter 5

TEXTS, WORKS, VERSIONS (WITH REFERENCE TO THE INTENTIONS OF MONSIEUR PIERRE MENARD)

Jorge Luis Borges's 1939 story, 'Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*', has inspired a number of philosophers to expound upon the theoretical implications of Menard's attempt to rewrite Miquel de Cervantes Saavedra's *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha* (1605–1615).[1] The lesson generally—but not unanimously—drawn from the tale is that since tokens of a single text-type could be the constituents of two distinct works, literary works are not conceptually reducible to texts.[2] Although

[1] 'Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote', *Sur* 56 (1939), 7–16; reprinted *in Obras Completas* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1974), 444–50; trans. Andrew Hurley, 'Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*', in Jorge Luis Borges, *Collected Fictions* (New York: Viking, 1998), 88–95.

[2] The literature on Borges is enormous. For a start, consult www.hum.au.dk/institut/rom/borges/borges.htm. An early indication that valuable philosophical ideas might be found in Borges's fictions is provided by Joseph Agassi in his 'Philosophy as Literature: The Case of Borges', *Mind*, 79 (1970), 287–93. Agassi does not, however, mention the Pierre Menard fiction. Comments on the latter surface in Stanislaw Lem's 1971, *A Perfect Vacuum*, trans. Michael Kandel (New York: Harvest/Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 72–3. References made by philosophers include Richard Wollheim, 'Are the Criteria of Identity that Hold for a Work of Art in the Different Arts Aesthetically Relevant?', *Ratio*, 20 (1978), 29–48; David K. Lewis, 'Truth in Fiction', *American*

I agree with this conclusion, the argument typically given in its favour depends on controversial claims, especially with regard to the nature and individuation of texts. In an effort to support the Borges-inspired argument, in this chapter I assess rival assumptions about texts and make a new proposal. A better understanding of textual individuation also proves helpful when we explore some of the other puzzling cases mentioned in the story, such as the oft-overlooked first item on the list of Menard's accomplishments—a symbolist sonnet that appeared twice with variations. With an eye to illustrating some of the complications with which an ontology of art would have to contend, in the third section of this chapter I discuss this example and elucidate some of the senses of 'version' in artistic contexts.

This chapter does not even attempt a sketch of a general ontology of literature, nor do I defend theses thought to cover all kinds of artistic items, the diversity of which is hard to overestimate. Yet I do introduce some considerations that any successful theorizing in that direction ought to take into account, and it turns out once more that intentions are an important part of the story.

THE TEXT/WORK ARGUMENT

Setting various refinements aside, an argument along the following lines can be presented in support of the thesis that a literary work is not

Philosophical Quarterly, 15 (1978), 37–46; Jerrold Levinson, 'What a Musical Work Is', *Journal of Philosophy*, 77 (1980), 5–29, reprinted in *Music, Art, and Metaphysics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 63–88; Arthur Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 33–7; B. R. Tilghman, 'Danto and the Ontology of Literature,' *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 4 (1982): 293–9; Susan Wilsmore, 'The Literary Work is Not its Text', *Philosophy and Literature*, 11 (1987), 307–16; Gregory Currie, *An Ontology of Art* (London: Macmillan, 1988); 122–3, 134; Jean-Marie Schaeffer, *Qu'est-ce qu'un genre littéraire?* (Paris: Seuil, 1989), 131–7; Michael Wreen, 'Once is not Enough?', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 30 (1990), 149–58; David Davies, 'Text, Context, and Character: Goodman on the Literary Artwork', *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 21 (1991), 331–45; Gregory Currie, 'Work and Text', *Mind*, 100 (1991), 325–40; Christopher Janaway, 'Borges and Danto: A Reply to Michael Wreen', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 32 (1992), 72–6; Peter Lamarque, 'Aesthetic Value, Experience, and Indiscernibles', *Nordisk Estetisk Tidskrift*, 17 (1998), 61–78; Jorge J. E. Gracia, 'Borges's "Pierre Menard": Philosophy or Literature?', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 59 (2001), 45–57; David Davies, *Art as Performance* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 40–1; John Dilworth, 'Internal versus External Representation', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 62 (2004), 23–37; Petr Kot'átko and Karel Císař, eds., *Text a dílo: případ Menard* (Prague: Philosophia, 2004).

conceptually equivalent to a text, even for those works having a textual component:

(1) The text tokens, t_1 and t_2, generated by two writers are type-identical ('first Borgesian assumption').

(2) The two literary works, w_1 and w_2, which these writers produce in generating their respective tokens of this single text-type, have divergent artistic or aesthetic properties ('second Borgesian assumption').

(3) Two literary works with divergent artistic or aesthetic properties cannot be identical, so $w_1 \neq w_2$ (from (1), (2), and an assumption about identity: if A is identical to B, A and B have the same (non-epistemic) properties.

(4) $t_1 \neq w_1$ or $t_2 \neq w_2$ (given (1) and the substitutivity of identity, if $t_1 = w_1$ and $t_2 = w_2$, then $w_1 = w_2$, which is incompatible with (3)).

If this argument is sound, it establishes that textual identity is not sufficient to determine work identity in all cases.

Questions can, however, reasonably be raised about this argument's premisses, and in particular, the Borgesian assumptions (1) and (2). Given some proposals concerning the meaning of 'text', the putative conceptual gap between texts and works would be bridged. Such proposals, are, of course, controversial. What is *not* controversial, however, is that the term 'text' and its cognates are routinely put to contrasting uses, and that the literature in which explicit definitions are offered is far from unanimous.[3] Advocates of a text/work distinction consequently owe their readers a clarification and grounding of their assumptions about the meaning of 'text', especially since on some assumptions about texts, the argument sketched above is valid but unsound.[4] Sorting out some of the options is the task of the next section.

[3] For instructive surveys, see Willie van Peer, 'Text', in *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*, ed. R. E. Asher (Oxford: Pergamon, 1994), 4564–8; and Richard Shusterman, 'Text', in *A Companion to Aesthetics*, ed. David E. Cooper (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 418–21. For a similar recognition of the contested semantics of 'text', see Peter Lamarque, 'Objects of Interpretation', *Metaphilosophy*, 31 (2000), 96–124, at 106. A literary theorist who advocates an eliminativist perspective on texts and works is Anders Pettersson, *Verbal Art: A Philosophy of Literature and Literary Experience* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's, 2000), 90–102.

[4] A philosopher who has independently stressed this issue and argued for an intentionalist approach is Petr Kot'átko in 'Text, dílo, interpretace: k implikacím Menardova případu', in

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A first, and intuitively appealing approach is to think that sameness of spelling is a sufficient, and perhaps even necessary, condition on textual identity. After all, it may seem obvious that if '*chat*' and '**chat**', are, in spite of visible differences, tokens of the same text-type, this is because the two strings or inscriptions are comprised of instances of all and only the same letters of the Roman alphabet in the same order. A purely syntactical approach to textual identity can be given a more rigorous formulation by adopting Nelson Goodman's account of notational schemes, which are arrangements whereby marks or inscriptions are systematically correlated with 'characters' in accordance with the syntactic constraints Goodman dubbed 'disjointness' and 'finite differentiation'.[5] At bottom, this means that there is a partial function mapping marks or inscriptions onto character-types. Obviously, some marks are not characters at all; but no one mark which functions as a character is an instance of more than one character. (Goodman does not, by the way, claim that such syntactical distinctions are sufficient to the individuation of texts.)

There are major objections to the idea that Goodman's (or any other purely) syntactical scheme gives us the concept of text we need. It is highly dubious that exact sameness of spelling or character type constitutes a necessary condition. Editors frequently correct misspellings when establishing texts, and it is common to assume that textual equivalence is maintained in spite of various sorts of syntactical variations, as in editions in which unfamiliar and inconsistent Renaissance spellings and typographical conventions have been modernized (replacing, say, the non-syllabic past tense 'd and syllabic '-ed' with '-ed' and stressed '-èd' respectively). For many purposes it would be overly severe to judge that one cannot have read the text of a Shakespearean sonnet if one has not struggled with Thomas Thorpe's abominable edition, a facsimile thereof, or some syntactically equivalent reprinting.

Kot'átko and Císař, eds., *Text a dílo: případ Menard*, 171–95. I thank him for giving me an English version of his essay.

[5] Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols* (Indianapolis, Ill.: Hackett, 1976), ch. 4. For advocacy of a purely syntactical approach, see W. V. O. Quine, *From Stimulus to Science* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), 94–6.

Plausible doubts can also be raised with regard to the idea that sameness of spelling or syntactical equivalence in a notational scheme constitutes a *sufficient* condition on textual identity. In poetic contexts, differences in font can be important, and any edition neglecting such differences does not replicate the text adequately. The point is not that strict identity of font must always be maintained, as in the lame idea that all reliable editions of Ludwig Tieck must be printed in *Fraktur*. Instead, variations of font within a text often need to be indicated. Rubrications and illuminations, which for some purposes are crucial to the identity of some texts, represent another challenge. It may, however, be possible to devise a syntactical approach that could cope with these problems.[6]

More importantly, one may also ask how the inscriptions or 'strings' to which a syntactical scheme is applied are themselves to be identified and individuated in the absence of assumptions about their provenance and point. In Goodman's scheme, textual classifications have nothing to do with the manner in which the marks are produced; they could, for example, have been generated accidentally when a cat explored a computer's keyboard with its paws. All of the marks produced in a single episode are part of 'the same text'. Yet with texts intentionally made by people, the 'parsing' of textual units is not so straightforward, and no simple spatio-temporal conditions determine which marks belong to the same text.

In sum, that two inscriptions produced by two writers are characters of the same type in a notational scheme does not entail that we should recognize them as instances of the same text, and so nothing follows about the more general text/work relation.

In an effort to avoid the limitations of syntactical approaches, William E. Tolhurst and Samuel C. Wheeler III have proposed a speech-act theoretic account of textual individuation. Their central contention is that a text is not just an inscription having a given set of observable properties or language-related functions; instead, it is 'an object that has those properties in virtue of having been produced in a certain way'.[7] They propose, then, to

[6] Robert Howell, personal communication.

[7] William E. Tolhurst and Samuel C. Wheeler III, 'On Textual Individuation', *Philosophical Studies*, 35 (1979), 187–97, at 191.

individuate texts, and by the same stroke, works, as historically and causally determined utterance types. The identity of a text, T, is defined in terms of a word or character sequence, W, and a particular instantiation of W, which is the primary token of the text-type. A particular token of W is a token of T just in case it is either this primary token or a replica of it. For example, *Emma* (1816) was written by Jane Austen in the English of her day, and her text must be identified accordingly. The primary token is Austen's holograph, a series of inscriptions which are tokens of a sequence of types of expressions in English. This sequence taken as a whole is the text-type of the novel. Copies made directly from this primary token, or from copies so made, are also tokens of this text (and work) type.

If this speech-act theoretical account of textual individuation is accepted, sameness of text entails sameness of work, and to interpret one is to interpret the other. If it is allowed that Menard did not simply copy Cervantes's text, but instead generated his own primary token, it follows that Menard produced not only a distinct work, but a distinct text as well (even though the spelling is the same). And so the Borgesian argument would falter, its first assumption being denied along with the subtending conception of textual identity.

Such a conclusion hinges, however, on the thought that the given elucidation of 'text' is correct, yet reasonable doubts can be raised on this score. Tolhurst and Wheeler admit that they have no analysis of the replica relation that is an important component of their account of texts, which leaves their proposal rather open-ended. They mention intentional acts of copying as a central type of replication that normally maintains textual identity, and they even allow that if someone mistakenly introduces deviations while trying to copy the primary token, the result can also be counted a token of the text, since a faulty copy is still a copy, as long as there is no 'extensive garbling'. A similar approach, they add, could be used to deal with Goodman's 'one wrong note paradox' with regard to the relation between a musical score and performances or instances of the work.[8] With this latter point I hasten to agree, yet the implications for

[8] Tolhurst and Wheeler, 'On Textual Individuation', 194–5; cf. Goodman, *Languages of Art*, 186; and Stefano Predelli, 'Goodman and the Wrong Note Paradox', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 39 (1999), 364–75.

textual individuation should give one pause, as not even a moderately determinate text-type can be established by an indeterminate series of past and future inept attempts at copying the words of the primary token. The relevant comparison is not the score/performance relation, but the task of faithfully reproducing a musician's score. In any case, a successful account of texts must have more to say about replication.

Another criticism of the Tolhurst and Wheeler approach to textual individuation, presented by Gregory Currie, hinges on a counter-example. A writer addresses himself to two distinct audiences simultaneously, his intention being to perform two distinct speech acts—a straightforward assertion for one audience, and for a second audience, an ironic denial of that very assertion's contentions. If texts are to be individuated as speech acts, a single utterance is productive of two texts in such an instance—'surely an excess of entities', Currie comments.[9] This objection seems telling in that it brings to light our commitment to a conception of text that is considerably narrower than the one Tolhurst and Wheeler defend. It is indeed possible for a writer to generate ironic and serious works or utterances for two audiences by publishing what we are strongly inclined to recognize as tokens of a single text-type. Tolhurst and Wheeler give us insufficient grounds for abandoning our inclination to say that there is only one text, but two distinct works or utterances, in a publication targeting two different kinds of response. An advocate of the Tolhurst and Wheeler proposal might respond, however, that this objection begs the question concerning the text/work distinction by assuming that texts and works are conceptually distinct.

Currie raises another objection, which recalls a line taken by Goodman in response to Richard Wollheim. This second counter-example takes the following form: two politicians, X and Y, issue communiqués that are word-for-word the same. If someone holding a copy of X's statement were asked to supply the text of Y's statement, the request could be met by surrendering X's text, even though it is not the primary token of Y's statement, nor even a replica of it (assuming that the 'x is a replica of y' relation is the ancestral of the 'x was copied directly from y' relation). The key thought is that for a range of practical purposes, word-for-word

[9] Gregory Currie, 'Work and Text', *Mind*, 100 (1991), 325–40, at 330.

equivalence suffices to ensure textual sameness: we need not concern ourselves with the causal provenance of the token we receive, provided that the wording is that of the speaker or writer whose text we want to examine.

This is a telling criticism of the Tolhurst and Wheeler proposal. Yet one may worry that it returns us to a purely syntactical conception of textual individuation, which means the counter-proposal is open to the objections against that approach evoked above. Unless we have independent knowledge that the two politicians are using the same language in the same historical context, a copy of the character sequence alone will not suffice to determine even the minimal linguistic meanings of Y's communiqué. If one does have such knowledge, the situation can be understood as a case in which a faithful copy of Y's text has been provided, as the status of the 'copy' of X's communiqué changes once it is intentionally and reliably passed along as an instance or replica of Y's text.

What are the alternatives to the unappealing choice between an inadequate, purely syntactical approach and the overly 'thick' pragmatic conception? Many philosophers attempt to find a *via media* by adding a semantic component to the syntactical notion. Goodman, for example, asserts that the linguistic and hence textual identity of an inscription depends upon its functioning as a meaningful sign for someone in some language. In an essay Goodman co-authored with Catherine Elgin, we read that 'marks are inscriptions in a language when they function as such', and it is added that since the character-type 'chat' functions equally well in English and in French, its inscriptions 'might belong to either language'.[10] This move opens the door to the objection that Goodman's proposal stumbles on the obstacle of trans-language ambiguity, which is a matter of an inscription conforming to the rules of two or more languages and thereby failing to have any determinate textual identity. Tolhurst and Wheeler contend that this phenomenon is ubiquitous, since for any given inscription, possible languages having alternative semantics can be constructed, the result being that in the absence of causal or historical anchorings, textual identity is in principle indeterminate.

[10] Nelson Goodman and Catherine Z. Elgin, *Reconceptions in Philosophy and Other Arts and Sciences* (Indianapolis, Ill.: Hackett, 1988), 60.

One may be tempted to discount this problem as an otherworldly philosophical conceit, since few if any inscriptions of any significant length function well (or at all) in more than one natural language. The objection can be restated, however, in terms of the ambiguities arising as a result of the distinct historical stages of a language in which complex inscriptions do effectively function. For example, when contemporary students of *Emma* read about Mr Elton 'actually making violent love' to Emma in a carriage, they are likely to imagine advances rather more audacious than those which Jane Austen associated with these very same characters.[11]

Goodman indeed rejects the tempting idea that textual identity has something to do with the competence, performance, or effective aims of the writer (as in the idea that Pierre Menard intentionally wrote his *Quixote* in an archaic Spanish). In response to Richard Wollheim's mobilization of a Pierre Menard argument, Goodman wrote: 'To deny that I have read *Don Quixote* if my copy, though correctly spelled in all details, happens to have been accidentally produced by a mad printer in 1500, or by a mad computer in 1976, seems to me utterly untenable.'[12] More generally, Goodman contends that there is only one *Quixote*—the first one penned by Cervantes—and hence only one genuine text, of which Menard's inscription is but a replica. It is not clear, however, that Goodman can consistently keep score in this manner, as he elsewhere classifies works of literature as allographic, thereby setting historical factors aside. Nor can he consistently argue that an artefact's linguistic function is determined only in its context of creation.[13]

Intuitions may very well falter and diverge when we are asked to ponder the tepid question whether a monolingual Frenchman's inscription of 'chat' and a monolingual Englishman's inscription of 'chat' generate tokens of the same text-type. Yet there may be cases where sameness of spelling and a minimal notion of semantic sameness (literal word or dictionary meaning in a language) do not jointly suffice to establish textual identity. Consider an early edition of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* (1928), which includes the expression 'if the reader will look at page 144', whereby the

[11] Jane Austen, *Emma*, ed. Stephen M. Parrish (New York: Norton, 1972), 88.

[12] Goodman, 'Comments on Wollheim's Paper', *Ratio*, 20 (1978), 49–51, at 50.

[13] For a detailed and lucid critique of Goodman's contentions on this topic, see David Davies, 'Text, Context, and Character: Goodman on the Literary Artwork', *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 21 (1991), 331–45.

reader is referred to a comical portrait reproduced on that page.[14] Are we to assume that textual identity is maintained if tokens of all and only the same typographical symbols, having the same conventional linguistic meanings, are reiterated in the same order? Suppose, however, that in a new edition satisfying that very condition, reformatting causes the illustration to appear on page 85 instead of page 144. The string '144' appears in the same place and has the same basic meaning, but now provides a misleading indication having rather different artistic effects. One may reasonably protest that the *text* has thereby been vitiated. Yet the minimal semantic and syntactical condition was satisfied, so it would follow that this is not even a sufficient condition on textual identity.

One temptation at this point is to strengthen the semantic component. Currie, for example, states that two text tokens are of the same text-type if they 'have the same semantic and syntactic properties'.[15] One problem with this vague suggestion is that it does not answer Tolhurst and Wheeler's question as to how a sequence of marks acquires its linguistic affiliation, which is presumably crucial to the identification of semantic properties. The sense of 'semantic properties' on which this sort of proposal relies also wants arguing. Given at least one understanding of 'semantic properties', the Borgesian argument fails, since Cervantes and Menard do not mean (and even less, refer to) the same things, as the Borgesian narrator so eloquently tells us.

There is, I think, a better alternative, which I shall call the 'locutionary' account of textual identity.[16] Basically, the idea is that we need a disjunctive conception of 'text' that allows us to classify different sorts of items as instances 'of the same locutionary text-type'. I do not contend that this is the only correct classification that can be associated with the word 'text', but I do contend that it is a prevalent and useful one.

[14] Virginia Woolf, *Orlando: A Biography* (London: Hogarth, 1990), 171, and (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1946), 119.

[15] Currie, 'Work and Text', 325. Currie says this is only a sufficient condition for textual identity; necessity is unnecessary, he explains, because the examples on which he bases his argument in favour of the text–work distinction satisfy this sufficiency condition.

[16] The term 'locutionary' appears in John Austin's *How to Do Things with Words*, ed. J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisà (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962), 94. In his terminology, however, what I am after is more 'pheme' than 'rheme'.

Writers often produce an inscription with the intention of creating a token of a sequence of characters in some notational scheme employed in some language or collection of languages. For example, while working on a story, Theodor Seuss Geisel made up a name for a sticky green substance, and using the Roman alphabet, intentionally wrote or typed marks corresponding to the character sequence 'oobleck'. He went on to use this name in a number of English-language sentences designed to get readers to imagine the events in a story in which the strange green substance falls from the sky.[17] As a commonplace assumption about intentions would have it, actions motivated and guided by a writer's intentions may or may not result in the production of a genuine token of the *intended* character in the target notation and language, unwitting misspellings being a familiar example of how things can go wrong. For example, without having changed his mind about the spelling, Geisel might have mistakenly written 'ooblek' instead of 'oobleck' in his manuscript at some point, or printer's errors might have introduced such deviant spellings in some edition of the book. Such errors are overruled in the determination of the primary token of the locutionary text, which reads 'oobleck' in accordance with the author's effective notational intentions.

In order to handle the sorts of problem cases mentioned above, we further specify that the notational scheme employed in establishing the locutionary text must be sensitive to variations in font, formatting, and rubrication. For example, any token of the text-type of the present pages must introduce variations of font for the two instances of 'chat' employed on p. 115 above; strings indicating that page number must be altered in keeping with reformatting or changes in pagination, etc. If for some significant reason there were an elaborately illustrated 'A' at the beginning of the next paragraph, this item should be reproduced at the relevant point, and so on.

As I indicated above, reference to intentions is crucial to the identification of a primary token, not only because we are usually uninterested in retaining typographical mistakes, but because we must also be attuned to writerly intentions as we try to recognize which inscriptions and corresponding characters were meant to be grouped together. A writer can write diverse meaningful sentences on the page of a manuscript without having the intention of making these words part of a single text.

[17] Dr Seuss, *Bartholomew and the Oobleck* (New York: Random House, 1949).

Reference to intentions is necessary, then, to the identification of a collection of sentences constitutive of the primary token of a *locutionary* text. As the history of critical editorial practice shows, this kind of identification of a unified text is immensely problematic in some cases (e.g. that of Friedrich Hölderlin), but it is not always so.

I turn now to the conditions under which a token of a locutionary text is successfully replicated. Given a primary token comprised of *intended* and *grouped* characters in a notation scheme used in a target language or languages, other tokens instantiating all and only the same *intended* characters in that scheme and language count as tokens of the same locutionary text-type.[18] Whether such tokens are produced intentionally or not, or are based on or copied from the author's primary token, is irrelevant. A locutionary text-type includes other kinds of replications as well. Namely, an acceptable deviation in the production of replications is the employment of alternative spellings and punctuation conventions available in the target language, on the condition that the linguistic conventions employed are not incompatible with the relevant intentions of the author. Modernization of Renaissance spelling is an example where the condition is satisfied, whereas an edition of e.e. cummings's poetry where spelling and punctuation have been standardized would be a case in which the condition is not met. No doubt there will be borderline or controversial instances as well, but many examples falling on either side can be identified. In sum, the locutionary text-type covers the primary token and any tokens that satisfy one of these conditions on replication.

The locutionary conception of text fares well with regard to some of the key problems surveyed above. In the case of the essayist who writes ironically for one audience and deceptively for another at the same stroke, we would find one, not two locutionary text-types, thereby skirting Currie's telling objection to the Tolhurst and Wheeler account. In other words, the locutionary text-type is not individuated in terms of the *illocutionary* intentions and actions linked to the production of the inscription's primary token, but it does depend crucially on other aspects of the

[18] Cases of multiple yet poorly coordinated authorship (or what I have called 'traffic-jam' cases in Chapter 3), introduce additional complexities. If there is no global intention governing the production of the inscriptions, there is no 'locutionary text', but a text in some minimal, syntactical sense.

writer's intentional action, and most notably, the choice of a notational scheme, language(s), and intended sequences and groupings of characters. Goodman's intuition that one can read Menard's text in reading Cervantes's, and vice versa, is also respected, since there is only one locutionary text-type here. Though Menard does not mechanically copy Cervantes's words, he does end up replicating them (*all* of them, if we follow the example of other philosophers and overlook the details of Borges's narrative). The text of politician X's press release is also the text of politician Y's press release because it satisfies one of the stated replication conditions. The locutionary notion of textual identity does not limit replication to the intentional copying of the syntactical features of a primary token, or of ancestrals of such a copying relation. Unintentionally produced replicas of the primary inscription or character-type are included as instances of the locutionary text. The font and format sensitivity condition allows for relevant shifts in font and formatting, and so in principle handles rubrication and internal cross-reference (as in the *Orlando* example).

The locutionary proposal avoids the shortcomings of an overly narrow syntactical conception as well as those of a broad, pragmatic notion of the text. My contention is not, of course, that this notion of a locutionary text matches or exhausts the several senses of 'text' in ordinary usage; the claim is, however, that it reflects a valuable, well-entrenched, and prevalent manner of identifying the text of a work of literature, as well as the texts of various other kinds of works and utterances.

It may be objected at this point that I have ignored various relevant alternative proposals concerning the nature of texts. What about post-structuralist conceptions of text and the project of dissolving works into indeterminate textuality?[19] In response to that theoretical inclination, I would point out that a more precise or determinate notion of text is indispensable. We often want to know whether two or more particular inscriptions are the same locutionary text. We want to copy an inscription *verbatim* or *literatim*, or to find out whether someone else has done so, the capacity to perform such operations being a basic component of literacy. This is what the Borges narrator is relying on when he refers to Menard's

[19] Roland Barthes, 'Texte (théorie du)', in *Oeuvres complètes. II:* 1966–73, ed. Eric Marty (Paris: Seuil, 1994), 167–9.

and Cervantes's texts as 'verbally identical' [*verbalmente idénticos*] just before he waxes eloquent about stylistic and other differences between the two writers' productions. If text and textuality are always already indeterminate and in a condition of perpetual flux and deferral, how could Cervantes and Menard generate anything that could rightly be recognized as being 'verbally identical'? As the proponents of theories of a sublime and wholly indeterminate textuality regularly rely on such textual identifications (they are, for example, quick to complain if they are misquoted), their accounts of textuality are most charitably understood, not as plausible definitions, but as exhortations to engage in creative and transgressive interpretations.

The proposed explication of 'text' is, by the way, at odds with the definition of 'text' proposed in one context by Jorge J. E. Gracia, who maintains that any entity becomes a text on the condition that it is intended by an author to convey a specific meaning to a certain audience in a context. Gracia writes, more specifically:

> A text is a group of entities used as signs that are selected, arranged, and intended by an author to convey a specific meaning to an audience in a certain context. The entities in question can be of any sort. They can be ink marks on a piece of paper, sculpted pieces of ice, carvings on stone, designs on sand, sounds uttered by humans or produced by mechanical devices, actions, mental images, and so on. These entities, considered by themselves, are not a text. They become a text only when they are used by an author to convey some specific meaning to an audience in a certain context.[20]

This account describes neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition on being a text as opposed to some other sort of thing. It is odd, to say the least, to hold that someone's intentional wink of the eye—which is an action that could be intended to communicate some specific meaning—is literally a text, and the same might be said of an intelligible scribble produced by acting unsuccessfully on some communicative intention. Gracia's definition also seems to have the undesirable consequence of allowing that of two, linguistically identical inscriptions, only one might be a text, e.g. if the one had been intentionally used with communicative intent, while the other was a randomly or unintentionally created display

[20] Jorge J. E. Gracia, 'Borges's "Pierre Menard": Philosophy or Literature?', 46.

on a computer screen.[21] With regard to individuation, Gracia claims that if two persons understand a single utterance of 'Fire!' differently, 'the two persons do not understand the same text ... we have two different texts'.[22] It would seem to follow, disastrously I should think, that people cannot disagree over even the most minimal meaning of the same text.

With regard to the text/non-text boundary, it should be noted that the locutionary notion of textual individuation correctly rules out non-linguistic items, eschewing *literal* talk of the text of an abstract expressionist painting, or worse still, the 'text' of performances, events, historical epochs, and lives. Yet as the locutionary text is defined as the product of an intentional action or of an unintentional replication of some intended character, it does not allow that any and all natural phenomena that happen to be 'legible' in some language constitute tokens of a locutionary text. Such a claim is, however, compatible with the idea that some items that are not the products of communicative intentions can in some other sense be classified as texts, provided that they replicate well-formed expressions in some language. This is correct English usage and makes good sense, for we can readily speak of the legible text that a computer malfunction happens to generate on a screen. This is, admittedly, a special case, and moreover, it is a case about which intuitions differ. Debates over the status of purely accidental text-tokens or text-like marks have no implications for literary ontology, as literary works are always the products of intentional doings—and given some philosophers' proposals, literary works just are actions or action types. Thus, even if we were to grant that the inscriptions on the 'saviour stone' discovered in the Guizhou province of China instantiate the five characters meaning 'Communist Party of China', we would deny that this unusual phenomenon is an utterance or a work.

[21] Similar objections are levelled against David Kaplan's intentional account of words by Herman Cappelen, 'Intentions in Words', *Noûs*, 33 (1999), 92–102. Elsewhere Gracia develops other considerations regarding the nature and status of texts. For example, in 'Can There be Texts without Historical Authors?', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 31 (1994), 248–53, he verges on accepting the possibility of some authorless texts, but then prefers the argument that as such scripts or word-like configurations have no authors with contextualized linguistic intentions, they have no meanings and hence cannot be texts.

[22] See Gracia, *Texts: Ontological Status, Identity, Author, Audience* (Albany, NY.: State University of New York Press, 1996), 89.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE TEXT/WORK ARGUMENT

Anyone unconvinced by the objections to strict, syntactical accounts of textual individuation canvassed above will readily allow that the Borgesian argument goes through: sameness of spelling or of character type does not entail sameness of work. I hope to have established, however, that problems with such syntactical accounts are quite serious. Yet they do not force us to shift to a pragmatic theory of texts that is incompatible with the text/work distinction. An alternative is the locutionary account of textual individuation, which supports the Borgesian argument, as in poetic contexts, words' divergent acoustic and referential properties are artistically relevant, while locutionary text's types have no such features and so cannot determine a work's identity. Menard, we know, does not conceive of his *Quixote* effort as that of a scribe intent on slavishly producing a replica of Cervantes's text, but his writing is patterned after the latter, and he destroys all drafts that deviate from it. Thus, if we idealize Menard's performance into a complete replication of Cervantes's text, as far as locutionary equivalence is concerned, the texts are of the same type. Yet work identity does not follow from this fact, as such factors as an utterance's illocutionary force and generic affiliation are not determined by the locutionary act alone, and in this regard, the two writer's aims and accomplishments indeed diverge, just as the Borges narrator tells us. In sum, given the independently plausible, locutionary conception of texts, the Borgesian text/work argument sketched above goes through. A work is not, then, a text construed as a syntactical type, nor even is it a text as individuated along the 'locutionary' lines sketched above.

A rejection of a work/text reduction gives us only the beginnings of an adequate account of the ontology of literature, however, and in the next section I turn to additional complications introduced by the Borgesian narrator.

INTENTIONS AND VERSIONS

In spite of the interest philosophers have shown in the ontological implications of Borges's story, little attention has been paid to a puzzling matter broached at its outset, for at the top of the list of Menard's unusual literary

achievements we find 'a symbolist sonnet that appeared twice (with variants [*con variaciones*]) in the review *La Conque* (in the numbers for March and October, 1899)'.[23] We are not given any further indications concerning these publications, but can imagine some possibilities.

We might first speculate that Menard published the symbolist sonnet a second time because of regrettable coquilles or typographical errors that had crept into the initial publication. '*Variaciones*', then, is correctly translated as 'variants', where the latter simply refers to corrections. There is, then, only one sonnet having a single locutionary text, manifested in multiple tokens falling into two syntactically divergent types corresponding to the two publications. Or perhaps it was the editor of *La Conque*, Pierre Louÿs, and not Menard himself, who saw fit to reprint the sonnet in a second, corrected and more 'authentic' version. We have multiple editions of any given Shakespearean sonnet, *cum notis variorum*, precisely as a result of untiring editorial efforts at establishing the texts of the Shakespearean works in a context where authorial holographs are unavailable. Pondering the marks on the pages of disparate and defective editions, the scholar asks what the lost original inscription or primary token was meant to read, and if unsure, wisely passes the puzzle along to the reader in the form of variants given in the notes.

Another option for our imaginative theoretical explication of the Menard story is to set aside the possibility that Menard's sonnet owed its two-part appearance to the sorts of epistemic conditions which keep the critical-editorial industries up and running. Menard, we would then surmise, provided *La Conque*'s editor with a definitive authorial manuscript that was then reliably set in type and printed. Menard in turn carefully read and corrected proofs, the result being that on both occasions what was printed in the literary periodical corresponded character-by-character, point-by-point, to the author's settled choices. The variations, then, have nothing to do with some effort to replicate the linguistic features of a lost primary token.

[23] 'Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*', 89. Anthony Bonner translates '*variaciones*' as 'variations' in his translation of the story in *Ficciones* (New York: Grove, 1962), 45–55, at 46; whereas James E. Irby opts for 'variants', in *Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writiings*, ed. Donald A. Yales and James E. Irby (Harmondsworth: Penquin, 1970), 62–70.

Given this idealized scenario, we may be tempted to read the mention of the sonnet as making a point complementary to that of the *Quixote* episode. While the latter shows us that textual identity is not sufficient to establish work identity, the sonnet reveals that it is not necessary either, as there can be two texts constitutive of one and the same work. Yet this last point is problematic for an ontological scheme which, in taking its point of departure in the thesis that the text is not the work, goes on to ask what, in addition to a text or verbal performance, determines a work's identity—the perhaps problematic assumption being that in any case a determinate and unique verbal pattern is a necessary condition of work identity.[24] In such a context, Menard's two-headed symbolist sonnet would appear to be something of a monster.

Here's why. Let us suppose that in scanning those lines appearing under Pierre Menard's name in the two issues of *La Conque*, a reader encounters two distinct sequences satisfying Petrarchan sonnet conventions and takes note of some striking similarities, as well as non-trivial differences, between the two poems. Let us say as well that this reader accepts Leibniz's principle of the indiscernibility of identicals. Transposing, such a reader quickly reasons from the artistic differences between the poems to their strict non-identity. On the basis of the observed similarities and common authorial affiliation, such a reader might conclude that the second sonnet is a version of the first, a closely related yet distinct literary work, in which case there are two texts and two works.

Though plausible, such a reading does not match our narrator's indications, which tell us that in detecting the similarities between the two stretches of text, the reader is supposed to categorize what was read as variations or versions of '*un soneto simbolista*'—a, or one, symbolist sonnet that appeared twice. Yet which sonnet is that? Taken as a whole, the serial publication does not scan as a sonnet—only each half can do that, but those two sonnets are different. So in what sense is there a single sonnet here?

[24] For astute reservations about this assumption, and about the project of a general ontology of literary works, see Robert Howell, 'Ontology and the Nature of the Literary Work', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 60 (2002), 67–79.

Wollheim suggested that the way to approach the general problem of the work of art's identity was to look to the writer's own 'theory' for a criterial specification of relevant identity conditions.[25] I doubt this is a viable solution to the more general problem because writers might have no general theory about such individuations, or even an incorrect one, in which case even the most skilled attempt at elucidating the writer's theory would not yield any correct criterial specifications regarding the identities of the works. It may be more accurate to think that it is the writer's effective, local choices and decisions which in a given literary context mark off the distinct works within a developing *oeuvre*.

Even so, we would do well to take more seriously the narrator's indication that Menard has published a *symbolist* sonnet. A symbolist writer might have thought that a text appearing in *La Conque* entertains 'esoteric affinities' with the Sonnet of which these writerly trappings are but external analogies, the 'essential character of symbolist art being never to reach the Idea itself'.[26] Or perhaps the relevant thought has a more specific inspiration in Menard's master, Valéry, who was fond of mathematical analogies.[27] Thus we might speak of the sonnet as a group of texts, variants, and versions. Valéry also tended to insist on the necessarily incomplete status of all writerly labours, in which case there might be groups of textual versions and variants, but no definitive Work.[28] The sonnet of which the two publications are variations, then, is a creative activity which is meant to be essentially incomplete or *sans terme certain*.[29] The Borgesian narrator's sparse indications concerning Menard's symbolist sonnet make better sense when interpreted along these lines. The two halves of the series each constitutes a provisional sonnet, and as the two works bear striking similarities to each other, they are intended jointly to evoke a single work which is meant to be absent from the pages of *La Conque*.

[25] Wollheim, 'Are the Criteria of Identity?', 36–7.

[26] Jean Moréas, 'A Literary Manifesto—Symbolism', in *Symbolist Art Theories: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Henri Dorra (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 150–2, at 151.

[27] For background, see Steven Cassedy, 'Paul Valéry's Modernist Aesthetic Object', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 45 (1986–7), 77–86.

[28] For characteristic fragments on this theme, see Valéry, *Oeuvres*, ed. Jean Hytier (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), ii.553.

[29] Valéry, 'Discours sur l'esthétique', in *Oeuvres*, i.1294–314, at 1299, 1309.

This is guesswork, of course, as we cannot always import actual world facts, including symbolist theory, into a work of fiction.[30] The upshot, in any case, is not that the individual work has been eliminated as a candidate for appreciation, even in cases where writers adopt strategies of fragmentation which they set in opposition to traditional ideas about unified and completed works of art. The real lesson to draw from the narrator's emphasis on artistic variations concerns the importance of groups and clusters of works in an account of the objects of interpretation and appreciation.

The objects of interpretation, the Borgesian narrator seems to tell us, are not just texts. Nor are they works taken in isolation. Instead, the story draws our attention to a category of works the interpretation of which requires us to focus on a work's relation to other works—the term for this category being 'versions'. According to the etymology (our word derives from the Latin *vertere*), to create a version of something is to give it another 'turn', to keep a range of features constant while altering or refining others (whence the close link between versions, variants, and variations). Yet this thought is stretched to cover a diversity of cases, so that we may usefully linger over some of the several senses of 'version'.

A first category of versions may be identified in terms of the maker's expectation that a version will serve as a reasonably viable surrogate or stand-in for some work of art of which it is a version. In a literary context, translations are central examples of this sort of version, and this in keeping with one of the term's earliest and most widespread senses (whereby students translating from French to Latin and back write both '*version et thème*'). Menard's *oeuvre* includes versions, in this sense, of works by Quevedo and Ruy López de Seguar; then there is Borges's Spanish version of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, and so on. More generally, the 'x is a version of y' relation does not involve any sort of pretension to textual or work equivalence in any strict sense. Instead, the relation is a functional one involving epistemic

[30] For more on this issue, see Chapter 7. Borges critics do not always respect this point about the selection of background premisses in the interpretation of a work of fiction. For example, Daniel Balderston (ironically?) tells us that the narrator has 'suppressed' works from the list of Pierre Menard's publications, and cites, as evidence, the actual world existence of Dr Pierre Menard's *L'Écriture et le subconscient: psychanalyse et graphologie* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1931); see Balderston, *Out of Context: Historical Reference and Representation of Reality in Borges* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 18–38.

access achieved through approximate semantic and other sorts of equivalence or similarity. So if we are asked whether the translation is a different work from the work translated, the only sober answer is 'yes', even if we think that in reading the translation, we rightly or wrongly hope to win some genuine measure of acquaintance with features of the original. Some of the commentators write of Pierre Menard's *Quixote* as a version, in just this sense, of Cervantes's work, and they suggest that the moral of the story is that even the most perfect translation generates a distinct work.[31] This is at best a metaphorical insight, since Menard's 'translation' of Cervantes would be of no help at all to anyone incapable of reading the original work. As far as appreciation goes, we can always take an interest in the various surrogate versions of a work, but neither comprehension nor appreciation of the work requires this.

Another type of version is comprised of remakes and adaptations. Such versions are not meant to serve as surrogates for an anterior work of art. Instead, they take some artistic item as a source and introduce sufficient novelty to give it another spin. For example, Menard has written a version of Valéry's *Le Cimetière marin*, and a fragment of the sort of transmetrification the narrator describes has been attempted by Gérard Genette.[32] Here the 'x is a version of y' relation can be broadly characterized as x's having been patterned upon some y, some of the salient artistic or aesthetic features and functions of which it reproduces, while intentionally diverging from y in any number of other respects. Even if we allow that Menard's and Cervantes's texts are type-identical, it is probably best to classify Menard's *Quixote* project in the same loose category of versions, in spite of the narrator's hyperbolic talk of a literal re-creation of the work Cervantes entitled *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha*. Some theorists—Genette for example—contend that all literary works are versions in this sense, as imitation, transformation, and *bricolage* are essential to artistic creativity. Whether a given work has a specific model or 'hypotext' which it reworks and to which it refers is another matter.

With regard to this broad category of versions, the question of the object of interpretation and appreciation becomes rather tangled. If we are only

[31] For example, George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 70–3; and Maurice Blanchot, *Le Livre à venir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1959), 133.

[32] Gérard Genette, *Palimpsestes* (Paris: Seuil, 1982), ch. 44.

interested in Valéry's poem we need not look at Menard's transposition, but the strange qualities of the latter would be impossible to recognize unless we were familiar with the model. Parodies and pastiches clearly must be appreciated in light of their targets, and understanding a version's merits and defects may require reference to anterior versions of a common model. The Borgesian emphasis on the idea that the object of interpretation is not just a work, but relations between works and groups of works, could seem to have some rather disastrous consequences if taken to the extreme. If every work can only be a version of some anterior work, then how did literary creation ever get started? And it is unacceptable to propose that competent appreciation of any particular work requires the appreciation of all anterior works. Does Borges really tell us that the only apt object of interpretation is the Library of Babel in its entirely?

I think not, even if aspects of the story might seem to indicate otherwise. As is well known, the Borgesian narrator of the Pierre Menard story goes on in his final paragraph to promote an art of reading based on anachronism and erroneous attributions, an instance of which would be interpreting the *Odyssey* as though it had been influenced by the *Aeneid*. It is far from obvious how such a proposal squares with the *Quixote* considerations, since the object of such an anachronistic reading or 'performance interpretation' is surely not the *Odyssey* taken as a historically situated literary work.[33] This is the point where some readers champion the story's narrator as the great post-modern liberator of the reader, while others declare him a fool and advert to Borgesian irony, elitist politics, or the miracle of auto-deconstruction.[34] It should be added, however, that the narrator's own critical approach to Menard's texts generally respects a basic life-and-works critical framework. The narrator's stated objective is not to present an

[33] For the term 'performance interpretation' with reference to the Borges story, see Nicholas Wolterstorff, 'Resurrecting the Author', in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, xxvii, ed. Peter A. French, Theodore E. Uehling, Jr., and Howard K. Wettstein (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Indiana Press, 2003), 4–24.

[34] For one critic, the upshot of the tale is that 'to read a fiction is to reread a reading rather than a writing', from which it is said to follow that 'there is, potentially, an infinity of *Don Quixotes* over time, each written by different authors and read by different readers'; Floyd Merrell, *Unthinking Thinking: Jorge Luis Borges, Mathematics, and the New Physics* (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 1991), 195; for a sampling of other readings, see Harold Bloom, ed., *Jorge Luis Borges* (New York: Chelsea House, 1986), 149–60.

isolated argument in literary ontology, but to rectify an inaccurate newspaper account of Menard's *oeuvre*. Individual works and fragments, both published and unpublished, are identified and related to each other, while reference is made to information conveyed in personal correspondence and facts about the literary-historical context in which these projects were situated. Most importantly, it is clear that the narrator does not seek merely to describe an arbitrarily selected collection of inscriptions—an impersonal segment of some vast intertext or hypertext, but attempts to characterize the attitudes and schemes orienting Menard's pursuits. Menard, like other writers, wrote works and fragments of literature, not just texts in an endless hypertext, and we can take them as objects of appreciation by attempting to reconstruct the projects and contexts in which these writings were situated.

Stephen Davies helpfully remarks that if the ontology of art is to be 'other than a philosopher's game', it must reflect the '"what's" and "why's" informing the esteem that draws us to art works'.[35] And as Davies's specific observations regarding the complex, context-sensitive individuations of musical performances and works indicate, the esteem in question draws us not only to works, but to a variety of other sorts of artistic items, including improvisations, extemporizations, and versions of various sorts.[36] Similarly, a lesson of the Borges tale is not simply that the category of determinate works is distinct from that of qualitatively identical texts, but that the objects of appreciation, including works, come in many versions, which fact makes it particularly hard to pin down the 'locus of appreciation'.

[35] Stephen Davies, *Musical Works and Performances: A Philosophical Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 9. Cf. David Davies on the 'pragmatic constraint' on the ontology of art, *Art as Performance*, 18.

[36] Davies offers no generalizations about versions, but frequently employs the term in different senses. See, for example, *Musical Works and Performances*, 8, 22, 28, 58, 96, 121, 122.

Chapter 6

INTENTION AND THE INTERPRETATION OF ART

> Ek gret effect men write in place lite;
> Th'entete is al, and nat the lettres space.
> (*Troilus and Criseyde*, v.1629–1630)

The theory of the interpretation of works of art is a fitting subject for a lengthy treatise.[1] This chapter is not, however, meant to be any such thing. Instead, my primary goal here is the relatively limited one of setting forth and defending some restricted intentionalist principles pertaining to just one kind of interpretative project. To that end I compare this position to a kindred account, the hypothetical intentionalism delineated by Jerrold Levinson, as well as a rival, fictionalist approach. This chapter is also the occasion for me to make good on a contention announced at the outset of this book, which is that our understanding of interpretation can be advanced by improving our account of intentions. Consequently, some of what we have gleaned about intentions in previous chapters will be put to work along the way. I shall also find it helpful to linger here over other questions pertaining to the nature of authorial and artistic intentions, focusing, in particular, on fictionalist approaches to artist's intentions and on a contrast between so-called semantic and categorial intentions.

As 'interpretation' and its cognates are labels for a large and messy constellation of issues and items, it is important to be especially clear in setting one's agenda. Accordingly, the chapter begins with what I hope will

[1] The *genus* and species of interpretation are already a matter of complex disquisitions, and there are also sophisticated proposals for the classification of divergent ways of classifying interpretations; see Staffan Carlshamre and Anders Pettersson, eds., *Types of Interpretation in the Aesthetic Disciplines* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 2003).

be accepted as a straightforward evocation of a paradigm of one kind of interpretative situation. I then go on to identify some of the general theses about interpretation which philosophers have been willing to defend. This approach allows me to identify the topic that provides the focus of this chapter and to situate that topic alongside others not to be tackled here.

AN INTERPRETATIVE SITUATION

Imagine a situation of the following sort: you have become acquainted with a work of art, but remain somewhat puzzled by it. 'What does *this* mean?', you ask yourself, referring to some feature, or constellation of features, which you find intriguing and mysterious, and which you have trouble relating to those aspects of the work you already recognize and understand. For example, you notice that there is a face on the shield held by one of the Roman soldiers depicted in a crucifixion picture painted by a medieval Bohemian painter, and you wonder what symbolic or other meaning this face has. Your curiosity is not driven by the assumption that there need be a simple answer to your question. You might hope to find out what specific idea is conveyed by this seemingly isolated symbol or detail, yet you are also after a more general way of making sense of the entire picture, a way of responding to a whole series of questions raised by both its puzzling and more comprehensible features. Perhaps you discuss the matter with others, who may advance one or several ways of understanding the work. Or, consulting critical essays, you discover an array of alternative interpretations, many of which are presented by their authors as correcting previous, inadequate conjectures. You set out to compare these rival critical approaches, assessing them in relation to features of the work.

This is, I take it, at least one central kind of situation the theory of art interpretation is about. Now here are some very general things which philosophers have said about this sort of situation:

(1) At least some questions about a work's meaning are about determinate states of affairs. It does not follow, however, that we can always find out what these are.

(2) There are no definitive answers to interpretative questions. It is not like asking how many siblings someone has. Instead, interpreters 'construct' or invent the meanings of the work.

(3) Two or more rival and incompatible responses to one's questions about a work of art's meaning may be equally good.

(4) Some interpretations are valuable, not because they answer questions about the work's meaning, but because they manifest the interpreter's creativity, or because they enhance someone's enjoyment and appreciation of the work.

(5) When two answers to an interpretative question are equally good in all other respects, we should opt for the one that makes the work artistically better and more interesting.

(6) Interpretations must be assessed on a case-by-case basis, as there are no overarching standards or principles. Different factors will work differently in different cases, so one must 'play it by ear'.

(7) Answers to interpretative questions about a work's meanings and other features are not to be sought in any source of information about the artist's intentions, such as interviews, biographies, or letters. For example, if a voluminous and detailed diary kept by William Shakespeare were to be discovered, its contents would have no implications for the meanings of his plays and poetry.

(8) The adequacy of an interpretation can be assessed with reference to standards of interpretation. Such standards are relative to different interpretative projects or goals, and the choice between these projects is a normative question. If what you are after is amusement and an innovative way of reading the work, a correct interpretation could even thwart your ambition.

(9) One (central) standard of interpretative success is this: the best interpretation is the one that offers the most comprehensive identification of the work's meaning.

(10) The work's meaning is determined by———.

In what follows I shall not even begin to attempt to unpack and explain all of these claims or to assess the complicated argumentation that surrounds them. Readers desirous of a more comprehensive account are advised to work their way through Robert Stecker's *Interpretation and Construction: Art,*

Speech, and the Law, and the essays in recent collections of papers on interpretation.[2] The point of my list, aside from showing what a tangled matter the theory of interpretation has become, is to make it possible to point out that my central question will be this: given (1), (8), and (9), how is the blank in (10) to be filled in? I do not assume that this is the only important question pertaining to the interpretation of the arts. I shall simply set aside those claims, such as (2) and (4), which would lead us away from that question; nor shall I offer elaborate justifications for the various assumptions that lead us to (10), namely, (1), (8), and (9). I move on, then, in the next section to survey some rival positions taken with regard to the completion of (10).

An obvious, preliminary question concerns the meaning of 'meaning' in (10). At this point in the discussion, I want to refrain from setting forth some controversial, general answer to this question, since some rival accounts of interpretation build upon rival theses about the specific nature and status of semantic properties, some of which will emerge below. Instead, it would be best to centre the discussion around items that any mildly plausible account of a work of art's meaning would have to cover. I take it that this includes the events, characterizations, and situations figuring in the story conveyed by a novel, play, film, or other narrative work, as well as the emotions, attitudes, and themes expressed by any work of art. Whether there is a sharp or principled boundary between a work's semantic and other relevant properties is not an issue I shall linger over here. Presumably some aesthetic and artistic properties are uncontroversially semantic

[2] Robert Stecker, *Interpretation and Construction: Art, Speech, and the Law* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003); see also his *Artworks: Definition, Meaning, Value* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), chs. 6–11; and for a survey, 'Interpretation' in *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, ed. Berys Gaut and Dominic McIver Lopes (London: Routledge, 2001), 239–51; Michael Krausz, ed., *Is There a Single Right Interpretation?* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002); Annette Barnes, *On Interpretation: A Critical Analysis* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988); Patrick Colm Hogan, *On Interpretation: Meaning and Inference in Law, Psychoanalysis, and Literature* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1996); Paul Thom, *Making Sense: A Theory of Interpretation* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000); and Joseph Margolis and Tom Rockmore, eds., *The Philosophy of Interpretation* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002). I also recommend Gaut's 'Interpreting the Arts: The Patchwork Theory', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 51 (1993), 597–609. Gaut offers cogent criticisms of formalism as well as of various forms of intentionalism stronger than the one defended here, which is meant to be compatible with his thesis that 'intentions do not play an *exhaustive* role in specifying the correct interpretation of art' (606).

(central examples being the sorts of representational and depictive features I have just evoked), whereas others are not (elegance, skilfulness, originality, and repetitiveness being fairly standard examples). Yet these two sorts of qualities or features of works are often related in *meaningful* ways within a given work, so that recognition of the work's non-semantic features can be crucial to an understanding and assessment of semantic ones, and vice versa. This has implications for how the blank in statement (10) should be filled in.

THESES ABOUT THE WORK'S MEANING

In its extreme version, intentionalism holds that a work's meaning and the actual author's intentions with regard to the work's meaning are logically equivalent. I call this '*absolute intentionalism*'.[3] As this thesis is anything but obvious, it is probably a good idea to spell it out a bit more. The key idea is that in intentionally creating a work, the artist (or group of persons acting in concert) frames and acts on intentions with regard to the features of the projected work, including the work's meanings. The absolute intentionalist's thesis is that the finished work's meanings are all and only those that were intended in this manner: if an author intends to make a work *W* that has meaning *m*, and indeed makes *W*, then *W* has *m*; and, if a work, *W*, has meaning *m*, then *W*'s having that meaning was intended by the author in creating the work. In short, the absolute intentionalist fills in the blank in (10) with 'the author's intentions with regard to the work's meanings', and

[3] This view is associated, among others, with E. D. Hirsch, Jr.'s *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967); P. D. Juhl, *Interpretation: An Essay in the Philosophy of Literary Criticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980); Stephen Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels, 'Against Theory', in W. J. T. Mitchell, ed. *Against Theory: Literary Studies and the New Pragmatism* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 11–30; and William Irwin, *Intentionalist Interpretation: A Philosophical Explanation and Defense* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1999). Hirsch's views, by the way, were not static, and on one reading his view is quite distinct from that of Knapp and Michaels. On this topic, see Gary Iseminger, 'Actual Intentionalism vs. Hypothetical Intentionalism', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 54 (1996), 319–26. For background on Hirsch, see Henry Staten, 'The Secret Name of Cats: Deconstruction, Intentional Meaning, and the New Theory of Reference', in *Redrawing the Lines: Analytic Philosophy, Deconstruction, and Literary Theory*, ed. Reed Way Dasenbrock (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 27–48. Hirsch's later, ethical grounds for absolute intentionalism are convincingly critiqued in Thom, *Making Sense*, 91–3; cf. Hirsch, *The Aims of Interpretation* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

can supplement this claim with an account of the nature of meaning-constitutive expressive or communicative intentions. (Absolute intentionalism is, by the way, the strategy of interpretation that Criseyde recommends to Troilus in the lines from her letter cited as an epigraph to this chapter. She puts this advice to a deceitful end, since she does not want him to fathom *all* of her intentions.)

Before continuing, I should point out that absolute intentionalism is compatible with disparate assumptions about the nature of intentions, though it has generally been advocated by theorists who think of intentions as real and effective mental states akin to 'willings' or volitions.[4] Odd though it may seem, absolute intentionalism has on occasion been yoked to a strikingly anti-realistic notion of intention where 'author' is just the name for whatever sort of meaning-constitutive locus the interpreter projects. *Anti-realist absolute intentionalism*, then, has it that all meanings of the work are authorial intentions, yet construes the latter as interpreters' instrumental projections.[5] Constraints linked to some conception of psychological verisimilitude may or may not be appended to this version of intentionalism. In *fictionalist intentionalism*, the interpreter imagines or makes believe that the text or structure was written with an array of decisive intentions, where the author is historically 'verisimilar', yet not believed to be identical to, the agent or agents who actually created the text or artefact. *Moderate fictionalist intentionalism* would do the same, while allowing that some of the work's meanings were not intended by the fictionalized author. *Textualist intentionalism* is the idea that meanings are determined by intentions, where intentions are viewed as if they were immanent in the text or work, it being added in a fictionalist vein that the *intentio opera* owes its emergence to the reader's conjectures.[6] A *conditionalist intentionalism* recommends

[4] Thus in the index to Hirsch's *Validity in Interpretation*, one reads: 'Intention. *See* Will'.

[5] For a proposal of this sort, see Stanley Fish, 'Biography and Intention', in *Contesting the Subject: Essays in the Posmodern Theory and Practice of Biography and Biographical Criticism*, ed. W. H. Epstein (West Lafayette, Ill.: Purdue University Press, 1991), 9–16.

[6] For this approach, see Umberto Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1990), and 'Overinterpreting Texts', in *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 45–66. Note that this is a view which, if it is to be taken quite literally, requires a very broad—and in my view unacceptably implausible—conception of what can count as an intention, unless, that is, 'text' is rethought as designating an agent's action, and intentions are somehow parts of actions. Whence a good motivation for appending a fictionalist clause to this idea.

conjectures as to meanings the author 'could have intended', where the *possibilia* in question are appealing ones in worlds close to the actual artist's.[7] An even broader view would be that interpretation targets whatever the work 'could mean', in one of the several possible senses of 'could'.[8] I raise criticisms against fictionalist accounts of interpretation below.

The counter-thesis of absolute intentionalism, *absolute anti-intentionalism*, negates both of the conditionals figuring in the absolute intentionalist's thesis.[9] Some meanings intended by the author are, then, not meanings of the work (because some intentions are not successfully realized), and some meanings of the work are unintended. What is more, absolute anti-intentionalism holds that authorial intentions are never decisive or determinant with regard to a work's meanings, and that the former are in some sense irrelevant to the interpreter's tasks. Absolute anti-intentionalists have different ways of filling in the blank in (10), but they agree to exclude 'the author's intentions' from the list of meaning's conditions, and this is what distinguishes their view from various sorts of intentionalism. They say, for example, that the work's meanings are determined by the features of the text, performance, artefact, or other arrangement or display constitutive of the work. They sometimes bring in other, contextual factors as well. It may be worth recalling in this connection that the authors of 'The Intentional Fallacy' allowed that the evidence 'internal to the poem' included not only the text and the language in which it was written, but 'all that makes a language and culture'.[10]

[7] See Jerrold Levinson, 'Two Notions of Interpretation', in *Interpretation and its Boundaries*, ed. Arto Haapala and Ossi Naukkarinen (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1999), 2–21.

[8] For an insightful delineation of relevant senses of 'could', see Stecker, *Interpretation and Construction*, 73–4.

[9] Staunch anti-intentionalists are numerous. For a start, consult Daniel O. Nathan, 'Categories and Intentions', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 31 (1973), 539–41; 'Irony and the Author's Intentions', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 22 (1982), 246–56; 'Irony, Metaphor, and the Problem of Intention', in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press, 1992), 183–202; and George Dickie and W. K. Wilson, 'The Intentional Fallacy: Defending Beardsley', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 53 (1995), 233–50. Amongst the many precursors was Paul Valéry, who wrote in 1934, regarding the 'famous question of interpretation', that 'the intention of the author has no greater value than that of any other reader—since the author's power dies out in the work, which must impose everything', cited in *Œuvres*, ed. Jean Hytier (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), i.61 (my trans.).

[10] William K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley, 'The Intentional Fallacy', *Sewanee Review*, 54 (1946), 468–88; reprinted in *On Literary Intention*, ed. David Newton-De Molina (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1976), 1–13, at 13.

The anti-intentionalist thesis is compatible with a range of assumptions about intention, but would be easier to defend were it established that intentions were epiphenomenal, or played a negligible role in the actual production of a work of art. Claims to the effect that intentions are indeterminate or unknowable also seem to make matters easier for the anti-intentionalist.

There are intermediary positions as well. *Moderate, constrained, or partial intentionalism* is the thesis that authorial intentions figure in (10), yet combine with other factors, such as features of the finished text, artefact, or performance, and aspects of the historical and artistic context in which the work was created.[11] Unlike absolute intentionalism, this view allows that there are unintended meanings, and that some authorial intentions are not successfully realized, even when they are acted upon. Yet the artist's intentions are partly constitutive of some of the work's meanings, and thus are necessary to 'work meaning' taken globally. Just how this account works will be further discussed below. It may be worth recalling here that this sort of intentionalism is compatible with a highly tolerant or broad view with regard to the aims and standards of interpretation more generally. Texts and artefacts can be put to all sorts of uses having diverse values, and the satisfaction of curiosity concerning the work's actual meaning is only one possible goal. Yet it is the intentionalist's thesis that if one's goal is that of understanding and appreciating the work of art in a historically and

[11] Various philosophers have defended views in this vein. For a start, see Gary Iseminger, 'An Intentional Demonstration?', in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Iseminger, 76–96, and Noël Carroll's 'Anglo-American Aesthetics and Contemporary Criticism: Intention and the Hermeneutics of Suspicion', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 51 (1993), 245–52. According to Christopher Norris, even Jacques Derrida should be included amongst the intentionalists, as Derrida is said to have defended the thesis that authorial intention is 'an idea that provides the "indispensable guardrail" for any reading of a text'; see Norris, 'Limited Think', in *On Literary Theory and Philosophy: A Cross-Disciplinary Encounter*, ed. Richard Freadman and Lloyd Reinhardt (London: Macmillan, 1991), 187–212, at 202. Yet in the passage from *Of Grammatology* cited by Norris in support of his surprising claim, Derrida diminishes the importance of reference to intentions by writing that 'this indispensable guardrail has always only *protected*, it has never *opened*, a reading'; *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Spivak (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 158. Though I am not so sure I follow the distinction between protecting and opening a reading, Derrida's 'never' seems much too strong to make him a steady friend of the intentionalists, and it does not strike me that his readings of Plato, Kant, Mallarmé, et al. have been guided or protected a great deal by the application of intentionalist principles.

artistically appropriate (that is, non-anachronistic) manner—or as we sometimes say, *qua*, or in its capacity as, a work of art, then a concern with intended meaning is necessary to the successful realization of one's interpretative project.[12]

Partial intentionalism can be conjoined with different assumptions about the nature and function of intentions, though it would be hard to defend if epiphenomenalist contentions turned out to be right. Yet other options in the theory of intention and intentional action remain open. For example, Noël Carroll links his defence of what he calls 'moderate actualist intentionalism' to a 'neo-Wittgensteinian' theory of intentions, whereby intention is 'a purpose, manifest in the artwork', not logically independent of the work.[13] Such an emphasis on a kind of 'intention in action' postulated as immanent in the work of art diverges from the functionalist account of intention defended in Chapter 1, where the logical gap between intendings, actions, and results was underscored. To advert to the example discussed at the very outset of this book, we do not want an account of the work of art, or of the artist's intentions, that effaces the difference between the skilful painting of the lather on the horse's mouth and a similar result achieved by luck. Or to shift to a better-known example, if Henry James had fully intended to write a ghost story when he authored *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), but unintentionally ended up writing a *text* that functions very well as an instance of unreliable narration, we misrepresent his accomplishment if we read the *work* as a cleverly devised case of 'hesitation' and deliberate ambiguity. (For more on the text/work distinction crucial to the latter phrase, see Chapter 3.)

Hypothetical intentionalism similarly pertains to the goal of identifying work or utterance meaning and its determinants. Yet unlike other forms of intentionalism, this position links utterance meaning to an audience uptake condition, and the latter is in turn linked to the actual author's intentions. In William E. Tolhurst's proposal in this vein, a work's meaning is an interpreter's hypothesis about the author's meaning, where that hypothesis is based solely on the evidence which members of the author's

[12] Thanks to Stephen Davies for prompting me to clarify my position on this point.

[13] Carroll, 'Art, Intention, and Conversation', in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Iseminger, 97–131, at 100–1.

intended audience possess by virtue of membership in that audience.[14] In what Jerrold Levinson calls 'hypothetical intentionalism', the author's categorial intentions are decisive for apt interpretations. Interpreters should disregard an artist's semantic intentions and opt for interpretations which, while remaining compatible with the artefact, render the work artistically valuable. This proposal is taken up at some length below, once some additional features of the larger dialectic have been discussed.

CLAIMS AND COUNTERCLAIMS

Absolute intentionalism has been defended by means of a dilemma: given that all linguistic and other expressions are 'ambiguous' (or more precisely, that the information they intrinsically carry, or the thoughts or propositions they express, are necessarily indeterminate), and given that they can only be determined or filled in by author's intentions, choices, and decisions, either there is no such thing as determinate work meaning, or the latter is reducible to, or determined by the author's intentions.

One response to this intentionalist argument is to deny its conclusion while accepting the thesis of semantic indeterminacy. This would mean there is no fact of the matter about what any artistic utterances or symbolic artefacts mean; people could neither agree nor disagree over what was said or meant or expressed in a work. This is hard to live with, and self-defeating in the absence of a sharp boundary between the semantics of artistic and non-artistic works or utterances. Advocates of semantic indeterminacy tend to end up speaking of misreadings and interpretative rigour, which hardly makes a lot of sense if there are no semantic facts, or true and false theses about meanings. It is more plausible to say that the interpreter does not have to choose to be trammelled by facts about what a work means, but that is a different proposition, which I set aside in choosing to focus on (9) and (10) at the outset of this chapter.

A second response to the intentionalist argument is to accept some version of the antecedent clause about the semantic indeterminacy of sentences and such, while denying that authorial intention is the only

[14] William E. Tolhurst, 'On What a Text Is and How It Means', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 19 (1979), 3–14.

possible source of semantic determination; other factors, such as linguistic and artistic conventions and contextual factors, can determine a text's meanings, thereby constituting an at least partially determinate meaning in a given context. The anti-intentionalist goes on to point to the logical gap between making a work with particular intentions, and actually realizing such intentions by creating a work which, once completed, effectively has or expresses the intended meaning. Mrs Malaprop may get her points across, but she does so in funny ways that she did not intend, and the absolute intentionalist account is ill-equipped to describe the difference between this utterer's meanings and the meanings of the utterance she produces.[15] The correct explanation of her successful communicative actions depends on recognition of the rift between her intentions (with regard to what her *words* mean) and actual utterance. There are crucial differences between what she says, what she means, and what she communicates. In sum, what Alfred F. MacKay called 'a Humpty Dumpty account' does not seem promising, for it does not codify the difference between the speaker's meaning and the meaning of the utterance.[16] (We

[15] On the significance of malapropisms for semantics, see Donald Davidson, 'A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs', in *Philosophical Grounds of Rationality: Intentions, Categories, Ends*, ed. Richard E. Grandy and Richard Warner (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 157–74. Cf. Stecker, *Interpretation and Construction*, 12–14.

[16] Alfred MacKay, 'Mr Donnellan and Humpty Dumpty on Referring', *Philosophical Review*, 77 (1968), 197–202; in his response to MacKay, Donnellan contended that MacKay conflated claims about meaning and reference; see Keith S. Donnellan, 'Putting Humpty Dumpty Together Again', *Philosophical Review*, 77 (1968), 203–15. For criticisms of absolute intentionalism in the theory of interpretation, see Jerry R. Hobbs, *Literature and Cognition* (Stanford, Calif.: Center for the Study of Language and Communication, 1990), 9 ff.; George M. Wilson, 'Again Theory: On Speaker's Meaning, Linguistic Meaning, and the Meaning of a Text', in *Rules and Conventions: Literature, Philosophy, Social Theory*, ed. Mette Hjort (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 1–31. Proponents of absolute intentionalism tend to rely at this point in the discussion on some kind of distinction between meaning and significance, where meaning is intended, and significance is not, or at least need not be. This distinction is not as straightforward as some writers seem to assume, particularly if we follow Hirsch's contention that meaning is 'what is represented by a text; it is what the author meant by his use of a particular sign sequence; it is what the signs represent', whereas significance is a relationship between meaning, as defined, and something else; *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 8. While I do not think that the meaning–significance distinction is devoid of theoretical value, application of such a contrast is question-begging in the context of a dispute in the theory of interpretation over the determination of a work's meaning—which point was made quite well by an advocate of absolute intentionalism, P. D. Juhl, in *Interpretation: An Essay in the Philosophy of Literary Criticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 27 ff. Thanks to William Irwin for prompting

can insist on this point without assuming that there is a perfectly sharp boundary here. There are many cases where the distinction works smoothly, and others where the classification is less obvious.)

Anti-intentionalists have an array of arguments, many of which involve epistemological and metaphysical worries about the very status and determinacy of intentions and other states of mind. E. D. Hirsch offers an excellent response to the epistemological worries, the key point being that the anti-intentionalist shifts epistemic standards in a self-serving way, inconsistently imposing severe, risk-averse principles when it comes to conjectures about authorial intentions.[17] I have addressed myself—successfully I hope—to some of the other very general metaphysical objections to intentionalist psychology as a whole in Chapter 1. A sensible stance on the place of intentions in the theory of the interpretation of the arts is not the contention that anti-intentionalism flows from the winning metaphysical critique of the Transcendental Subject or of the problematical *philosophème* of Agency as such; nor is it reasonable to reach for an anaemic conception of intentions *per se*, which simply begs the question, while meshing poorly with well-entrenched practices and attributions. The opponents of intentionalism are invited to offer a moderately comprehensive and plausible account of the manner in which meaningful complex artistic artefacts come into being, and blank gestures in the direction of anonymous 'textual processes', 'automatic writing', 'discursive strategies', and 'microphysics' do not suffice.

The anti-intentionalist's best argument takes the form of a dilemma: either the artist's intentions are successfully realized in the text or structure produced by the artist, in which case the interpreter need not refer to them; or the artist's intentions are not successfully realized in the artefact or performance (taken in conjunction with other, non-intentional features of the context), in which case reference to them is insufficient to justify a related claim about the work's meanings.[18] As far as I can see, absolute

me to dot the 'i's on this point. For his favourable account of Humpty Dumpty, see *Intentionalist Interpretation: A Philosophical Explanation and Defense* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1999), 56–60.

[17] Hirsch, 'In Defense of the Author', in *On Literary Intention*, ed. David Newton-De Molina (Edinburgh: University Press, 1976), 87–103.

[18] For a recent mobilization of this argument, see Dominic McIver Lopes, *Understanding Pictures* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 159–60.

intentionalists lack a convincing response to this argument. To deny that there are unsuccessful or unrealized semantic intentions offends against any plausible account of the actual author's intentions and actions, as it is easy enough to identify meanings that were not the object of the author's intentions and which conflict with the latter. In case there is any doubt, I shall devote a longish paragraph to an example, which will, I hope, also be of some interest to those already persuaded.

Writing under the *nom de plume* Isak Dinesen, Karen Blixen first published a story entitled 'The Uncertain Heiress' in English in 1949, and later prepared a version for publication in Danish. The story recounts a young woman's encounter with her rich Uncle Seneca, who proudly claims to have been the author of the series of murders attributed to Jack the Ripper. 'They gave me a name, "Jack" ', he tells his niece. 'It is a frisky name, a name for a sailor. Friskier than Seneca, do you not think so? And then, "the Ripper". Is not that brisk as well . . . smart?'[19] Composing her Danish version of this passage, Blixen seems to have worried that her audience would not know the meaning of the English word 'ripper', for she adds an explanatory interjection to Uncle Seneca's phrase: 'Og så, sammen med det, "the Ripper",—opsprætteren! [And so, along with that, "the Ripper",—the ripper!]'.[20] Blixen's Danish readers are explicitly told the meaning of 'ripper', and it seems reasonable to explain this aspect of Blixen's Danish text in terms of her communicative intent. What is unclear is why Uncle Seneca, who *in the make-believe of the fiction* is speaking his native English to his English niece, would feel any need to indicate the meaning of the word 'ripper'. Blixen's intention was to make sure her Danish audience could understand Uncle Seneca's ruminations on the name, but in trying to realize this intention, Blixen has indulged in a minor violation of the story's verisimilitude: people who share a language do not usually supply each other with perfectly redundant definitions of the words they use, and authors who want to write a plausible fiction should not make their characters deviate from this norm, which is what Blixen has done. In taking note of this deviation, we are most likely diverging in part from

[19] Isak Dinesen, 'The Uncertain Heiress', in *Carnival: Entertainments and Posthumous Tales* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 148–71, at 164.

[20] Karen Blixen, 'Onkel Seneca', in *Kongesønnerne og andre efterladte fortællinger*, ed. Frans Lasson (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1975), 225–48, at 243.

the understanding of the text Blixen had in mind, for she doubtless did not mean for her readers to notice—or at least linger over—the implausible and redundant nature of Uncle Seneca's interjection. Yet redundant it is, so here we have a case of a failure to realize certain intentions, as well as an instance of unintended meaning (the redundancy in the fiction, the uptake of which requires reference to authorial intentions and semantic conventions in Danish and English). Blixen is likely to have expected that her readers would understand and observe the literary convention that allows a story's Danish phrases to be taken (in make-believe) as direct quotations of an Englishman's utterances. The redundancy of Uncle Seneca's explanation is in part an artefact of the author's effort to cope with that convention's limitations. One may speculate that Blixen wanted her audience to get her meaning by following, but not focusing on, the convention. Danish readers were intended to understand Seneca's explanation, but were not supposed to focus on the author's explanatory intent.

The example helps to illustrate the thrust of the anti-intentionalist dilemma: we do not find out whether Blixen's intentions were successfully realized only by reference to those intentions, but by comprehending her texts' linguistic meanings given the relevant linguistic conventions. The most salient way the absolute intentionalist can coherently respond to the dilemma is by retreating to the position that the object of interpretation—or at least of the kind of interpretation the absolute intentionalist wants to defend—is just utterer's meaning, and not the meaning of the work.[21] Yet this amounts to changing the subject, as our point of departure was the theory of the interpretation of works of art, not just artists or artists' intentions. Although it makes good sense to think that artists' intentions are often expressive ones, such as the intention to perform some publicly observable action that will be an indication of a given attitude or state of mind (which the artist may or may not actually have), not all artistic intentions take this form, as others are a matter of the intention to produce a work which will, given certain conventions and contextual facts, have certain meanings (for a given audience). The latter sorts of intentions are

[21] Another tack the absolute intentionalist can take here is to reclassify the facts in terms of a meaning–significance distinction, yet as I indicated above, we lack independent grounds for believing that the latter cuts deep across the domain of semantic facts.

not successfully realized simply by virtue of being acted upon, for the artistic artefact or performance thereby produced must also effectively function conventionally in the targeted way, which is what Mrs Malaprop's sayings fail to do, even though they may nonetheless successfully convey some of the thoughts she was trying to communicate. Analogous considerations hold for works in non-verbal media.

The partial or moderate intentionalist has a response to the anti-intentionalist's dilemma. Some intentions, namely those pertaining to some types of *implicit* meaning, are not simply redundant with regard to the text's intrinsic features as far as the determination of utterance or work meaning is concerned. Implicit meaning is meaning that is not directly conveyed, but which is conveyed indirectly, that is, by means of the conveying of some other meaning. For example, the speaker or writer says that *p* in order to express *not-p*, and the latter is not just speaker's meaning, but *the meaning of the utterance*. A paradigmatic case is an ironic utterance. Mouthing 'Lovely weather today' on a bleak February morning in Stockholm, Folke, who has not lost his mind, directly expresses the thought or 'says' that the weather is fine, but the belief he implicitly conveys by this means is the opposite idea. Here utterance meaning and speaker's meaning mesh, while the meaning of the expression 'Lovely weather today', standardly interpreted in terms of the relevant linguistic conventions and contextual factors (determining who is speaking, and the referred-to spatio-temporal location), runs contrary to the speaker's implication that the weather is foul. (The contention here, by the way, is not that all implicit meaning derives from the speaker's intentions concerning what her actions are to indicate with regard to her beliefs and other attitudes. Signs, symbols, gestures, words, marks, and signals also have unintended implications. In Wayne A. Davis's example, the expression 'Mozart wrote over four hundred pieces of music' implies 'The natural logarithm of Mozart's last opus number exceeds 5.99.')[22]

With regard to the theory of art interpretation, these assumptions about implicit meaning allow us to argue that in cases where the artist intends to make a work in which certain meanings are implied without being

[22] Wayne A. Davis, *Meaning, Expression, and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 24.

explicitly stated, the intention is not redundant. This is so because in cases of even the most successful art-making, the work's implicit meanings are not immanent in the final artistic structure, display, arrangement, or text; nor are they fully determined by the latter in conjunction with conventions or other contextual factors alone—as the authors of 'The Intentional Fallacy' would have it. Such meanings are determined instead by other relational facts, the *relata* of which are authorial intentions and features of the text, artefact, or performance. Some implications are, of course, conventional, but other implied meanings of an utterance derive from relations between the author's intention, features of what is said, written, etc., and the context.[23] And this intentionalist position is compatible with the recognition that there are unintended meanings and other artistic qualities, as well as intended ones that go unrealized in the work. Intention is, then, *necessary* to such implicit meaning, but certainly not sufficient. This partial intentionalism is an alternative to the thesis that we can always fully understand a work in a historically and artistically appropriate manner without any uptake of the relevant intentions.

Partial intentionalism as a theory of interpretation follows from a very general thesis about the determination of the meaning of a work or utterance, the thought being that intentions are a key determinant of one kind of meaning. There are, however, differences amongst proponents of versions of constrained, moderate, or partial intentionalism with regard to the additional grounds that may be given in support of intentionalist strictures concerning the interpretation of works of art. To give two of these different lines of intentionalist argumentation labels, we may speak here of 'conversational' and 'axiological' intentionalist arguments.

To begin with the former, Carroll has advanced the argument that intentionalist constraints on interpretation follow directly from basic norms of conversation and communication, said to be applicable to all

[23] For background on speaker implicature, see Davis, *Implicature: Intention, Convention, and Principle in the Failure of Gricean Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). See also Stecker, *Interpretation and Construction*, 7 ff. I eschew here ongoing disputes in philosophy of language over what is to be included under 'what is said' as opposed to what is meant and what is communicated. I take my general approach to be compatible with a range of positions, except perhaps the most extreme literalisms. For a guide to some salient options with regard to the role of contextual factors in the determination of what is said, see François Recanati, *Literal Meaning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

(or at least most) appropriate art-interpretative projects.[24] The background premiss here ought to be fairly uncontroversial: whatever your theory of linguistic meaning may be, it is correct to assume that one key goal in conversational exchanges is that the speaker's words be interpreted along the intended lines, and this through the recognition of the speaker's intentions. The basic idea, then, is that utterance meaning in conversational contexts is a function of linguistic conventions, contextual factors, and the speaker's meaning; *given that the interpretation of art falls within the framework of conversation*, it follows that the meaning of a work of art will be determined by the same combination of factors, including the speaker's (or writer's or artist's) intended meaning.[25]

The italicized premiss in the last phrase (that artistic practices and conversation share the same basic semantic conditions) can, however, be challenged. We do not literally 'converse' with deceased authors and artists; nor should we assume that they necessarily worked with the aim of conversing with some contemporary audience. If, for example, I do not want to make the mistake of taking W. A. Mozart's *Ein Musikalischer Spaß* [*A Musical Joke*] (1784, K. 522) to be a botched composition, this is not because I take myself to be having a conversation with the great composer, or even because my interpretative attitude should be attuned to the fact that Mozart literally wanted to communicate something to persons hearing the piece in the sense of conveying some specific meaning or thought to them. There is, consequently, a limit to the 'cash value' of intentionalists' evocations of conversational norms and communicative practices in artistic contexts.

An intentionalist orientation towards interpretation need not be supported by the conversationalist premiss, for it can also be justified in terms of an interest in some (but not all) kinds of artistic value—namely, values pertaining specifically to the work as an artistic accomplishment having

[24] See Carroll, 'Art, Intention, and Conversation', in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. G. Iseminger, 97–131; another philosopher who contends that the reference to 'conversational interests' is crucial is Gary Iseminger, 'Actual vs. Hypothetical Intentionalism', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 54 (1996), 319–26. Iseminger also finds independent support for intentionalism in his account of art appreciation.

[25] Some anti-intentionalists retort here (implausibly in my view) that in everyday conversational exchanges, utterance meaning is determined without reference to speaker's meaning. For this counter-argument against Carroll, see George Dickie and W. Kent Wilson, 'The Intentional Fallacy: Defending Beardsley', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 53 (1995), 233–50.

determinate features, including semantic ones. The interests constitutive of such interpretative projects and practices motivate the acceptance of intentionalist norms of the restricted or constrained type defended here. Sometimes it is interesting and useful to interpret a text or artistic structure in ways that are clearly at variance with what the author intended to express or communicate with the work, and even in ways at variance with (what one recognizes as) the work's actual meanings. Yet on many occasions, what we are after is an understanding of the work that focuses on the author's intentional activities and accomplishments, and the success of such interpretative projects requires uptake of both successful and unsuccessful intentions, and of their relation to the utterance's meaning. If I want to understand and appreciate the humorous value of Mozart's musical joke, I must be attuned to his wilful imitation of the mistakes and shortcomings an inept composer might make, for if I fail to do that, I misunderstand the work and do not appreciate key aspects of its artistic value. Otherwise, I would miss the difference between a skilful realization of the artist's project and other kinds of outcomes. In sum, given some of our value-oriented pursuits, we want our interpretations to track the work's meaning, which in turn requires uptake of intentions, as these are sometimes decisive with regard to the work's implicit content, which in turn bears important relations to other features of the work, including artistic and aesthetic features.

So much for a relatively quick survey of some of the main theses and contentions surrounding the topic of this chapter. Reference to an actual example may help to make these threadbare indications more comprehensible and convincing.

INTENTIONS AND IMPLICIT CONTENT

In the 'Afterword' to her translation of *And Then*, a novel by Natsume Sōseki (the pen name of Kinnosuke Natsume), Norma Moore Field identifies the work as the second novel in a trilogy. Explicitly raising the issue of her grounds for speaking of a trilogy, she comments:

> After *Sanshirō* had appeared in the newspaper, Sōseki explained in an advance notice that he was entitling the next work 'And Then,' first because *Sanshirō* was about a

university student, and the next work would be about what 'then' happened; second, because *Sanshirō* was a simple man, but the new main character would be in a more advanced stage; and finally, a strange fate was to befall this character, but what 'then' followed would not be described. *The Gate*, the last novel in the trilogy, is about what 'then' might have followed. Obviously, these are only the most schematic links between the novels. The progression of age and situation of the central characters provides a framework for the complex interaction of Sōseki's lifelong themes. The three novels anticipate and harken back to each other in such a way that a consideration of them as a group becomes valuable.[26]

The commentator then goes on to detail some of these interrelations between the three novels. Some of her claims are supported by reference to the text's meanings, but she also bases her argument on an independent claim about the artist's intentions as stated in *Asahi Shimbun*, the newspaper in which the three novels were first published, in serial form, from 1908 to 1910. Field does not contend, for example, that the texts explicitly convey the idea that the main characters in each successive novel are literally continuations of the characters in the previous work(s). The student Sanshirō does not literally resurface in *And Then* having assumed the name Daisuke; nor is Daisuke his reincarnation (which is how Mishima Yukio links some of the characters in the novels belonging to his *Sea of Fertility* tetralogy). Instead, the relations between the stories conveyed in the trilogy are a matter of counterfactual ideas about possible relations between analogous fictional situations and agents in the three stories. For example, the story of Daisuke describes what 'might' have happened to someone like Sanshirō in similar sociohistorical circumstances. Such ideas about the counterfactual and analogical relations between fictional agents and events in the three stories of the trilogy are not part of the novels' explicit, literal story content, but to miss them would arguably be to fail to appreciate important aspects of the novels as well as significant links between them. Nor does it seem adequate to say that the novels are ambiguous between the novelist's intended sociological reading and its contrary, for on such an interpretation, Sōseki failed to produce the kind of works he was aiming at. Nor is it essential to the example that the author revealed his intentions in a newspaper article. He might also have chosen not to do so,

[26] Norma Moore Field, 'Afterword', *And Then: Natsume Sōseki's Novel* Sorekara (Rowland, Vermont, and Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1988), 258–78; at 266. Perhaps I should add that though I find Field's reading plausible, the accuracy of her contentions is not essential to my argument.

while nonetheless composing his trilogy with these very intentions; perceptive readers, alerted by the title *Sorekara* [*And Then*], could have arrived at such a reading, which would, by virtue of its correspondence with the intended implicit meanings, have been correct.

Yet here is where an objection to this line of thought finds its point of departure. Although it may be allowed that Norma Moore Field's comments on implicit meanings in the trilogy are an example of perceptive criticism, and that the partial intentionalist's principles are laudable in covering such examples of interpretative success, the objection has it that these principles are too broad to rule out other, unappealing cases. More specifically, the objection hinges on the standard of success which the intentionalist employs in thinking about intentions concerning a work's implicit content: under what conditions does someone's intention merely to imply or implicate some proposition by means of some utterance or work succeed? The thought is that if there are no such standards, unacceptable consequences will follow; yet attempts to develop such standards, it is objected, lead to circularity and other problems.

These unacceptable consequences are sometimes evoked by means of examples in which alternative authorial intentions are imagined.[27] Thus we tell a story in which a Japanese novelist—let's call him Sōseki the Strange—holds a press conference in which he sincerely and accurately reveals his intention that the three main characters in his trilogy were meant to be the successive appearances of a Martian in disguise. Such a reading is coherent with the textual evidence in the sense that nothing in the texts, standardly and literally interpreted, explicitly contradicts such a claim. Yet the Martian story-line seems tacked on and extraneous, and most if not all readers would have failed to think of it had they not read the

[27] This kind of objection takes various forms in the literature. David K. Lewis evokes a Conan Doyle who secretly believes in purple gnomes; see his 'Truth in Fiction', *Philosophical Papers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), i.261–80. In Jerrold Levinson's version of this challenge, we are asked to imagine that we discover that Franz Kafka's intentions with regard to '*Ein Landarzt*' were simply a matter of criticizing rural medical practices. Should we not reject any hermeneutic principle that would have the deflationary consequence of forcing us to ignore the rich symbolic dimensions of Kafka's story? See his 'Intention and Interpretation in Literature', in *The Pleasures of Aesthetics: Philosophical Essays* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 175–213, and for the discussion of the Kafka example, 184–6. A slightly different version of this essay appeared as 'Intention and Interpretation: A Last Look', in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Iseminger, 221–56.

interview. Do we not want to deny the intentionalist's idea that the fact that the author wrote with this implicit content in mind suffices to make such a daft interpretation the correct reading of the story?

There are two ways to go here. One is to respond negatively to the last question. That means we would accept the Martian reading and seek to show why an actualist intentionalism can be viable in the absence of a more stringent success condition on intentions regarding implicit meanings—the minimal (and I should think default) standard of success being simply that the intentions are compatible with the linguistic and conventional meanings of the text or artefact taken in its target or intended context.[28] Clearly, if no features of the novels' characterizations resonate with the Martian intention, the latter could be discounted. Yet should it turn out, on the contrary, that this authorial 'clue' opens up previously undetected connotations of various features of the text, the partial intentionalist would accept this new reading, even if one of its implications were that the novel is far less worthwhile as a result. The consolation would be that this is indeed a strange case, and that in other ones, such as that of the actual Sōseki, things worked otherwise. The other option is to try to block the Martian reading by imposing some more restrictive kind of filter or constraint specifying which intentions actually determine utterance or work meaning. In the next section I discuss at some length a couple of influential approaches that adopt this strategy. The minimal 'meshing' success condition, which is the approach I favour, is explored further in Chapter 7 with reference to the determination of the contents of the story conveyed by a cinematic work of fiction. The minimal success condition, I end up saying, is important, even though there is no methodology to be employed in drawing the line.

HYPOTHETICAL INTENTIONALISM

According to a proposal made by William E. Tolhurst, the apt target of interpretation is the meaning of an utterance or work; this is not (necessarily) the actual author's intention or the utterer's meaning. This

[28] Cf. here Stecker, *Interpretation and Construction*: 'An utterance does mean what a speaker intends if the intention is apt to be recognized in part because of the conventional meaning of the words used, or of a context that extends those meanings' (14).

is a crucial point, shared by all but a reductive intentionalist for whom there is no distinct meaning of the work, but only the speaker's or writer's meaning, deemed to be identical to the work's meaning. Yet the question remains as to how utterance meaning is in fact determined. Tolhurst's idea was that utterance meaning is determined by a *hypothetical intention* that a member of the *intended* audience would be justified in attributing to the author, and this uniquely on the basis of evidence possessed by virtue of being a member of the intended audience. That makes utterance meaning parasitic on the actual author's intentions with regard to the target audience (which may or may not be taken as a problem for the account).[29] Levinson agrees with Tolhurst that utterance meaning is the target, but amends the account by eliminating reference to the actual author's intentions concerning the target audience; instead, it is the *appropriate* or *ideal* audience of a work (intended or not) that is the normative standard in terms of which utterance meaning is to be identified.

How, more specifically, this interpretative principle is to be applied is a subtle matter. The idea that evidence is only admissible if an interpreter has it *by virtue of membership* in an appropriate audience is meant to eliminate privileged or private information; admissible evidence must be accessible, at least in principle, to all members of the audience in question. Yet this interpretative principle is not reducible to the simple fact that all (or even most) of the members of a given audience happen to have a specific body of evidence. Suppose, for example, that the appropriate audience of a work is comprised of francophones having a good background knowledge of the history of French literature and the sociocultural history of France. Suppose as well that readers belonging to this group must interpret a passage in Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* (1913–27) where the Baron de Charlus makes an allusion to a character in one of Molière's lesser-known dramas.[30] Not all such readers will remember the play and be able to

[29] This complaint was made by Daniel O. Nathan, 'Irony and the Author's Intentions', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 22 (1982), 246–56. Compare on this score D. Alan Cruise, *Meaning in Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 27: Utterance meaning is the 'totality of what the speaker intends to convey by making an utterance, within certain necessary limits'. As I indicate below, just what those limits are remains a crucial and bedevilled issue.

[30] Marcel Proust, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, ed. Pierre Clarac and André Ferré (Paris: Gallimard, 1954), ii.1010.

recognize the allusion, but as members of the audience in question, they would ideally be able to do so and would in principle be required to accept this publicly accessible, intertextual evidence as germane to an interpretative claim about Proust's work. It follows, then, that what makes an audience an (or the) appropriate (or ideal) audience is ultimately the kind of evidence its members potentially and ideally possess and use in interpreting works. (And it may be worth adding, following Roman Ingarden, that the ideal or even competent reader must also know when to *refrain* from filling in some of the 'spots of indeterminacy' that have intentionally be left unspecified by the artist.)[31] So it is not at bottom the selection of an audience *qua* social fact that determines what kind of evidence will be judged admissible; instead, the determination of an audience is informed by criteria of admissibility of evidence that are to be preferred for various reasons having to do with a larger conception of art and its understanding or appreciation. We may note as well that artists could very well intend to have members of the target audience scrutinize their interviews, diaries, and Internet sites in search of information concerning their intentions.

In Levinson's development of this approach, the appropriate audience is, most pointedly, not an audience the members of which possess evidence concerning the private attitudes of the author; nor is it an audience more interested in the author's thoughts and emotions than in the works that may express them.[32] The appropriate audience is, however, one the members of which seek to anchor the work in its context of creation, reading the text in the 'generative matrix' where it 'issues forth from individual A, with public persona B, at time C, against cultural background D, in light of predecessors E, in the shadow of contemporary events F, in

[31] Roman Ingarden, *Vom Erkennen des literarischen Kunstwerks* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1978); *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art*, trans. Ruth Ann Crowley and Kenneth R. Olson (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 293: 'The sensitive reader, possessed of sufficient artistic culture, passes silently over such places of indeterminacy, and just this allows him to constitute the aesthetic object intended by the artist, at least to a certain approximation'. Ingarden also expresses insight in this context about the error of overinterpretation.

[32] For insightful criticisms of the 'private–public' dichotomy in this context, see Carroll, 'Interpretation and Intention: The Debate between Hypothetical and Actual Intentionalism', *Metaphilosophy*, 31 (2000), 75–95, at 92.

relation to the remainder of A's artistic oeuvre, G, and so on.'[33] Yet as Levinson himself helpfully points out, it remains unclear where one should draw the line between admissible and inadmissible evidence concerning the author's attitudes and persona. This is, he comments, the crux of the issue: 'what is the scope of specific author-based contextual factors in the genesis of a literary work that are legitimately appealed to in constructing our best hypothesis of intended meaning?'[34] At one extreme is the narrow scope of a text interpreted solely in terms of the language and century of composition; at the other extreme is the broad scope that includes diaries, interviews, and other publicly accessible sources of information about the author's attitudes. Levinson indicates that the interpretative constraint he recommends is broader than the former extreme, but narrower than the latter; expressed intentions in interviews, for example, are ruled out, as is 'any fact about the author's actual mental state or attitude during composition, in particular what I have called his semantic intentions for a text'.[35] This is where Levinson and I disagree.

To understand Levinson's views on the interpretation of works of art as expressed in the essays under consideration, it is important to keep in mind that he stresses the importance of a distinction between categorial and semantic intentions. Semantic intentions are an artist's intentions to mean something in or by a text or artefact, while categorial intentions 'involve the maker's conception of what he has produced and what it is for, on a rather basic level; they govern not what a work is to mean but how it is to be fundamentally conceived or approached'.[36] An example of such a categorial intention would be Sōseki's intention that his novel entitled *Mon* be read as a work of literary fiction. Levinson would allow, then, that interpreters who fail to recognize this authorial intention are unlikely to do a good job of appreciating the work; yet the evidentiary filter of hypothetical intentionalism is to be applied to the novelist's various semantic intentions. Categorial intentions can determine a work's features and therefore have a constitutive status, while semantic ones cannot, and are at best suggestive of a work's meanings. Whenever heeding someone's semantic intentions would make the interpretation less interesting and the

[33] Levinson, 'Intention and Interpretation', 184.
[34] Ibid., 178, n. 11.
[35] Ibid., 206.
[36] Ibid., 188.

work less valuable, we should overrule them in favour of a superior interpretation that is compatible with the textual and contextual data. In the case of the example, Levinson's strictures would have us rule out the novelist's inferior semantic intentions while retaining our crucial knowledge of his larger categorial aims.

As Levinson kindly underscored in personal correspondence, it is important to note that his theory of interpretation is distinct from the kind of fictionalist account articulated by Alexander Nehamas, about which more will be said below.[37] According to the latter, the interpreter's goal is not a matter of seeking to know the *actual* author's intentions, be they semantic or categorial. Instead, the target of interpretation is the meaning intended by a constructed, artistically relevant authorial persona. In Levinson's account of interpretation, the *actual* author's categorial intentions (such as the intention to make a work belonging to a particular genre), are a legitimate (and at times even crucial) target of interpretative enquiry. And with regard to semantic intentions, it is again the *actual* author's intentions that are the target of the interpretation, provided, however, that the evidentiary strictures described above are observed. At times, evidence about the actual artist's intentions, although accessible and reliable, is deemed irrelevant: for example, the members of the hypothetical intentionalist's ideal readership will not heed Sōseki's interview statements as they ponder his works' meanings. This may be why Levinson at times refers to his position as non-intentionalist (as opposed to intentionalist or anti-intentionalist), while also claiming that his views are 'akin to' or 'resonate' with the views of Nehamas. Yet Levinson adds that in hypothetical intentionalism, there is 'no prescription to imagine or make-believe anything about the author (the actual or the hypothesized one), and the hypothetical author, i.e. the author-as-hypothesized does not belong to the (or any) fictional world, as does, say the narrator'.[38]

My assessment of Levinson's proposal in what follows focuses on two main issues: first of all, the question of the applicability of the distinction

[37] Alexander Nehamas, 'Writer, Text, Work, Author', in *Literature and the Question of Philosophy*, ed. Anthony J. Cascardi (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University, 1987), 267–91; 'What an Author Is', *Journal of Philosophy*, 83 (1986), 685–91; and 'The Postulated Author: Critical Monism as a Regulative Ideal', *Critical Inquiry*, 8 (1981), 131–49.

[38] Levinson, personal communication.

between categorial and semantic intentions, and the problem of borderline and hybrid cases; and second, the grounds or motivation for their difference in status, and more precisely, the question why the reasons given for the constitutive role of categorial institutions should not also apply to semantic ones.

The distinction between semantic and categorial intentions is drawn, first of all, on the basis of the contents of intentions, and involves, more specifically, the aspects of the work of art that the artist has in mind. As Levinson puts it, categorial intentions 'govern not what a work is to mean but how it is to be fundamentally conceived or approached'.[39] In one of Levinson's examples, the intention to make a sculpture and have it be taken as such is categorial, while the intention to express rage with this work of art is semantic.[40] In this and many other examples, the distinction can be readily applied, but there are others where it cannot. Sōseki's intentions with regard to the relations between the characters in his trilogy may be a case in point. The writer intends to write novels in which the successive protagonists appear as if they were continuations of a single type of person. It seems hard to separate the categorial and semantic aspects of the content of such an intention, or cluster of interrelated intentions. Can we truly isolate the artist's goal of making works that are part of a trilogy from the meanings that in his mind constitute the links between the stories related in the three works?

Another example where the application of the distinction is problematic is a case where an author intends to write a ghost story in which the horrors would be more terrible because presented only indirectly through the report of an observer. As Henry James put it, 'prodigies, when they come straight, come with an effect imperilled; they keep all their character, on the other hand, by looming through some other history—the indispensable history of somebody's *normal* relation to something.'[41] With this in mind, the author pens a text in which we only hear about the ghosts through the account of a governess; the reading of that account is clearly framed as part of an exchange of ghost stories, and many readers readily

[39] Levinson, 'Intention and Interpretation in Literature', 188.

[40] Levinson, 'Extending Art Historically', in *The Pleasures of Aesthetics*, 150–71, at 158, n. 8.

[41] Henry James, 'From a Preface', in *The Turn of the Screw*, ed. Robert Kimbrough (New York: Norton, 1966), 100–5, at 103.

infer that the story's events are to be imaginatively explained in supernatural terms. The question in our context is whether the author's intention to make ghosts part of the story is a purely semantic intention—and thus could be ruled out by the hypothetical intentionalist (who thinks the work is more valuable when read as a well-crafted case of unreliable narration). What is this intention's relation to the categorial intention of writing a certain type of story, namely, a ghost story? How could the author have framed the latter intention without also having some sort of semantic intention relevant to the presence of ghosts in the tale? It looks like a case of a single, mixed intention, not two significantly distinct aims. And if that is so, an interpreter working with hypothetical intentionalism has to decide whether the semantic aspect disqualifies the intention. I have not been able to find a principled basis for making such a decision (given, of course, the text's compatibility with the relevant intentions).

The hypothetical intentionalist could adopt a policy whereby any intention having a categorial component should be recognized, even if it is linked to semantic elements. Alternatively, it could be decided that a categorial intention involving a semantic component is merely 'suggestive' and not constitutive. Both solutions seem arbitrary. The latter sacrifices important categorial intentions in order to screen out the semantic ones; the former violates the clause about excluding semantic intentions. Partial intentionalism, which places no great weight on the distinction between categorial and semantic intentions, does not face such a problem.

The question concerning what reasons could motivate such policies leads directly to an even more basic problem, which is that of saying why even the most pure categorial and semantic intentions should have a different status in a theory of interpretation. In the next few paragraphs I survey various potential reasons, contending that on closer inspection, they do not in fact justify the use made of the distinction in hypothetical intentionalism.

One potential reason for a difference in status has to do with reliability. Perhaps the two kinds of intentions have significantly different functions in the creative process, in which case interpreters who follow the principles of hypothetical intentionalism are attuned to an important difference. Levinson writes that categorial intentions are *decisive* or *determinative* of a work's features in a way that semantic intentions are not. He points out

that semantic intentions often fail—as a result, say, of clumsiness or mistaken beliefs. He then adds: 'But if the writer intends his text *as a poem*—as opposed to a short story, a dramatic monologue, a piece of calligraphic visual art, or a mere diary entry—then that intention is of a different sort and of a different order, and virtually cannot fail—so long as the text in question at least allows of being taken, among other things, as a poem.'[42] In the same passage, Levinson goes on to say that semantic intentions do not 'determine' meaning, while categorial intentions '*do* in general determine how a text is to be conceptualized and approached on a fundamental level and thus indirectly affect what it will resultingly say or express'. And that, presumably, is a reason, perhaps even a sufficient reason, why semantic intentions should have only a *suggestive* role in the construction of interpretative hypotheses, while categorial ones have an *evidential* role.

Levinson says semantic intentions can fail; categorial ones *virtually* cannot fail. Does this phrase mean that they do, sometimes fail? I should hope so, as one is hard-pressed to think of an example of an infallible, future-directed intention to perform an action, and I count the making of works belonging to a certain category as an action. And indeed Levinson allows that both categorial and semantic intentions are fallible, so the reliability of the former is no reason for granting the two a logically distinct status in our theory of interpretation. Perhaps Levinson's point in this regard is that it is in general easier to realize categorial intentions, and that semantic intentions are more likely to misfire. Yet even this more modest thesis is not so obvious. Some categorial intentions may, in some contexts, be very hard to realize; and some semantic intentions are easy to pull off. Degree of difficulty and likelihood of success do not in any case correspond to whether knowledge of someone's aims has constitutive or merely suggestive value with regard to their actual achievement.

A version of the intentional fallacy pertains to categorial intentions just as much as it does to semantic ones. We cannot infer from someone's having a categorial intention that it has been successfully realized in the work, even if the agent is known to have acted on that intention. Nor can we automatically infer back from features of a realized text or artistic

[42] Levinson, 'Intention and Interpretation in Literature', 188.

structure to the relevant categorial intentions. A writer shows us a sonnet he has authored. Can we conclude, therefore, that the author categorially intended to write a sonnet and intentionally did so? The argument is invalid, even if we are willing to set aside cases of wayward causality. The author could have being trying to realize a specific categorial intention incompatible with the poem's actually being a sonnet.

Levinson allows that categorial intentions are decisive or determinant only if the text 'allows of being taken' that way. The same sort of constraint can be placed on our use of facts about semantic intentions: a semantic intention is to be deemed decisive of a work's content only if the text 'allows of being taken' that way. Semantic intentions do not, indeed, succeed by fiat, but neither do categorial ones, and the reasons are the same in both sorts of case. Recognition of the artist's constitutive role is constrained by facts about what the writer has managed to do in producing a text. A partial or constrained variety of intentionalism can make use of the same insight, holding that intentions of any kind are decisive only if they are textually or structurally compatible, that is, if they are consistent and mesh with the features of the work's text or artistic structure. Successful realization of intention is, in both cases, at the very least a matter of intentionally producing something compatible with the content of the intention.

Reliability, or degree thereof, turns out not to be the key to any important difference in status between the two kinds of intention, and therefore not a decisive reason for preferring hypothetical intentionalism over partial intentionalism. Are there other reasons? One candidate to consider has to do with accessibility or epistemic access: perhaps categorial intentions are more readily known, while semantic ones are elusive. Yet once we are in the business of making claims about the respective contents of intentions, we are in no position to say that semantic intentions are dark and inscrutable creatures of the mentalistic night, while categorial ones are easily perceptible features of objective behaviour. We manage to know both sorts of intention—when, that is, we do manage to know them at all—in the same way. Some categorial intentions are, by the way, very hard to fathom. What precisely was the categorial intention of Apuleius when he wrote the last part of his *Metamorphoses* or *The Golden Ass*? To write a parody, or something else entirely? Which of the passages in Franz Kafka's

notebooks were meant to be just diary entries, and which parts were intended to be works of literary fiction? What were his categorial intentions when he interrupted his writing to draw sketches in these notebooks? To what categorial genre does Kafka's (1919) *Brief an den Vater* [*Letter to My Father*] belong? Did these writers successfully realize their categorial intentions, whatever they were? 'Puzzling questions', as Baudelaire liked to say.

To sum up, a proponent of what I have called partial intentionalism holds that the theory of appreciation and interpretation should be attuned to the artist's constitutive role in the making of works. It is the artist who makes the work, and settling on categories *and meanings* is part of that creative process. We ought to reject the criticism-promoting idea that it is the reader who invents the story; we prefer, instead, a model in which the reader attempts to discover the nature of the story as told, acknowledging that it is the storyteller who, within limits and contingent on his or her ability, decides what happens in the story he or she is going to tell, including events that need not, for various reasons, be related directly in the text. Hypothetical intentionalism suffers from the problem that we do not have any systematic way to separate the categorial wheat from the semantic chaff. What is more, it is not even obvious that we have any good grounds for trying to do so. Some intentions are inextricably semantic and categorial; some chaff is categorial, and there is semantic wheat to be harvested. If the works of art that actual authors have created are the prime target of an interpretative hypothesis, then we should let all the available evidence about the causal history of the artistic structure have the same, initial status. Part of that history is a matter of the semantic intentions on which the artist has successfully or unsuccessfully acted. Sometimes the author's semantic intentions are less limited than the meanings a reader may be able to dream up on the basis of the text and other background evidence. Sometimes interviews and diaries open up all sorts of wonderful undiscovered meanings. We can indeed imagine a Kafka whose diary reveals stupid semantic intentions, but we can also actually read the remarkable diaries of the real Franz Kafka. What is harder to imagine is why critics should be required to refrain from allowing their interpretations of Kafka's works to be in any way guided by an interpretation of these fascinating diaries and other evidence relevant to the actual author's thoughts and experience. Recognizing that in some cases limited

or boring semantic intentions are decisive of a work's features is the price we pay for an interpretative principle that allows us on other happier occasions to recognize that the artist's laudable and complex aims were decisive.

An alternative to hypothetical intentionalism's split verdict on semantic and categorial intentions is a thoroughgoing shift to a fictionalist stance on authorial attitudes. In the next section I briefly present and criticize this approach.

FICTIONALIST INTENTIONALISM

So far I have considered authorship as an activity of actual agents, which means that, insofar as an interpretation makes claims about authorship, it can be false in the sense that things are not as the interpreter's utterance says they are. Yet as I indicated above, there is a rival family of conceptions regarding the relation between interpretation and authorship.[43] Following this anti-realist line, interpreters of a text should construct an idea of the work's author without being guided by extra-textual evidence (in an extreme version, *any* such evidence) concerning actual processes of production. The interpreter still frames ideas about the attitudes expressed in the work, but does so without asking whether those attitudes were in fact intentionally made manifest by anyone. Instead, the interpreter simply pretends or makes believe that the attitudes expressed in the text were expressed by someone. The make-believe *persona* that emerges from this sort of interpretative process is referred to variously as the 'real', 'fictional', 'implied', or 'postulated' author.[44]

I find this model of interpretation unattractive, and do not see what could justify its acceptance. Perhaps I have failed to divine the correct motivation for such an approach, but those set forth in the literature have serious flaws. Is it the messy nature of creative processes, or a debunking of the myth of solitary genius, that warrants such a move? Yet such

[43] For overviews and criticisms, see Stecker, 'Apparent, Implied, and Postulated Authors', *Philosophy and Literature*, 11 (1987), 258–71; and Gerard Génette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), ch. 19.

[44] As is often the case, we have more notions than names for notions. What Gregory Currie means by 'fictional author', for example, is different from the concepts to which I have just referred. I return to this topic in Chapter 7.

debunking requires reference to the evidence concerning real authorship. The way to challenge some myth of T. S. Eliot's solitary genius, for example, is to show the evidence supporting the idea that the actual Ezra Pound had a crucial role in the creation of *The Waste Land* (1922). In cases where it is discovered that individual authorship actually obtains, why should the interpreter only pretend or make believe that the attitudes expressed are those of an author? If I genuinely believe, for example, that Ingmar Bergman was the author of *Nattvardsgästerna* (1962) [*Winter Light*], why should I pretend to attribute the film's expressive qualities to the activity of a non-existent, but all-too-Bergmanian, author-surrogate, one referred to with the expression 'Ingmar Bergman'? If, on the other hand, the interpreter discovers that neither joint nor individual authorship obtained, why should we continue to think of the film's expressive qualities as the intended results of an author's activities? A film can, like a traffic jam or a randomly generated computer message, display various properties that I can dislike or enjoy without having to attribute them to a single imaginary maker. So in neither the case of an authored or unauthored text does the adoption of a fictional idea of authorship find any special warrant in the specific nature of the text's creation. As Berys Gaut points out, the 'construction strategy' or anti-realist conception of the author has been employed to defend the idea of individual authorship in cases where multiple authorship is the more probable, actualist diagnosis. Yet if we are to make-believe that a single authorial persona is wholly responsible for everything we see in a film, such imaginings can hardly satisfy the constraints of any plausible conception of what actual authors are capable of doing.[45] And as both Gaut and Stecker point out, fictional authors simply do not have the sort of causal powers that are required of the makers of a film or other work of art; the postulated author, then, lacks a characteristic essential to authorship, i.e. that of having existed independently of the work and causally contributing to its genesis.

Another anti-realist line runs as follows. For various practical reasons, we simply do not know what went on during the making of a work. For example, we do not have time to study the biographical information, we

[45] Berys Gaut, 'Film Authorship and Collaboration', in *Film Theory and Philosophy*, ed. Richard Allen and Murray Smith (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 149–72, at 158–61.

just want to watch and appreciate the film. The next step in the argument is to claim that the very nature of our interpretative project requires us to attribute attitudes and implicit meanings to someone's expressive activity. It would in many cases be a factual error to assume that the expressed attitudes were those of the film's real maker(s), so it is best simply to make believe that the attitudes expressed are those of a fictional author. Such make-believe cannot be wrong, because it is just a fiction that enhances the viewer's appreciation of the film. After all, there is nothing wrong with adopting this easier interpretative approach as a matter of convenience.

One problem with this line of thought is the frailty of the assumption that interpretation is always and only a matter of the identification of speaker's or utterer's meanings. Another problem is this: if we are not genuinely interested in, or do not wish to be trammelled by, the messy causal history of the actual author's creative activities, how is it that we explain our interest in the actual relations between works produced by the same agent? Why do we go on comparing different texts by the same author, where 'the same author' refers to someone whom we hold causally responsible for the production of the texts in question, and not to a product of our own make-believe? Why understand Bergman's *Winter Light* as the first film in a trilogy, which is how the director situated the work in his own understanding? Why not postulate or make believe an author whose corpus is radically different from that of the actual author? In practice we are loath to indulge in such intertextual fantasies. In spite of the recommendations made by the narrator at the end of Borges's 'Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*', we do not construct an authorial persona responsible for both *Winter Light* and some lurid Hollywood production. Instead, we are attuned to various interesting relations between the different works belonging to the corpus or *oeuvre* of some individual or collective author. For various reasons, such relations are of aesthetic and argumentative relevance, and plotting them can be part of worthwhile descriptive and explanatory endeavours.

Another problem for the make-believe approach to authorship is that it suffers from a serious blind spot. Under what conditions would we be able to make believe that a work had no author, but emerged from a chaotic process involving various people's activities? Textual appearances, which are the anti-realist's sole basis, can be deceptive: a text that emerges from

a chaotic and uncoordinated production could look as if it has been made by a single author, and a work crafted by a single (or collective) author could look like something emerging from an uncontrolled or highly conflictual process. Or even more seriously, under what conditions could an interpretative project guided by the postulated author approach successfully identify an utterance as having been produced as a result of severe coercion, in which case the apparent author's authorial function would have been vitiated? The interpreter who fashions a make-believe author on the basis of textual evidence alone is blind to the difference, and is likely to have to rely on a default assumption favouring authorial control.

Perhaps the motivation for the anti-realist move is a stronger epistemological worry. How can we ever know for sure what happened in the complex process whereby a text is created? Lacking such knowledge, we may be loath to take the risk of making assertions about the actual author's thoughts. Instead, we choose to project that form of authorship that best suits the text at hand and whatever evidence we happen to have regarding its context of creation. Fictionalist interpretative strictures, then, square best with the interpreter's actual evidentiary predicament and a risk-averse epistemic attitude. In response to this, I claim that the evidentiary difficulties surrounding our access to actual authorship are not always insurmountable; sometimes the evidence supports reasonable, but of course fallible, inferences about events involved in a work's making. It is true that often we cannot get all of the evidence we would like to have, and it is possible that the evidence we do have is misleading. Yet that is but a familiar condition of all historical knowledge. The avoidance of epistemic risk has its own risks and costs.

Another fictionalist response is to say that one's interpretative project is not of a historical nature, the goal being instead to maximize one's enjoyment of those texts and artefacts that have washed up on the interpreter's stretch of the shoreline. Yet if this is the goal, we no longer need to rely exclusively on evidence pertinent to the context of creation and the author's intended or target context; nor do we need even the fiction of attributing attitudes to an expressive author.[46] Instead, the

[46] The strident anti-intentionalist complains here that the fictionalist approach fails to make good on Foucault's deeper critique of the author-function; see, for example, Nickolas Pappas,

interpreter's goal is to see what effects emerge when a given theoretical paradigm or collection of background assumptions is brought to bear in the interpretation of a text or artefact, no claims being made to provide an appreciation of a work of art *qua* work of art. Such non-appreciation-oriented interpretative operations may provide a vivid illustration of the theory's tenets, or perhaps even an illustration of some of the theory's possible explanatory shortcomings, thereby opening up new lines of enquiry.[47]

Yet if artistic appreciation based on correct understanding is the primary aim of one's interpretative project, the evidence about the history of the work's production, including the intentional actions and plans of the makers, cannot be discounted, and we must use that evidence in the making of claims about authorial attitudes and their relation to the work's meaning. To hold that knowledge of authorship is unnecessary or undesirable because it is often unattainable looks like a case of 'sour grapes'. Why not recognize that such knowledge is always desirable, but sometimes out of reach?

I shall now briefly discuss an example chosen to illustrate the shortcomings of a ficitonalist approach to the artist and his intentions.

SELF-PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS AN OLD MAN

Consider briefly a picture painted by the Dutch painter David Bailly (1584–1657), see Figure 1.[48] The image depicts a young man, seated next to a table, facing the implied viewer. On the table are various objects typical of the *vanitas* genre: a skull, flower blossoms, an hourglass, a candle that has just been snuffed, symbols of wealth, power, beauty, the arts, and life's transient

'Authorship and Authority', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 47 (1989), 325–32. For those skipping around, please go back to Chapter 5.

[47] This is not just a rhetorical concession. For an example of this sort of interpretative operation, see my *Models of Desire: René Girard and the Psychology of Mimesis* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), ch. 5.

[48] For a colour reproduction and commentary, see Norbert Schneider, *The Art of the Still Life: Still Life Painting in the Early Modern Period* (Cologne: Taschen, 1990), 82–4. Schneider assumes that painting is a self-portrait by Bailly, and states without argument that the oval portrait depicts the artist's 'current features' (82). Yet the figure represented there does not look 67 years old, and as Ron Toby suggested to me in conversation, it is unlikely that painterly conventions of the time support the conclusion that the figure in the portrait is supposed to be that old.

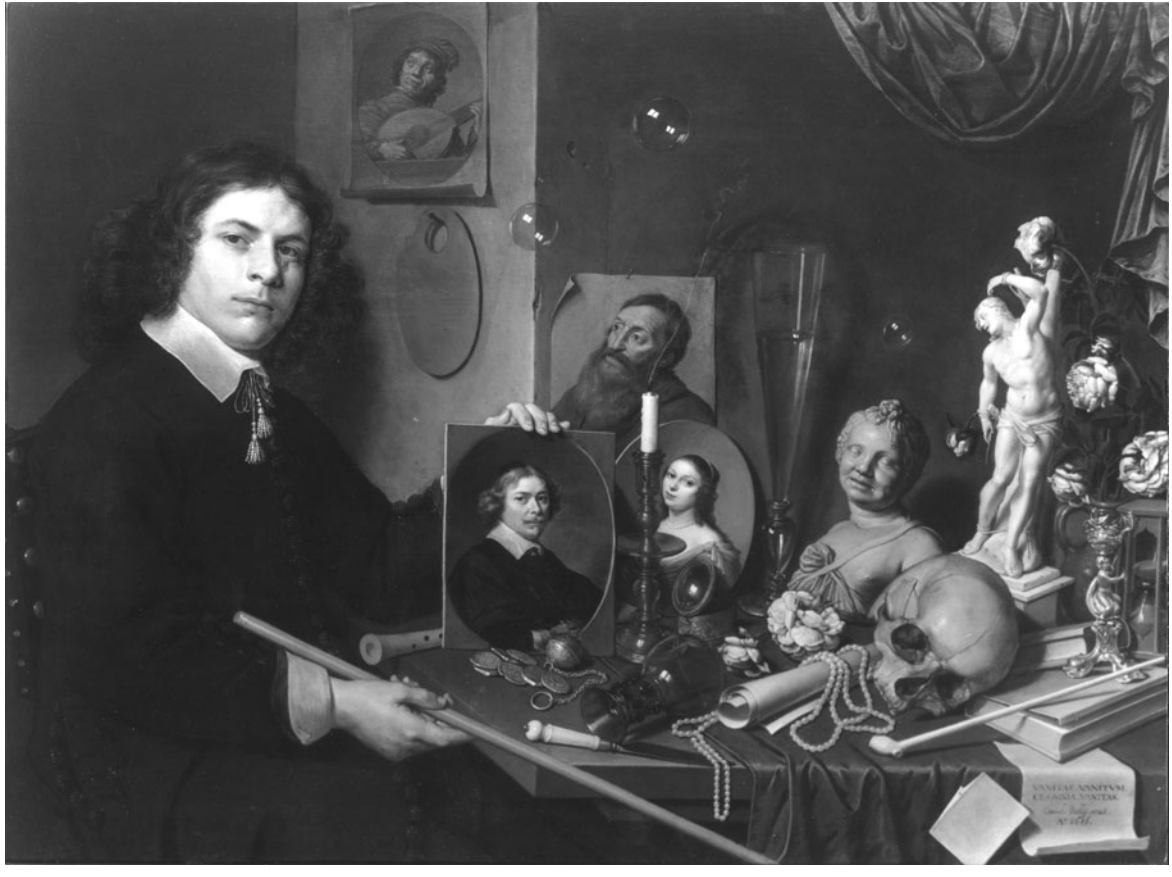

FIG. 1: David Bailly (1584–1657). Vanitas with self-portrait (1651). Oil on wood, 89.5 × 122 cm. Courtesy of the Stedelijk Museum De Lakenhal, Leiden, Netherlands.

pleasures. In the air hover soap bubbles to remind us that *homo bulla est*. And the young man holds on display an oval portrait—perhaps his own work—in which he is depicted as a much older man. Hanging from the table is a scrap of paper displaying the artist's signature and the date 1651. It is often assumed that this painting is a self-portrait (and a self-portrait containing a nested self-portrait). The accuracy of such an interpretation depends on facts about the circumstances of the picture's creation—facts about who is depicted and by whom. What is more, the time of this act of depiction, relative to the life history of the artist, is directly relevant to some of the choices the interpreter of this picture must make. Suppose the viewer assumes that the painting is a self-portrait that was made when the artist was still young. In that case, the self-portrait shows us an artist who has depicted himself holding up an image in which he has anticipated the passage of time by representing the future effects of his own ageing, a gesture perfectly in keeping with the conventions of *vanitas* meditations. The painter, then, depicts himself as anticipating a future process of ageing and demise, foreshadowed in the portrait, skull, and other objects. This is a cogent interpretation of the picture, one which squares well with fictionalist interpretative strictures whereby one takes the artefact and, within broad contextual constraints, gives it a reading while projecting the expressive aims of a postulated artist.

Yet in this case such a reading is most likely wrong, and the only way to correct it is to have recourse to facts about the actual artist. Consider how our reading of the image must change if we learn that when he painted this picture the artist was in fact much older than the young man in the image. In that case, we can infer that this depiction was not intended to show us the artist's appearance at the time of the work's creation. Instead, the 'present' moment in the picture's depictive contents, the moment when the young artist displays a picture of himself as an older man, is, relative to the time of the work's creation, a moment already long past. The typical *vanitas* thought that one should meditate on the fact that one's 'not yet' will inexorably be replaced by 'already' is thereby deepened and given a nostalgic turn: youth's decline is not even something yet to happen, but has already occurred, in spite of appearances to the contrary. Still another complication is introduced by the possibility that at the time of his painting of this image in 1651 when he was 67 years old, Bailly was in fact much older

than the man depicted in the nested, oval portrait. Bailly, then, would have intentionally depicted the time of his youth, as well as the time of his maturity, as bygone moments, the former anticipating the latter in an image, just as the artist himself, in painting and displaying this self-portrait, anticipates the moment when future viewers will contemplate this *vanitas stilleben* as the vain trace of a life that is now past.

The point I would like to make about this intricate example is that its contents depend crucially on historical facts about the actual artist's life, physical appearances, and intentions, and that fictionalist postulations unanchored by such facts are inadequate. The picture is a self-portrait only if the painter intentionally attempted to depict himself in this painting and managed to achieve a suitable visual likeness, and the actual artist's age at the time of his painting of the image determines whether the depictions of self are prospective or retrospective.

SUMMARY

I have argued that absolute intentionalism, fictionalism, and hypothetical intentionalisms are seriously flawed options in the theory of art interpretation. As far as I can see, that leaves us with anti-intentionalism and partial intentionalism—at least as long as we are discussing the kind of interpretative project I have been focusing on throughout this chapter. Some of the main contentions associated with these two rival options can be summarized as follows:

Anti-intentionalist strictures have been motivated by:

(A1) recognition of the very real shortcomings of reductive biographical criticism;
(A2) recognition of the limitations and blind spots of individualist historiography;
(A3) epistemic and ontological worries about mentalism;
(A4) rejections of intention-based semantics and an emphasis on the autonomy of conventional linguistic and other meanings;
(A5) particular assumptions about intention and artistic agency, such as the idea that intentions, unlike actual creative processes, are epiphenomenal, necessarily conscious, or always deliberately formed;

(A6) an emphasis on the goal of making original and innovative interpretations;
(A7) the worry that an intentionalist account of interpretation entails or promotes individualist assumptions about the production and value of works of art;
(A8) the goal of maximizing the value of works of art;
(A9) the lack of reliable or detailed evidence about many artists' intentions;
(A10) the dilemma argument: either intentions are successfully realized in the artistic structure or they are not, and so intentions are either unnecessary or insufficient conditions of the work's meaning.

Actualist intentionalism, of the partial or moderate variety recommended here, is motivated by:

(I1) recognition of the various functions intentions have in the lives of temporally situated agents;
(I2) the explanatory and descriptive value of intention-based pragmatics and semantics in the theory of linguistic and non-linguistic expression and communication;
(I3) the goal of interpreting and evaluating (i. e. appreciating) works as works of art in a non-anachronistic, historically contextualized manner, with an eye to discovering a range of specifically artistic values and 'disvalues';
(I4) recognition of the important role of intentions in the creation of works of art, and in artistic careers more generally;
(I5) a rejection of the idea that a work of art is just a structure or object, as opposed to something that has been made or accomplished in a context;
(I6) recognition of the importance of distinctions between various forms of collective art-making, including some to which joint intentions are crucial;
(I7) recognition of the artistic and aesthetic pertinence of distinctions between intended and unintended relations between works within an *oeuvre*;
(I8) the contention that the anti-intentionalist dilemma argument fails because it overlooks artistic implicature or 'implicit, intended

work meaning', in relation to which the actual artist's intention is a necessary condition;

(I9) the idea that partial intentionalism is compatible with recognition of unintended meanings, as well as with a pluralist position with regard to the diversity of interpretative projects.

How do these rival contentions add up? By my lights, the latter considerations prevail. Anti-intentionalist considerations (A1) and (A2) are correct, but not decisive in light of the important aims and interests identified in (I3)–(I6). Practical interests as well as the evidence supporting (I1) outweigh (A3). Although (A6)—the goal of originality—is important in some contexts, it should not be a sovereign priority in art appreciation focusing on the discovery of the work's meanings. Similarly, (I3), or the more general goal of discovering the artistic value and disvalue of works, trumps (A8), according to which appreciators should somehow try to enhance the value of works. (The interpreter can do something to try to enhance or optimize the value of his or her own experience and interpretation of the work, but not the value of the work: that was the artist's task. And one central way to enhance the value of an interpretation is to say something accurate about the work's actual meanings.) The practical problem of obtaining evidence about intentions—(A9)—is genuine, but does not justify shifting one's theory about the locus of meaning and appreciation. And if we have good evidence about anything, we have some about the intentions of many artists, even anonymous ones. With regard to the contrast between (A4) and (I2), the anti-intentionalist consideration fails to identify a promising, general approach to the theory of meaning, whereas a sophisticated intention-based semantics is independently appealing, and compatible with the thesis that some meanings are conventional. Complaints about a strong link between intentionalism and an objectionable individualism, or (A7), are unjustified, especially in light of the legitimate artistic and critical projects involved in (I6) and (I7). Finally, what I take to be the strongest anti-intentionalist consideration, the dilemma argument of (A10), is met by (I8), as long as a minimalist success condition is viable. This latter issue is further pursued in the next chapter.

Chapter 7

FICTION AND FICTIONAL TRUTH

In this chapter I further develop the case for partial intentionalism by taking up some basic issues related to fiction, namely, the difference between fiction and non-fiction, and the status and determination of fictional truth. I try to show how bringing intentions into the picture gives us a better understanding of these topics. My point of departure is a pragmatic approach to the concept of fiction, which has, I maintain, important implications for our thinking about other issues raised by fiction. The chapter concludes with an analysis of a cinematic example (István Svabó's 1991 *Meeting Venus*) in which some fiction-constitutive intentions are successfully realized, while others result in unintended ambiguities. My discussion of this case is meant to exemplify and clarify partial intentionalism as an approach to the interpretation of works of art. More specifically, I take up the issue of the minimal success conditions on certain kinds of intentional, implicit meaning.

FICTION AND NON-FICTION

The word 'fiction' has diverse and even incompatible meanings. We say that Hans Christian Andersen's stories, for example, are fictions, but we also say that when a colleague deceptively proffers an excuse for not attending a meeting, this too is a fiction, in spite of the obvious and important differences between the two examples. 'Fiction' can also be used to single

out some sort of non-deceptive but arbitrary convention or arrangement, an example being the 'legal fiction' that all real property was granted by the king. In ordinary discourse, this diversity of usage is fairly unproblematic, but in poetics and aesthetics, 'fiction' should be assigned a more restricted sense if it is to function as a helpful descriptive and explanatory term. In such a context, we want to say that works of fiction are distinct from lies, hoaxes, legal conventions, and earnest scientific treatises.

What is the principled basis for a basic distinction between non-fiction and various sorts of fiction? Attempts to elucidate a viable fiction–non-fiction distinction without reference to intentions have been notoriously unsuccessful. There is no form of words or style that makes a discourse fiction. Works of fiction in various media are not distinguished from non-fiction in terms of their falsehood or referential failure. Any such criterion abolishes the difference between fictional storytelling, deceptive discourses, and failed science. The person who in reading 'The Emperor's New Clothes' (1835) wonders whether it is literally true that these particular persons existed and did the things described in the story is asking the wrong question. And even if that story did, by some chance, literally represent some actual state of affairs truthfully, this would not change its status as a work of fiction. A purely semantic approach cannot account for the difference between earnest prognoses and fictional utterances about the future.

An alternative is to suppose that fictional status is determined by the work's recipient or some community of recipients.[1] The claim, then, is that if people—or 'enough' people—treat a work as fiction, and if it thereby functions for them in the relevant mode, then it *is* fiction. Proponents of such an approach must go on to tell us what this special function is, and whether the decision to count a work as fiction is based on anything other than the whims of the public. Could the public never be wrong? Are we to allow that a work can 'be' fiction for one public and also, with just as much

[1] Such a claim is advanced by Hugh Wilder, who writes that fiction 'only became possible in Western Europe during the Renaissance' and 'could not have been written earlier or elsewhere until the conditions were right'; see his 'Intentions and the Very Idea of Fiction', *Philosophy and Literature*, 12 (1988), 70–9, at 74. If there seem to be plenty of counter-examples to that Eurocentric historical thesis, Wilder tells us this is only because post-Kantian literary theory allows us to recognize 'the origins of fiction'.

justification, non-fiction for some other public? Broad appeals to the weight of 'tradition' leave this question unanswered.

A more promising line of thought is that a work's fictional status is determined by aspects of its making or production, and, more specifically, its being an artefact or performance effectively designed to serve a certain function. Fiction, then, is one kind of accomplishment that can be contrasted to others. The precise nature of the requisite fiction-making design is a matter of some controversy, but roughly speaking there has been some convergence on the idea that fiction-making intentions aim primarily at make-believe or imagining, as opposed to belief or some other attitude.[2] Had H. C. Andersen been moved by a primarily assertive intention in conveying the story recounted in 'The Emperor's New Clothes', the result would have been a work of non-fiction conveying a number of literal falsehoods. Yet if he wrote the text with the goal of making fiction, he thought of the story events and their implicit narration as standing outside the range of literal truth-values. Instead, these events were to be *imagined*, even if the story was also meant indirectly to convey genuine insights about actual persons or situations more generally. A work of fiction may be designed to realize various other ends, but make-believe is constitutive of its specific means to them. Such an account of fiction is compatible with competing accounts of the imagination, as long as imagining is understood as the *entertaining*, as opposed to the believing or disbelieving, of a thought or proposition.

[2] The basic insight is expressed in Gottlob Frege, 'Thought' [1918], in *The Frege Reader*, ed. Michael Beaney (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 325–45, at 330; philosophical discussions of a pragmatic fiction/non-fiction distinction include Margaret MacDonald, 'The Language of Fiction', in *Art and Philosophy: Readings in Aesthetics*, ed. W. E. Kennick (New York: St Martin's, 1964), 295–308; John R. Searle, 'The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse', *New Literary History*, 6 (1974), 319–32; Richard Gale, 'The Fictive Use of Language', *Philosophy*, 46 (1971), 324–39; Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Works and Worlds of Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 219–34; Gregory Currie, 'What is Fiction?', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 63 (1985), 385–92; and *The Nature of Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Peter Lamarque and Stein Haugom Olsen, *Truth, Fiction, and Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994); Trevor Ponech, *What is Non-Fiction Cinema? On the Very Idea of Motion Picture Communication* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1999); Noël Carroll, 'Fiction, Non-fiction, and the Film of Presumptive Assertion: A Conceptual Analysis', in *Film Theory and Philosophy*, ed. Richard Allen and Murray Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 173–202; Margit Sutrop, 'Imagination and the Act of Fiction-Making', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 80 (2002), 332–44; and Robert Grant, 'Fiction, Meaning, and Utterance', *Inquiry*, 44 (2001), 389–404.

So much for the broad strokes. What is it, more precisely, that the maker of a fiction must intend to do, and under what conditions does the attempt to realize such intentions succeed? Whereas John R. Searle characterized fiction-making as non-deceptive pretence made possible by a special set of conventions, Richard Gale, Nicholas Wolterstorff, Gregory Currie, and others have proposed that fiction is generated (at least in part) by a *sui generis* illocutionary action. There has, however, been significant disagreement with regard to the specific nature of this illocutionary category. I shall begin my discussion with an examination of Currie's sophisticated proposal, from which much can be learned.

Currie recruits a Gricean analysis of communicative intentions to characterize the fiction-maker's intentions, while appending conditions pertaining to the epistemic status of the utterance (where 'utterance' is used in a suitably broad, Gricean sense that covers communicative actions involving a range of media). Roughly, Currie proposes that an utterance is fiction just in case it was made by someone with the intention that a target audience's recognition of some intended feature will be a reason to engage in some intended make-believe. More precisely, Currie's analysis runs as follows:

S's utterance of U is fiction iff there is a feature of utterances, F, and there is a characteristic of persons, C, such that S utters U intending that anyone who has C would:

(1) recognize that U has F;
(2) recognize that U is intended by S to have F;
(3) recognize that S intends them (the possessors of C) to make believe that P, for some proposition P;
(4) make believe that P.

Where S also intends that:

(5) (2) will be a reason for (3);
(6) (3) will be a reason for (4).

Where if P is true, it is no more than accidentally true.[3]

To begin with the very last clause (which unlike (1)–(6) is not part of the fiction-maker's intentions), the basic idea behind Currie's epistemic condi-

[3] Currie, *The Nature of Fiction*, 33. I have made trivial notational changes.

tion on fiction-making is that fictions do not 'track the truth' (in the sense of displaying a counterfactual dependence on the facts). Currie motivates this move by reference to several examples, such as the case of an unimaginative person who tries to pass off as his own work of fiction what is, unbeknownst to him, an account of a series of facts. Currie also describes an odd case in which someone inadvertently yet reliably produces a veridical utterance while duly acting on a communicative intention that targets make-believe. As Currie develops this example, we are to imagine that someone has had a traumatic experience that has been repressed; yet in trying to write a work of fiction, this person's imaginings happen to correlate perfectly with those very experiences which the mechanisms of repression put out of reach of voluntary or active recall; thus, while the condition requiring the intention to produce make-believe is satisfied, the contents of the work nonetheless track the truth: had the events not occurred, the author would not have described them as occurring, and those events that did occur were precisely the ones the author described. Currie thinks that, in this and other cases where the writer's story tracks the truth, no fictional utterance is produced, and on this basis argues that a communicative intention oriented towards make-believe, though necessary, is not sufficient for fiction-making. Such are Currie's reported intuitions, yet my own survey of students' and colleagues' opinions has failed to uncover any systematic basis for such a classification, as many people are prepared to accept such cases as instances of fiction—or judge them puzzling and irrelevant.[4] I think we would do best, then, to do without Currie's epistemic condition.

Another controversial feature of Currie's analysis is his claim that all fictions are communicative in the sense that they necessarily are produced with the aim of eliciting make-believe on the part of some audience: 'Fiction is essentially connected with the idea of communication. Perhaps there could be creatures who made up imaginative stories for their own personal enjoyment, and who never (out of either choice or necessity)

[4] For an argument to the effect that this epistemic condition must be amended, see David Davies, 'Fictional Truth and Fictional Authors', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 36 (1996), 43–55, at 51. I thank Davies for helpful discussions of a range of topics related to fiction.

communicated these stories to each other. Such beings produce fantasies rather than fiction.'[5] 'Essentially' seems too strong: it can reasonably be doubted that *all* fictions are communicative utterances, as private fantasy and make-believe also fall comfortably beneath the rubric 'fiction'. 'Fantasy' has diverse meanings, yet it is plausible to say that fantasy, or at least one kind of fantasy, is a subset of make-believe in which the person having the fantasy enjoys imagining events that are deemed either illicit or 'out of reach' in actuality. Some such fantasizing is private, and if it is a kind of fiction, it follows that there are fictions that are not utterances or works. We can, however, go on to identify a subset of fictions that are utterances or works, and which, *qua* utterances, necessarily involve some expressive or communicative intention (and hence the intentional indicating of attitudes to one or more audiences, a smart feature of Currie's analysis being his inclusion of the latter possibility).

Currie's analysis of fictional utterances includes the Gricean 'loop' or mechanism whereby a speaker or writer produces an utterance with specific intentions that are meant to be recognized, and where this very recognition is further intended to provide a reason for some audience to recognize that the speaker intends members of that audience to make believe the specified semantic contents. As various authors have argued, such Gricean communicative intentions are rather complicated, and it is not clear that all beings capable of producing fiction (which includes very young children) must have such elaborate constellations of attitudes. Consequently, thinner assumptions about the communicative intentions necessary to fiction are to be preferred.

As I contended in Chapter 6, an artist's categorial intentions are in principle no more infallible than his or her semantic ones: the intention to produce a work belonging to a given category—fiction included—is not always successfully realized. Quite obviously, the intention to write fiction may fail to be realized if it is never executed or acted upon, as when the person dies before writing a line. This is hardly an objection to Currie's analysis, which concerns only utterances that have been successfully produced. Yet fiction-making intentions can also misfire or fail even when the intention to produce an utterance or work is successfully acted

[5] Currie, *The Nature of Fiction*, 25.

upon. Someone could irrationally try to produce a fictional utterance in a situation or manner that is inimical to the successful realization of that goal. After all, performing an action with the intention of giving someone a reason to do something does not entail that this action successfully provides a reason, even less a good and sufficient reason, to do that thing. In Currie's analysis, the person who makes the utterance has done so with the intention of getting an audience to recognize his or her intention to endow the utterance with some publicly observable feature linked to both the attitude of make-believe and specific propositions to be imagined. Yet managing to make an utterance while acting on such an intention does not entail that the utterance has any such feature; and even if the utterance is successfully endowed with that feature, it does not follow that the maker of the utterance has targeted a feature that will in fact make the utterance a work of fiction (or that will make it publicly recognizable as such). The person could, for example, have some very bad ideas about what features of an utterance yield make-believe, and though this person manages to generate an utterance having just that target feature, the result still is not fiction. For example, social facts determine that a given kind of document or statement produced in a certain situation must have a particular status (as, for example, an official declaration or report, contract, legal writ, and so on). An agent producing some such document, or saying certain words in an official capacity and on an official occasion, in that situation cannot unilaterally grant it a fictional status through some intentional fiat, though he or she could mistakenly think it possible to make a fiction in this context and unsuccessfully try to do so. In sum, a success condition on the fiction-maker's intentions is required.

It may be worth mentioning here a way in which the latter condition ought *not* to be specified. I have in mind the idea that a genre must exist as an institution, where the latter is understood as a formal or informal social arrangement, such as a prevalent practice that is the object of a high degree of social recognition or mutual belief. Searle, for example, wrote that the non-deceptive pretending constitutive of a fictional utterance was made possible by the observance of 'horizontal' conventions, yet he did not say what they were or provide any convincing evidence of their existence. Some of Tzvetan Todorov's remarks also point to an institutional condition: 'It is because genres exist as an institution that they function

as "horizons of expectation" for readers and as "models of writing" for authors.'[6] An objection to the idea that fiction-making has an institutional success condition along these lines is that there is little evidence that such a thing is satisfied in all cases; also, such a condition makes it hard or even impossible to explain the genesis of a genre. If an institution had to exist for fictions to be made, how did the 'game' of fiction ever get started? The only way out of this explanatory circle is to opt for a non-institutional approach to speech-acts (such as inviting) and psychological attitudes (such as thinking and believing), the constitutive features of which are not essentially a matter of contingent social rules or norms.

Clearly, the appeal to intentions does not in itself answer genetic questions or provide a non-circular analysis. Consider problems besetting what I take to be an overly strong intentionalist thesis about the link between genre and intention:

(Extreme intentionalist thesis) A work belongs to some generic category, G, if and only if its maker(s) created the work with the intention of making a work belonging to that category, where these makers had the requisite knowledge of the category G.

As a simple example, someone might propose that an utterance's being a joke works in just this way. If you meant to be joking, then you were joking, whether other people could tell, or thought what you said was funny or not; and you can hardly tell a joke if your intention is to engage only in a serious utterance of some sort. (Perhaps the best response to someone who defended this theory of joking would be: 'You must be joking!'.)

This extreme intentionalist thesis is wrong if there are cases of an author or artist making a work belonging to some category without having any intention of including that generic notion as part of the plan, or if there are cases where, though acting on the intention, the artist or author fails to make a work that belongs to the category. Instances of the latter sort are to be expected if one accepts the plausible idea that intentions, and actions based on them, are fallible. And the start-up problem mentioned above prompts us to allow that there can be cases where the writer or speaker

[6] Tzvetan Todorov, *Genres in Discourse*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 18.

does not operate on the relevant 'categorial intention' because no such concept was available. In some cases, the genre does exist already, but the artist or author in question is neither aware of it nor guided by thoughts about it in making a work which is nonetheless aptly classified as an instance of the genre.

That the extreme intentionalist thesis is false does not mean that an intentionalist condition is unnecessary. A key condition on a work's membership in a category could be that the work or utterance have some collection of intrinsic or relational features that are not only compatible with, but at least partly constitutive of, works belonging to the genre. Suppose as well that someone can intend to make a work having those features without also having the intention of making a work belonging to the category. Then the intentionalist requirement might concern the intention of making a work with the relevant features and not the intentional making of a work falling beneath this or that conceptual or generic rubric. It is coherent, though not necessarily accurate, to imagine a Mozart unaware of musical parody as a genre, but who independently found himself motivated to compose a work—*Ein Musikalischer Spaß* [*A Musical Joke*] (1784, K. 522)—that would amusingly display the foibles of rival musicians and ungifted students. And it is this latter sort of intention that is a necessary condition on the work's belonging to the genre of musical parody.

To return to the case of fiction, my proposal is that fictional utterances satisfy two main conditions. A fictional utterance must first of all intentionally express a sequence of imaginings. The basic thought that must be indicated by the utterance, then, can take the form 'I have imagined such-and-such', or alternatively: 'Such-and-such can be imagined'. 'Expression', refers to a fallible, intentional indication or evidencing of attitudes or thoughts.[7] And imaginings, as I stated above, are alethically neutral thoughts that may or may not involve imagery or some specific phenomenological or sensorial features.[8]

[7] Wayne A. Davis, 'Expression of Emotion', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 25 (1988), 279–91; *Meaning, Expression, and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), ch. 3.

[8] For this point, and background on theories of imagining, see Paul Noordhof, 'Imagining Objects and Imagining Experiences', *Mind and Language*, 17 (2002), 426–55.

As Currie and many other philosophers have maintained, the making of a fictional utterance or work is typically also motivated and guided by the goal of getting others to engage in certain imaginings. Or to shift to Kendall L. Walton's evocative and influential idiom, the text, artefact, or performance is offered as a 'prop' for a game of make-believe.[9] In an early paper on the issue, Margaret MacDonald expressed a similar line of thought by writing that the storyteller issues an 'invitation to exercise imagination'.[10] Similarly, Nicholas Wolterstorff speaks of the 'fictioneer' as presenting certain states of affairs for our consideration, and of inviting us to ponder them for various purposes.[11] Such an illocutionary action would be a species of 'excercitive' in John L. Austin's terms, and a 'directive' in John R. Searle's and William P. Alston's nomenclature.[12] Such invitations, recommendations, or promptings accompany the author's expression of a sequence of imaginings.

Bringing these two conditions together, we have the following sketch of an analysis:

S's utterance of U is a fictional utterance just in case (1) what U expresses is primarily a sequence of imaginings, and (2) S makes U with the primary intention of inviting the members of some audience, A, to engage in this sequence of imaginings.

Are there counter-examples to this proposal? One might wonder whether a patient who retails his fantasies to a psychiatrist is producing a fictional

[9] Kendall L. Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe: On the Foundations of the Representational Arts* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990). Walton's discussion of the fiction–non-fiction distinction (ch. 2) yields a mixed (and extremely open-ended) account in which emphasis is laid on the social context. His emphasis on 'make-believe' is, however, indispensable. For criticisms of Walton's thesis that all pictures are fictions, see Dominic McIver Lopes, *Understanding Pictures* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 85–91.

[10] MacDonald, 'The Language of Fiction', 299.

[11] Wolterstorff, *Works and Worlds of Art*, 233.

[12] John L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, ed. J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisà (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962); John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: an Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969); William P. Alston, *Illocutionary Acts and Sentence Meaning* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000). Cf. Kent Bach and Robert M. Harnish, *Linguistic Communication and Speech Acts* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1979), and François Recanati, *Meaning and Force: The Pragmatics of Performative Utterances* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

utterance. And when children excitedly tell their parents about some make-believe they have enjoyed, is this a fictional utterance? In response to the evocation of such schematically described cases, one can ask whether the illocutionary condition is satisfied: are the speakers trying to get the audience to engage in the corresponding make-believe? If not, then the statements were not fictions. And did the speakers' utterances express primarily their imaginings, or a rather more heterogeneous series of facts that included some make-believe? If it was only the former, then it could be correct to allow that their utterances indeed belong to a broad category of fictional utterances. Resistance to that classification, if there is any, may be motivated by an alternative usage of the word 'fiction' as referring to a valued species of literature. Yet not all fictions are creative or have artistic ends. For example, philosophers urging a semantic doctrine have expressed imaginings about the meaning and reference that the words 'water' and 'jade' would have on a 'Twin Earth' where the microphysical composition of such substances is different from what they are on our planet. Although these philosophers' utterances are embedded in earnest works of non-fiction, it is uncontroversial to categorize them as fictional. One might challenge the second condition of the analysis by contending that it is possible that some fictional utterances are not communicative in the sense of being invitations to some audience to engage in make-believe. If that is correct, a broad conception of fiction lacking the second clause could be defended, but this would still cover the many, arguably more paradigmatic cases, where the person who expresses some make-believe does so with the further intention of getting someone to engage in this make-believe as well.

To be more than a sketch of an analysis, my proposal would require some tinkering and developing. One might, for example, follow Currie's lead and have the fiction-maker's intentions regarding the audience be indexed to some target characteristic of persons. Second, it is plausible that people who make fiction need not do so with the intention that the members of the audience will respond to it by imagining *all and only* the same propositions described or evoked by the utterance, so this condition would have to be weakened a bit. And of course the analysis places a large burden on the distinction between utterances that do and do not primarily express imaginings. There are difficult, borderline cases (such as various

writings by August Strindberg, and Lars von Trier and Jørgen Leth's fascinating 2003 film, *De fem benspænd* [*Five Obstructions*]), but there are also plenty of paradigmatic ones falling squarely on either side of that distinction.

If it is accepted that intentions targeting make-believe or imagining are at least in part what give an utterance its fictional status, it should also be pointed out that the *evidence* we use in trying to detect the status of a completed work can take a variety of forms.[13] Stylistic properties as well as blatant falsehood or implausibility can suggest that the producer of the work was acting on fiction-making intentions; contextual clues and information about the artist's or writer's previous activities also help guide the public's inferences about the relevant intentions. Sometimes the evidence we have is quite reliable, but in other cases it is not. Sometimes new evidence becomes available and we must revise a prior hypothesis. When Virginia Woolf first published *Orlando: A Biography* in 1928, some London booksellers were mislead by the work's subtitle and placed their copies on the shelves alongside non-fictional biographies. Instructions from the Hogarth Press led them to correct this error and reclassify the book as fiction.[14]

ON FICTIONAL TRUTH

Given the basic understanding of the fiction/non-fiction distinction introduced above, we are in position to take up the question of fictional truth (which is sometimes also referred to as 'truth in fiction', an expression that it would be best to reserve for fiction's contributions to truth or knowledge more generally). Various proposals for a semantic analysis of statements about 'fictional states of affairs' have led to notorious difficulties. If Hamlet Prince of Denmark did not literally exist, what is it that makes it true to say 'Hamlet was not a Martian in disguise', or false to say 'Hamlet believed in Freudian psychoanalysis'?[15] Do not such claims about a non-existent person

[13] This point is developed in Noël Carroll, 'Fiction, Non-fiction, and the Film of Presumptive Assertion', 173–202.

[14] James King, *Virginia Woolf* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1994), 423.

[15] For background, see MacDonald, 'The Language of Fiction'; Charles Crittenden, *Unreality: The Metaphysics of Fictional Objects* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991); Peter Lamarque,

simply fail to refer and hence lack any determinate truth value? Alternatively, should they all be deemed false? If so, in relation to what states of affairs could their falsehood be determined? Saying, along with David K. Lewis, that some propositions are true 'in the work' while others are not, seems a step in the right direction, but we must say how features of the work can determine which claims about a fiction's content are and are not veridical or sound.[16] Lewis's essay 'Truth in Fiction' bristles with interesting suggestions and insights which have been criticized and developed at length in the literature. As I shall explain in a moment, some of his proposals lead to a dead end, yet there are still some promising intuitions to which I shall turn after covering some of the more familiar terrain.

Lewis's central strategy is to employ the resources of possible-worlds semantics so as to give some rigour to metaphorical talk of the 'world' of a fiction (and for Lewis, talk of possible worlds is not metaphorical). Lewis recognizes that a string of sentences prefixed with a fictional operator does not suffice to pick out a unique world (in the sense of a coherent and total collection of states of affairs or propositions). In response to the special problem of the reference of proper names in fiction, he allows, with reference to Borges's Pierre Menard, that 'a fiction is a story told by a storyteller on a particular occasion', adding: 'Different acts of storytelling, different fictions'.[17] Yet instead of going on to develop a pragmatic account based on the actual storyteller, Lewis proposes three analyses attributing beliefs to a postulated entity called 'the implicit storyteller', who is imagined as relating the events in the fiction 'as known fact' (possibly by means of organizing the efforts of one or more narrating personae or voices). Whatever this storyteller believes to be the case in the world of the story is, then, true in the fiction. This implicit storyteller, it turns out, has a rational belief system, as becomes apparent when Lewis asserts that 'Truth in a given fiction is closed under implication.'[18] The storyteller will, then, in

Fictional Points of View (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); and Amie L. Thomasson, *Fiction and Metaphysics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[16] See David K. Lewis, 'Truth in Fiction', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 15 (1978), 37–46. Reprinted with postscripts in his *Philosophical Papers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), i.261–80. Subsequent citations are to the latter edition. An excellent critical discussion of this essay is provided in Lamarque, *Fictional Points of View*, ch. 4.

[17] Lewis, 'Truth in Fiction', 265.

[18] Ibid., 264.

principle have a belief-set that is at once infinite and unimpaired by contradictions. Clearly such an idealized account does not accurately model the competence enjoyed by even our most genial authors or readers.[19] Nor does it serve as a plausible aesthetic or artistic ideal, since many of the beliefs in question are irrelevant to the fictional work. It is correct to note that we often imagine the world of a fiction as if it were complete, but it is misleading to suggest that either the author or audience of a work of fiction imagines a complete, fully specified world of the story.[20]

Another problem with this aspect of Lewis's approach is that even if we grant that all fictional works tell a story—which is plausible as long as we work with some suitably broad sense of 'story'—it is far from obvious that fictions always 'have' an implicit storyteller as an essential constituent of their contents. For example, do all fictional radio plays have an implicit yet silent 'fictional narrator' (a kind of 'ventriloquist') as well as the various characters and sound effects that are heard? Arguably, many paintings are fictions lacking an implicit storyteller or 'presenter', though some, such as David Bailly's *vanitas* still life (Figure 1), depict a person who, in gesturing towards a nested picture within-the-picture, serves as a kind of narrator or visual 'presenter'.[21] Or to put this point another way, fiction is generally used in these contexts in a way that cuts across the *diegesis/mimesis* distinction.

As I noted above, Lewis describes three rival accounts of fictional truth that could be appended to these (or alternative) assumptions. The first, 'Analysis 0', amounts to saying that propositions are true in a fiction if and only if they are explicitly stated in the text (as it is 'standardly' interpreted in function of relevant linguistic conventions; Lewis does not linger here over issues concerning the identification of the text of a work of fiction, or the question whether some fictions have no texts; nor does he say how

[19] For a convincing critique of such idealizations of epistemic rationality, see Christopher Cherniak, *Minimal Rationality* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986). The assumption about closure under logical implication makes it especially difficult to provide a satisfactory analysis of the contents of fictions including logical impossibilities, even if we are rightly dubious about *ex falso quodlibet* as a norm of good reasoning.

[20] C. Mason Myers, 'Conceptual Indeterminacy and the Semantics of Fiction', *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 20 (1982), 465–74. Of course a realist about possible worlds might retort that if the reader cannot fully imagine or represent a set of complete worlds, he or she can still refer to one.

[21] For a more extensive discussion, see my 'Narrative', in *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, ed. Berys Gaut and Dominic McIver Lopes (London: Routledge, 2001), 275–84.

linguistic conventions alone make it possible to assign determinate meanings to indexical expressions). As Lewis points out, Analysis 0 makes it impossible to identify various banal implicit facts and events as being part of the story, so Analysis 0 is clearly hopeless—no matter how tempting it is to think that a story is fully determined by the text, audio-visual display, or other expressive means the storyteller has employed. As experience has taught me that the basic thought expressed by Lewis's Analysis 0 is a prevalent 'diehard' belief, I shall devote a paragraph to its refutation; those already persuaded are invited to skip the next paragraph.

Consider, for example, the first few lines of a translation of Émile Zola's 1877 novel, *L'assommoir:*

> Gervaise had waited for Lantier until two o'clock in the morning. Shivering from having stood at the window in her night shirt in the cool air, she finally dozed off, thrown across the bed, feverish, her cheeks wet with tears. For eight days in a row now, when they left the *Veau à Deux Têtes* where they had dinner together, he had sent her home with the children, only coming home in the middle of the night, saying he'd been out looking for work.[22]

To make sense of the story begun with this passage, readers have to rely not only on what the lines can conventionally be taken as explicitly meaning, but also on a number of other implicit premisses (and I base this claim and the rest of this paragraph on experiments undertaken with students in a range of contexts, including Denmark, Canada, China, France, and Germany). Lantier's behaviour is contrasted, for example, with a more typical pattern of not keeping someone up waiting until two in the morning. Gervaise's tears and waiting up late, even at the expense of her health, indicate, but do not directly state, her serious concern, which in turn only makes sense on the unspoken assumption that she does not like being left alone and is concerned about Lantier's nocturnal activities. Standardly interpreted, the text explicitly informs us that Gervaise waits for Lantier; readers go on to infer that she misses Lantier or is worried

[22] Émile Zola, *L'assommoir*, in *Les Rougon-Macquart*, ed. Henri Mittérand (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1964), ii.375. The original reads: 'Gervaise avait attendu Lantier jusqu'à deux heures du matin. Puis, toute frissonnante d'être restée en camisole à l'air vif de la fenêtre, elle s'était assoupie, jetée en travers du lit, fiévreuse, les joues trempées de larmes. Depuis huit jours, au sortir du Veau à Deux Têtes, où ils mangeaient, il l'envoyait se coucher avec les enfants et ne reparaissait que tard dans la nuit, en racontant qu'il cherchait du travail.'

about him. The text is standardly interpreted as meaning that Lantier tells her he has been out looking for work, but readers infer that this is a falsehood and that he has business of his own that he does not want to tell her about (this implication is even stronger in the original French wording). Like Gervaise, readers may become curious to know what Lantier is up to, and will keep an eye out for more evidence concerning Lantier's motivation as they continue reading. In sum, as the information provided by the text or other expressive device is necessarily incomplete, understanding a story can be aptly thought of as a 'completion task', where the receiver takes an explicit input, combines it with some additional background information (such as banal psychological premisses), and draws inferences as to the fiction's contents.

Lewis outlines two alternatives to Analysis 0, each of which provides a manner of amplifying the evidentiary base provided by propositions explicitly given in the text (as standardly interpreted following linguistic conventions). He refrains from saying which of the two best suits literary analysis, which is just as well, as neither is satisfactory. According to the first of these analyses, Analysis 1, the implicit storyteller's beliefs can be amplified with any and every proposition we take to be true in the actual world. If we do not believe there were Martians in disguise lurking about in Hamlet's times, and since the implicit storyteller does not say there were any, we can then infer that the latter does not believe Hamlet was a Martian, and that no such thing is true in the story. But of course implicit story truths sometimes contravene what we hold true in the actual world. To understand tales of the supernatural correctly, even the most convinced naturalist must make inferences using premisses involving magical forms of causation. A more subtle example may be found in 'The Purloined Letter' (1844), where Poe's narrator tells us explicitly that Dupin and his associate frequently indulge in smoking tobacco. It would be inappropriate to infer, however, on the basis of our current medical knowledge, that the characters in Poe's tale were thereby increasing their chances of getting cancer, even though such an inference does follow validly from the text's propositions and our world knowledge. More generally, it is odd to think that the contents of fictions created in the past would be affected by ongoing revisions of our beliefs. So Analysis 1, or what Walton later dubbed

the 'Reality Principle', will not do the trick.[23] (Perhaps there is a broad insight motivating the 'Reality Principle': maybe there are some basic framework background beliefs about agency that must be drawn upon in the comprehension of all fictions that tell a story, where stories always include agents (of some sort) trying to solve problems. It remains to be shown, however, that all fictions tell stories in this sense. And in any case, with reference to a variety of other facts and beliefs, the Reality Principle clearly does not hold.)

The thought behind Lewis's second proposed analysis is that our default assumption should be that the implicit storyteller has the same beliefs as those which prevailed—or more exactly, were 'mutually believed'—in the actual author's community. The text's explicit propositions can, then, be amplified by drawing upon any belief that was consensual in the actual author's community. So if the theory of humours was part of such a belief system, it could provide an unstated premiss for valid inferences about implicit story content. Such an approach is difficult to apply since it is not always easy to identify what is mutually believed in a community. For example, a long and ongoing controversy surrounds the question of what was believed about ghosts in the context of *Hamlet*'s creation.[24] Such epistemic difficulties are not the only problem with this analysis, however, since authors do not always limit themselves to premisses mutually believed in the social context in which they happen to be working. For example, the stories told in the Icelandic sagas often implicitly rely on

[23] See Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe*, ch. 4. That this principle is inadequate was argued by John Heintz in 'Reference and Inference in Fiction', *Poetics*, 8 (1979), 85–99: 'Material inferences, based on laws of physics or psychology, for example, vary from one work of fiction to another' (at 85). For an early statement of a version of the Reality Principle, see John Woods, *The Logic of Fiction: A Philosophical Sounding of Deviant Logic* (The Hague: Mouton, 1974). Another writer who endorses the equivalent of the Reality Principle is Umberto Eco: 'But everything that the text doesn't name or describe explicitly as different from what exists in the real world must be understood as corresponding to the laws and conditions of the real world', *Six Walks in the Fictional Worlds* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), 83; and more recently, Scott Soames, *Beyond Rigidity: The Unfinished Semantic Agenda of Naming and Necessity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 94.

[24] For a recent statement which emphasizes Shakespeare's explicit stress on the ghost's fictional status, see Stephen Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

archaic beliefs about zombies and magic that were no longer mutually believed in the thirteenth-century Christian society where these sagas were initially written and read. Moreover, we do not appropriately flesh in stories by such genial writers as Stanislaw Lem and Jorge Luis Borges by turning exclusively to the beliefs held in their communities, nor even the mutual-belief system of an international literary community, if such a thing could be plausibly held to exist.

One conclusion that may be reached at this point is that there are no principles of fictional truth—no 'mechanisms of generation', to recall Walton's phrase. Yet such a conclusion does not square well with the extent to which readers and viewers do manage to converge on a number of conclusions about what is implicitly the case in the story conveyed by a fiction. I have no hard data to present with regard to this empirical question, but base the previous assertion on the results of years of questioning students in a wide range of contexts about their comprehension of diverse fictions. The convergence, while far from perfect, is nonetheless striking, particularly with regard to clearly posed questions about basic, yet unstated or implicit, story facts. This convergence cuts across striking disagreements about the larger 'point' and themes of the work of fiction, which indicates that the problem of fictional truth should not be dissolved in some holistic account of work-interpretation. It is also significant in this regard to note that in spite of their notorious polemics and professional desideratum regarding originality, academic critics do agree on many implicit story facts. I provide examples of such uncontroversial yet implicit story truths below in a discussion of a specific case.

Another option is to turn to the reader and impose various evidentiary or uptake conditions, while stipulating that fictional truths are what such idealized or 'informed' readers converge upon. Currie, for example, proposes that fictional truths are beliefs that it is reasonable for an informed reader to infer that the 'fictional author' believed—where the fictional author is an interpretative construct logically distinct from the actual author, namely, someone for whom the story propositions are known to be true.[25] This move has the significant advantages gained by thinking of the propositions constitutive of a story as an incomplete and possibly

[25] Currie, *The Nature of Fiction*, 80.

contradictory belief-set as opposed to a possible world or set of possible worlds, yet requiring the fictional author to hold all of the story propositions to be true makes it impossible to deal with some self-embedded fictions, as Robin Le Poidevin has pointed out.[26] Currie must also answer the question about how the fictional author's beliefs are determined. His proposal on this issue is at bottom that we are left with a version of the mutual-belief principle to be modified and applied in vague and unspecified ways. He allows that the simple, mutual-belief strategy is not accurate and 'won't do', yet he says he has no rules to substitute for it, and adds that there is 'considerable agreement' in practice as to how the inferences ought to be drawn.[27] While vagueness is inevitable in this context, given that there are cases where the mutual-belief principle is simply inapplicable, this proposal is unpromising.

Another family of approaches to this problem is to weigh additional constraints on the idealized reader's interpretative operations. For example, John F. Phillips, who complains that Currie's notion of the fictional author is 'rather obscure', develops an 'informed reader' strategy by including a quasi-intentionalist loop: something is fictionally true just in case it is reasonable for an informed reader to infer from the text that under ideal conditions the author would agree that this proposition is fictionally true in the work.[28] An earlier proposal in a similar vein was Alex Byrne's idea that 'It is true in fiction F that p iff the Reader could infer that the Author is inviting the Reader to make believe that p.'[29] (Where the Author is not

[26] Robin Le Poidevin, 'Worlds within Worlds? The Paradoxes of Embedded Fiction', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 35 (1995), 227–38.

[27] Currie, *The Nature of Fiction*, 80–1.

[28] John F. Phillips, 'Truth and Inference in Fiction', *Philosophical Studies*, 94 (1999), 273–93, at 285.

[29] Alex Byrne, 'Truth in Fiction: The Story Continued', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 71 (1993), 24–35, at 33. For insightful comments on the problem as a whole and criticisms of Byrne and Currie, see David Davies, 'Fictional Truth and Fictional Authors', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 36 (1996), 43–55. Davies rejects the intentionalist line by claiming that it is 'clearly inadequate, since it does not allow for the *failure* of the real author to produce a work in which her intention is realized' (49)—a telling critique of intentionalisms lacking success conditions. At the same time, Davies wants to relate the 'intentionality' of the work to the actual author's 'act of generation'. His final suggestion is roughly that the attempt to give a principled analysis of the determination of story facts cannot be separated from larger issues concerning appreciation and the interpretation of the themes and point of the story, and even relations between a given work and other works in the same life-work; cf. his *Art as Performance* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 89–96.

the actual author but a 'logical construction' of the Reader, who is not the actual reader but an idealized one whose interpretative performance lives up to certain strictures.) A basic problem with this kind of approach is the difficulty of saying how we are to develop and apply the proposed constraints on interpretation: what kind of evidence must the Reader have, short of all possible relevant evidence, to be 'informed'? And what are the ideal conditions under which the author's agreement corresponds to the utterance's actual meanings or the intentions of the Author? Is the reader supposed to base inferences about story content uniquely on the text, and if so, why should we accept such a restriction, which strains the very meaning of the expression 'the informed reader'? Similar questions about fictional and hypothetical intentionalisms were discussed at greater length in Chapter 6.

Perhaps there is a way to answer such questions and make such approaches work. Instead of exploring such options and criticisms of them in detail here, I shall return to Lewis's provocative lines about stories and storytellings, with the aim of developing this line of thought without losing sight of the *actual* storyteller's relevant intentions and assumptions. The analysis of fictional truth can thereby be related more directly to the account of the work's fictional status.

On the pragmatic account espoused here, the creation and reception of a fictional work require imaginative acts—the author's and audience's respectively.[30] For example, sometime before 1816, E. T. A. Hoffmann dreamt up the idea of a particular, very hard nut to crack, bearing the proper name 'Krakatuk'.[31] As one reads Hoffmann's story-within-a-story in *Nußknacker und Mausekönig* [*The Nutcracker and Mouse King*] one is supposed to

[30] Amie L. Thomasson traces a similar claim back to Roman Ingarden's work on fictional entities, which are said to have a 'dual foundation' in both the creative mental act of an author and in the writing or speaking of the words of the fiction. See her 'Fiction and Intentionality', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 56 (1996), 277–98, at 294. It should be added, of course, that for Ingarden, the work of fiction has a 'third foundation' in ideal essences or concepts, and that the work's mode of existence is 'ontically heteronomous'; see his *Das literarische Kunstwerk. Eine Untersuchung aus dem Grenzgebiet der Ontologie, Logik, und Literaturwissenschaft* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1931), §§65–7; trans. George G. Grabowicz, *The Literary Work of Art: An Investigation on the Borderlines of Ontology, Logic, and Theory of Literature* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1973).

[31] E. T. A. Hoffmann, 'Nußknacker und Mauseköning' [1816], in *Werke*, ed. Herbert Kraft and Manfred Wacker (Frankfurt: Insel, 1967), ii.296–351.

imagine an odd sequence of events surrounding this nut. Yet once the work has been created and its contents determined, discourse about it need not be only make-believe: we believe, and do not simply imagine, that the author has created a work, the contents of which include the nut 'Krakatuk'. Some of the difficulties surrounding the notion of fictional truth arise from the fact that our responses to, and statements about the work, straddle this distinction: at times we engage in the relevant make-believe; at other times we make claims about what the author claims or expresses regarding what he or she has imagined, and about what readers imagine and ought to imagine in response to the work of fiction.[32] We say that there really is a work of fiction which 'has' various imaginary contents in the sense that the author of the fiction has imagined those things and has successfully invited or recommended that others do so as well by expressing these attitudes in the utterance or work he has created; we may then concur that it is appropriate, in engaging with the fiction, for the work's audience to follow this recommendation by engaging in these imaginings. In speaking of the contents of a work of fiction, then, the relevant prefix or operator is not simply 'It is true in some fictional world that . . . ', but 'In response to a particular work of fiction, it is appropriate to make believe that . . . ', where a central interpretative goal is that of understanding the story and related features of the work. So it is true, *tout court*, in the actual world that in response to *Hamlet*, it is appropriate to make believe that he was the Prince of Denmark, the reason for this being that it is true, of the work *Hamlet*, that in the story Hamlet is the Prince of Denmark and not a Martian. Statements about what is or is not 'fictionally true in *Hamlet*' can be rephrased accordingly. Thus, a statement of the form: 'In *Hamlet*, Hamlet is not a Martian in disguise' is true if and only if what someone is saying to be the case in making that statement, namely, that it

[32] Hardly a new thought, but it bears restating. See Keith S. Donnellan, 'Speaking about Nothing', *Philosophical Review*, 83 (1974), 3–31, esp. 5–7; Stefano Predelli, 'Talk about Fiction', *Erkenntnis*, 46 (1997), 69–77; John F. Phillips, 'Two Theories of Fictional Discourse', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 37 (2000), 107–19. Phillips proposes a different fictional-truth operator involving an as if endorsement of naïve realism about fictional entities. If this amounts to a recommendation to engage in make-believe, such a proposal squares nicely with the pragmatics of fiction as set forth above. For a careful discussion of the meaning and reference of characters' names in fiction, see Fred Adams, Gary Fuller, and Robert Stecker, 'The Semantics of Fictional Names', 78 (1997) *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 128–48.

is not appropriate to make believe that Hamlet is a Martian in the work, actually is the case.[33] Our discourse *about* the work is not pretence or make-believe, but both the creation of the work's contents or story and subsequent responses to it do involve imaginative acts.[34] Here it may be appropriate to recall MacDonald's comment that 'a storyteller both creates a story, a verbal construction, and the contents of that story. I want to say that these activities are inseparable. Certainly, no one could create pure fiction without also creating the contents which are its parts.'[35] We might do well here also to recall a paragraph from Bertrand Russell:

> There is only one world, the 'real' world: Shakespeare's imagination is part of it, and the thoughts he had in writing *Hamlet* are real. So are the thoughts that we have in reading the play. But it is of the very essence of fiction that only the thoughts, feelings, etc., in Shakespeare and his readers are real, and that there is not, in addition to them, an objective Hamlet. When you have taken account of all the feelings roused by Napoleon in writers and readers of history, you have not touched the actual man; but in the case of Hamlet you have come to the end of him. If no one thought about Hamlet, there would be nothing left of him; if no one had thought about Napoleon, he would have soon seen to it that someone did.[36]

Elucidating the problem of fictional truth in terms of appropriateness of make-believe in response to a work's content has the advantage of foregrounding the issue's normative character (in a broad, axiological, and not exclusively moral sense). In other words, the proponent of some analysis of fictional truth should be able to say why someone ought or ought not to allow that it is appropriate, in response to some work of fiction, to make believe some proposition. And 'appropriateness' has the advantage of expressing a suitably open and permissive position, that is, one which embraces both epistemic goals and other sorts of anticipated pay-offs or values. Quite generally, it could be appropriate for someone to make

[33] For background on the notion of truth employed here, see William P. Alston, *A Realist Conception of Truth* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996).

[34] On this point, see Jeanette Emt, 'On the Nature of Fictional Entities', in *Understanding the Arts*, ed. Jeanette Emt and Göran Hermerén (Lund: Lund University Press, 1992), 149–76, esp. 174.

[35] MacDonald, 'The Language of Fiction', 304. The cited remark ignores the existence of fictional works in non-verbal media.

[36] Bertrand Russell, *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1919), 169–70.

believe even something as loopy as the proposition that Hamlet is a Martian, as long as doing so could yield suitable benefits without causing anyone unjustified harm—and as long as there is no overarching reason why this person need not pursue the epistemic value of correctly understanding some basic aspects of Shakespeare's play. Perhaps the reader in question suffers from a dreadful and singular form of boredom that is only relieved when he rereads the classics, imagining them to be peopled with extraterrestrials. Or perhaps the reader has become convinced that all of the sensible things that might be said about the contents of Shakespeare's *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* have already been said, yet urgently needs to publish an innovative reading.

It is only in certain restricted contexts, defined by other sorts of goals, that such otherwise workable make-believe would be inappropriate. For example, the general and permissive notion of appropriateness of make-believe is further constrained if one's goal is to know something about the play *Hamlet*, understood *qua* literary work of art created in a particular historical and artistic context. Such a claim is compatible with a sensible pluralism about the value of divergent interpretative projects, while allowing that particular interpretative goals entail more stringent conditions. Thus we can say that one kind of interpretative project aims at producing reliable utterances of the following form: 'In response to a work of fiction, W, cognized *qua* work of art having contents determined in its context of creation, it is appropriate/inappropriate to make believe that *p*.'[37] In many cases, the needed standard of appropriateness is provided by our commitment to the goal of understanding the fictional utterance or work in the author's artistic context, where this context includes the author's expressed imaginings and corresponding recommendations about what we should make believe in responding to the utterance or work. If we happen to believe that an author's or artist's creation of a work in a context includes complex intentions about the imaginings integral to the work, and if we believe as well that some of these intentions are 'successfully realized' in at least the very broad sense of being compatible and well integrated with the text's or structure's (or other artistic arrangement's)

[37] Such an approach would have to be modified if our goal were to deal with the many acts of fiction-making that do not result in works of art. I shall set that task to one side here.

features, then we may have an additional basis for holding that certain norms of appropriateness of make-believe are grounded in features of the work, where the latter is identified as a text, performance, or artistic structure produced in some context with certain intentions regarding the 'context of interpretation' or background assumptions that should be relied upon in appreciating the work.[38]

It is hardly controversial to observe that in devising a fiction, an author can choose not to adopt background beliefs drawn from those of a local belief community or premisses he or she holds to be sound in actuality. A contemporary writer who does not believe in ghosts, and who writes for an audience that is similarly lacking in such convictions, may nonetheless chose to create a neo-Gothic or fantastic fiction in which various hackneyed supernaturalist premisses help to furnish what it is convenient to call the 'world' of the story. For example, an author settles on the unstated story premiss that certain sinister figures have 'the evil eye' and can, by simply staring at an enemy, cause them bodily harm. Our author then writes that when Monsieur Malocchio stared at her, Madame Lamalheureuse fell to her death. Competent readers of such a fiction interpret such explicitly conveyed story events in terms of the appropriate, unstated background tenets, thereby drawing the inference that it is true in the fiction that the man's gaze has caused the unfortunate lady's demise.[39] Not to be able to perform such inferences is to be a seriously incompetent reader of fiction. The corresponding element of readerly competence can be provisionally codified in the form of a heuristic:

> *The intentional heuristic (first version)*: in determining what is true in a given fiction, the reader, viewer, spectator, etc. should adopt the thoughts

[38] For a good argument as to why the relevant context of interpretation is not simply the objective context in which the utterance was produced, but the context targeted by the writer or speaker, see Stefano Predelli, 'I'm not Here Now', *Analysis*, 58 (1998), 107–15; and 'Never Put Off Until Tomorrow What You Can Do Today', *Analysis*, 56 (1996), 85–91.

[39] I provide a more detailed discussion of an example along these lines in my 'Characterization and Fiction Truth in the Cinema', in *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies*, ed. David Bordwell and Noël Carroll (Madison Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 149–74, at 166–8. For background on evil eye beliefs and practices, see Tobin Siebers, *The Mirror of Medusa* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983).

and background premisses that the author(s) of that fiction settled on in creating the work.

Working with this heuristic carries no guarantee of success. Nor are all of the problems evidentiary ones. What is the interpreter to decide should it be revealed that a given author simply had no thoughts on a particular matter? As Currie astutely points out, the author might have been undecided, or may have resolutely thought of the story as indeterminate or open to multiple interpretations (and here we might also recall Roman Ingarden's arguments about the necessity of 'spots of indeterminacy' in the fiction).[40] Or again, there may be no relevant, content-determining intention if the work emerged from the uncoordinated actions of several persons. Here we might have recourse to default assumptions drawn from actuality, generic patterns, or some combination thereof, or better, we might recognize that the story is indeterminate in this regard. Stories, unlike worlds, can be gappy and inconsistent.

Another challenge, however, is even more difficult: are the actual author's intentions in this regard never simply wrong? Intentionalists of a moderate or partial variety—such as myself—agree that intentions are fallible and therefore do not necessarily determine the content of a story. It follows that any plausible intentionalist or authorial account of fictional truth must include a success condition. Thus we can say that inferences as to implicit story content must 'mesh' with the explicit features of the text or other expressive item, and some authorial intentions and plans may simply be incompatible with the latter. Meshing here means 'be consistent with', but also carries the implication of a stronger condition involving relevance and integration: if there is a sense in which an extraneous hypothesis is consistent with data, but bears no meaningful, integrative relation with them, we would say that the two do not mesh.[41] A symptom or epistemic indication—but not a logical criterion or decisive determination—is whether any interpreters who are unaware of the intention as expressed separately (in an interview or diary, for example) would be even

[40] Gregory Currie, 'Interpreting Fictions', in *On Literary Theory and Philosophy: A Cross-Disciplinary Encounter*, ed. Richard Freadman and Lloyd Reinhardt (London: Macmillan, 1991), 96–112, at 103. Cf. Ingarden, *Literary Work of Art*, §38.

[41] Thanks to Berys Gaut for his query on this point.

moderately likely, given knowledge of the text or structure and relevant art-historical contextual factors, to understand the story along the lines indicated by the intention in question. Yet this is only a symptom, as some highly unlikely intentions in fact mesh quite well with a text once they became known via an interview, diary, or some other source, such as the director's commentaries on a DVD. It is clearly difficult to identify principles behind the line between successful and unsuccessful intentions, but that hardly means the distinction never obtains, and I have already quickly given clear enough examples falling on either side, as well as some guidelines concerning how such classifications work. I turn now to a more detailed discussion of an example which has been chosen to illustrate additional complications related to this question.

MEETING VENUS

Although it is based on, and may evoke various aspects of the Hungarian film-maker István Svabó's earlier experience as art director of a performance of Richard Wagner's *Tannhäuser* (1845) in Paris, the film *Meeting Venus* (1991) is uncontroversially a work of fiction: we are clearly not meant to believe that the cinematic images of Glenn Close refer literally to a diva named Karin Andersen singing in a 1990 performance at the *Opéra de Paris*; the recorded voice we hear singing the part of Elisabeth, the credits inform us, is Kiri te Kanawa's; yet as we hear this recorded singing and see moving pictures of Close singing, we are supposed to imagine or make believe that we hear bits of a Swedish diva's performance.[42] In this manner one may easily produce a number of relatively uncontroversial examples of what it is appropriate to make believe in regard to this work of fiction, where the thoughts or propositions in question find ample warrant in the audio-visual evidence, in plausible assumptions about the film's context and history of production, and in reasonable hypotheses about the intentions

[42] Background on the film and its director is provided by David Paul in 'Svabó', in *Five Filmmakers*, ed. Daniel J. Goulding (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1994), 156–208. See also Janet Maslin, '*Meeting Venus* Sings of Politics', *New York Times*, 10 Nov. 1991, sec. 2, 17–18, which includes an interview with the director.

of the director and his main collaborators, such as the co-author of the script, Michael Hirst (on the assumption that this film is an instance of joint authorship, along the lines discussed in Chapter 3). With regard to *Meeting Venus*, cognized *qua* work of art in its context of creation, it is appropriate, then, to make believe that:

(P1) A Hungarian maestro, Zoltan Szanto, has been hired to conduct a performance of Wagner's *Tannhäuser* in Paris sometime after 1989.

(P2) While in Paris, Szanto writes letters to his wife back in Budapest, telling her about the bureaucratic and political troubles that hinder preparations for the performance.

(P3) Szanto does not write to his wife about his romantic involvement with Miss Karin Anderson, the diva who is to sing the part of Elisabeth. He does tell her that Miss Anderson is about to become a grandmother, his devious and unstated aim being to forestall any suspicions on his wife's part.

(P4) Aspects of Szanto's experience during the rehearsals and performance are similar to (a) earlier performances of Wagner's work, in Paris and elsewhere (e.g. political protests); and (b) what it is appropriate to make believe about Tannhäuser's experiences.

(P5) Szanto lives in the shadow of his former teacher, the deceased Maestro Ignatio Sarto.

(P6) Szanto has doubts about the value of the ideas of Hans Dietrich von Binder, the drug-addicted choreographer and set designer, whose plans for parts of the production we glimpse during rehearsals.

(P7) At the last minute, when it is impossible to get the mechanized safety curtain up because of a union dispute, it is decided to alter the staging drastically and sing in front of the curtain.

Sceptical doubts could, of course, be raised about these and similar interpretative claims, as there is never a simple and unique path leading from the evidence to story propositions or thoughts. Yet so far, our intentionalism moves on relatively solid ground. It is more interesting to focus on the problems raised by a number of ideas, which, though of thematic centrality to the work, are far less unproblematic. Here, then, are some additional things that it *may* be appropriate to make believe in response to the work:

(P8) The first-night, improvised performance of *Tannhäuser* is (a) a great success, both artistically and with the public; (b) superior to the planned staging; (c) a source of joyous redemption for the conductor; (d) a triumph of those who love music over the various social and practical forces that hampered the production.

(P9) The improvised staging is a triumph because it (i) foregrounds the singing, which is excellent; (ii) replaces von Binder's futile effort to enhance the performance via boldly innovative yet anachronistic stagecraft; (iii) enhances the audience's emotional involvement.

(P10) The conductor's baton miraculously blossoms for a moment at the climax of the performance, just as the pilgrim chorus sings of a similar miracle in which the Pope's staff blossoms, symbolizing the redemption of Tannhäuser through Elisabeth's sacrifice.

(P11) Szanto's conflicts, both artistic and personal, have similarly been resolved through his success with the performance.

Propositions 8 through 11, and other related notions, all receive some degree of warrant in features of the audio-visual display, and they also find support in what can reasonably be surmised about the film-maker's intentions. With regard to (P10), for example, a close look shows that images of the blossoming baton have been intercut with reaction shots of members of the orchestra who are positioned close enough to the conductor to be able to have the kind of perceptual observation which, in standard conditions, enjoys a high degree of reliability. They are shown to react with astonishment to the sight of a miraculously blossoming baton, the apparent implication being that what we see should not be interpreted as a mere psychological insert suddenly employed within an otherwise naturalistic storytelling style (i.e. as something imagined or hallucinated by Szanto). And if the performance is, for Szanto and those close to him, somehow miraculous, it would seem to follow that the improvised performance has revealed its superiority to what may then be described as the contrived, anachronistic, and lurid avant-gardiste approach of von Binder. Szanto himself earlier told the diva that he was unsure of von Binder's vision, and that the music, passionately and authentically performed, could alone suffice to make a successful *Tannhäuser*.

Although this second collection of thoughts or propositions receive some degree of warrant, it strikes me as important to note that a reflective spectator may entertain some reasonable doubts about them, the result being a rather curious dialectic unfolding with regard to the story's contents. Although authorial intention supports propositions (P8)–(P11), and although there is some apparent evidence for them in the audio-visual display, they do not mesh sufficiently with the totality of the evidence presented by the latter. To say why, I must briefly trace some salient aspects of the dialectic I have in mind.

The relevant sequences have clearly been designed to get spectators to imagine that the performance is a triumph, the cinematic evidence for the quality of the performance being of three kinds: (i) frequent reaction shots showing how delighted and moved members of the audience, including von Binder himself, are; (ii) the miraculous, intersubjectively observable sprouting of the baton; and (iii) the high quality, real or perceived, of the musical performance (which is known by viewers of the film to be the work of musicians enjoying star status and international renown). And yet, on the other side of the balance, there is what the film's spectators can observe of the staging. At several points earlier in the film it has been intimated that von Binder's planned staging was anachronistic and had little to do with Wagner, yet the same may be said of the improvised performance as well, which retains aspects of von Binder's plan, while introducing additional, seemingly unmotivated elements. As it is actually displayed to us in the film, this staging is neither especially creative nor coherent. The performers still wear von Binder's anachronistic costumes. The pilgrims march up and down the aisles, as if in a hackneyed effort to 'break down' the division between spectators and participants. Moreover, facts about the cinematic rhetoric used to present the performance, and in particular, the employment of rhythmic editing, ellipsis, and emotionally manipulative reaction shots, stand in rather stark contrast to the idea that an effective presentation of Wagner's music can suffice to make a viable and moving performance *of the operatic work*. In this sense, the film manifests a kind of performative self-contradiction: we are presented with a dramatically and rhetorically embellished story of a performance, spiced with love, conflict, politics, humour, and some familiar and catching moments of Wagner's music; yet a central story theme or point of this cinematic drama

is that music alone suffices to move the audience; music, and not story and stagecraft, is the path to an authentic, moving, and even miraculous, redemptive revival of Wagnerian opera!

If it is the case that the film in this manner invites two rival and incompatible readings, the one according to which the improvised performance is a triumph, clearly superior to the planned staging, and the other according to which this is anything but obvious, we may sum up by saying that we have an important ambiguity with regard to what it is appropriate to make believe in response to this work. Yet it does not seem plausible to suppose that any such ambiguity figured in the film-makers' plans, in which case we must speak of an unintended ambiguity at the heart of the movie.

One might at this point opt for a fictionalist interpretative strategy by postulating a Svabó & Co. who worked with ironic aims. As a result of this interpretative operation, the film is revived as a highly complex and clever ironic statement about the difficulties and aporias of staging Wagner 'authentically', as well as a cutting and cold-hearted commentary on the collective delusion suffered by members of an audience overcome by a naïve emotional response to the music played during a flawed staging. And the miraculous sprouting of the baton can be reread as a metaphorical depiction of a momentary collective hallucination of the members of the orchestra. Alternatively, a fictional Svabó may have lucidly intended to produce a film manifesting an unresolved tension between the two contrasting readings sketched above, the goal being to let the members of the audience decide in keeping with their own sentiments and proclivities. Or perhaps, being divided on the issue himself, he wished to communicate the dilemma.

One objection to such ruminations is that this sort of critical-constructive enhancement of artistic value belongs to another sort of interpretative project from the actualist one we engaged in at the outset, and which led us to conclude that the tension between actual intentions and real results generates a basic story ambiguity. It could be further concluded that this is precisely the kind of result that a partial intentionalist should be prepared to accept. A final consideration reinforces this point.

Meeting Venus belongs to a category of fictions with regard to which one may raise additional questions about the contents of a work of fiction, namely, works that depict or refer to other real or imaginary works of

fiction.[43] In such cases the issues discussed above concerning the appropriateness of make-believe can be reiterated 'within' the make-believe: should our actual world principles of appropriate make-believe be applied to embedded or nested fictions? If so, in what way? These questions can be of special relevance in those cases where at least significant segments of the work in question are directly presented in the nesting work, i.e. through 'quotation' or some form of representation. In such cases, not only is it appropriate to make believe that a particular, 'nested' work of fiction exists in the 'world' of the nesting work, it is also appropriate to make believe that certain events happen in the story conveyed by the nested fiction. But which ones? The simple answer is to respond by saying that since the make-believe or nested fiction is just part of what it is appropriate to make believe in response to the nesting fiction, whatever principles determine appropriateness of the latter determine appropriateness with regard to the former. Yet the very nature of the partial intentionalist principles proposed here opens the door to the following query: cannot the maker of a fiction successfully intend to make a work in which some alternative set of principles determines the content of an embedded fiction? We are to imagine, then, that the story world is a strange one in which stories function rather differently than they do in the actual world. Could not the text or structure of an embedding fiction be compatible with such an intention? We do not, after all, require that artists respect the laws of physics and chemistry when they imagine story propositions, as 'impossible fictions' illustrate; is there any reason, then, to think that they must respect our putative principles of poetics, aesthetics, or hermeneutics? So even if intentionalism is right about fictional truth in the actual world, those very principles require us to allow that it could be appropriate to make believe that in some embedded fiction, fiction itself functions differently.[44]

How does such a line of thought apply to the case of *Meeting Venus*? The artistic nesting in *Meeting Venus* is especially complex because it is a matter of

[43] For a fine survey of examples, see Tadeusz Kowzan, 'Art "En Abyme" ', *Diogenes*, 96 (1976), 67–92. I discuss various theoretical issues related to embedded or nested works of art in 'Nested Art', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 61 (2003), 233–45. Questions about fictional truth in nested fictions are raised in Dale Jacquette's 'Intentional Semantics and the Logic of Fiction', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 29 (1989), 168–76; and in Le Poidevin's 'Worlds within Worlds?' (above n. 26).

[44] Closely related issues are discussed by Kendall L. Walton in 'Morals in Fiction and Fictional Morality', *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume*, 68 (1994), 27–50; Walton tentatively proposes that

an actual operatic work and of a make-believe performance of same, with the nested work standing in an indirect 'based on' relation to actual performances (such as the earlier Svabó-directed performance of *Tannhäuser* in the Paris opera). The movie also offers a representation of recordings of the musical parts of fragments of an actual performance of the opera (e.g. Kiri te Kanawa's recorded singing of Elisabeth's part). It could seem that intentionalist principles oblige one to respect the film-maker's designs and interpret the nested performance, not in terms of Wagnerian or other actual-world interpretative principles, but in terms of those targeted by the makers of *Meeting Venus*, namely, principles according to which the performers and audience are somehow perfectly right to respond to the performance as a deeply moving triumph, one so moving, in fact, that it makes sense to imagine that the miracle in the Wagnerian story could be magically exemplified, if only momentarily, in the conductor's and performers' experience of performing the work.

The problem of applying this line of thought to the film, however, is that we are hard-pressed to imagine what those alternative, story-constitutive principles are supposed to be, the result being that the dialectic of conflicting readings is not happily resolved in favour of a triumphant Zoltan Szanto. What principles could allow us to conclude, on the basis of the evidence given in the film, that Szanto has succeeded? A satisfactory answer to that question would require, for example, that we flesh out some kind of story about Tannhäuser, Elizabeth, the pilgrims, et al., in such a manner that it makes sense that the pilgrims are dressed in rags and carry torches when they march in singing about a miracle in Rome. How, precisely, we are to fulfil this task of fleshing out the nested story is far from obvious, but it is clear that we are supposed to include some such notion, if only in a schematic or vague way, in our make-believe. After all, even von Binder himself, whose earlier work and plans have been thwarted,

supervenience may be the basis for a what he describes as a puzzling asymmetry between axiological and factual imagining—the thought being that we go along with ridiculous and even impossible fictional truths, but refuse to make-believe morally and aesthetically repugnant propositions. I have doubts about this asymmetry, but do agree that we have good reason not to indulge in some of the emotions some fictions are designed to occasion. Similarly, sometimes we recognize that some proposition is fictionally true in some work, yet find the thought laughable or ill-motivated in the story and do not engage emotionally, or quasi-emotionally in the targeted way.

is shown to be immensely satisfied with the last-minute staging, and it is meant to be implicitly true in the fiction that he has good reasons. Yet on the basis of what Szanto says and implies in the story, the 'bottom line' would be this: the fragmentary and incoherent theatrics do not matter in the least since the work's redemptive force arises from the sheer excellence of the musical performance and value of the musical work; whatever story is needed is carried by the lyrics and by our knowledge of prior performances. Perhaps, yet this does not save the film from the larger kinds of tensions identified above: what we see and hear of the performance does not warrant these miraculous effects; nor can these effects be integrated, by authorial fiat, with everything else that has been presented to the spectator. It will not do, by the way, to say that the determination of fictional truth must be subordinated to larger appreciative options with regard to the point or theme of the work taken as a whole, the problem with the example being precisely that there is an unresolved tendency between these related but distinct aspects of interpretation.

In sum, intentions with regard to implicit fictional content are not redundant with regard to the explicit features of the text, audio-visual display, or other artistic structure, but if they are to be constitutive of the work's meanings, they must mesh sufficiently with those features taken as a whole. Sometimes this condition is satisfied and sometimes it is not. The heuristic, then, needs to be revised as follows:

> *Intentional heuristic*: in determining what is true in a given fiction, the reader, viewer, spectator, etc. should adopt the thoughts and background premisses that the author(s) of that fiction settled on in creating the work, yet only in so far as these assumptions mesh sufficiently with the features of the utterance (including the text, audio-visual display, or other expressive means).

Such an interpretative principle is, of course, vague, and must be applied with some skill to the particularities of the case at hand; but we should recall Aristotle's advice that it is unwise to look for more precision than a given subject matter allows, the subject matter here being the rather elusive and diverse aims and accomplishments of the human imagination.

CONCLUSION

The preceding chapters were designed to illustrate and support the thesis that intentions and intentional actions play crucial roles in both the making and reception of works of art. That thesis depends—as would its contradictory—on assumptions about the nature of intentions. According to the account defended here, intentions fulfil many functions in the lives of temporally situated agents who deliberate over what to do, settle on ends and means, and try to realize some of these plans. Those functions include initiating and sustaining intentional behaviour, guiding and adjusting that behaviour once it is in progress, prompting and terminating practical reasoning, and helping coordinate interaction. The objects of intentions are, at least in the first instance, the future actions of the intending party; such actions can, of course, be performed with the aim of prompting someone else's reaction. Intention is not reducible to any other single attitude, nor is it plausibly equated with a discourse or system of attributions. Intentions, then, are attitudes we take towards ends and means to those ends. As such they can give rise to more or less happy endeavours, but are not themselves actions, and do not infallibly realize the results they target.

These assumptions are not the only ones that can be associated with 'intention' and related terms, but I argued in Chapter 1 that they are superior to rival proposals in that they mesh better with a wide range of prevalent, well-entrenched, and valued practices and commitments. Although difficult and fundamental philosophical questions can be raised with regard to the epistemic justification of intentionalist discourse and the ontological status and causal efficacy of its referents, the *onus probandi* belongs squarely on the shoulders of those who, on the basis of speculative and controversial responses to such difficult theoretical questions, urge us to

take up the paradoxical task of intentionally withdrawing our reliance on intentionalist psychology.

Artists' intentions, I hold, are the same sorts of attitudes that we attribute to ourselves and others as we attempt to describe, explain, and predict our actions in a wide range of domains. Art-making is an intentional activity, even if it incorporates non-deliberative, unconscious, and spontaneous processes. Neither the inspirationist nor rationalistic conceptions can capture the blending of deliberate and intentional, spontaneous and sub-intentional processes in the creation of art. As the examples described in Chapter 2 indicate, creative ideas indeed 'pop' into artist's heads, but such events are framed by planning, hard work, and critical revision undertaken with specific artistic goals in view. The idea of a finished or completed work of art can only be explicated adequately by drawing upon action-theoretical and intentionalist notions, and the latter in turn shed light on the several senses of 'fragment' in aesthetic discourse.

Intentions of the right sort are also crucial to genuinely collaborative art-making and co-authorship, which, according to the proposal developed in Chapter 3, requires meshing plans as well as mutual beliefs about them. Only through the recognition of intentions can we successfully distinguish between individual and joint authorship or art-making, artistic 'perverse effects', and cases where authorship is vitiated by coercion. References to 'multiple authorship' and 'the social construction of art' tend to obscure these distinctions. As I contend in Chapter 4, an artist's short-term intentions and long-term plans and policies interact in complex ways in the emergence of an artistic *oeuvre*, and our uptake of such attitudes makes an important difference to our appreciation of the relations between items belonging to a single life-work.

With regard to the complex issues associated with the ontology of art, I claim in Chapter 5 that even items as basic and convention-dependent as texts cannot be reliably identified and individuated in the absence of a recognition of the relevant maker(s)' intentions. The same is no doubt true of many other sorts of items belonging to that bewildering and open-ended array of displays, arrangements, performances, and objects associated with works of art and their diverse versions. Texts and works are conceptually distinct, even in those cases where tokens of a text-type are a work's principal public component.

Recognition of intentions is also integral to the success of many projects involved in the reception of art. The intentionalism advocated in Chapters 6 and 7 is, however, a partial one. Works of art, like other artefacts, can be put to a bewildering diversity of uses, some of which diverge radically from the purposes the works were designed to fulfil, and from the maker's expressive or communicative aims. And as the popular version of 'the intentional fallacy' has it, biographical knowledge cannot replace scrutiny of the pictures or poems. No one's intentions are infallible, so there is a conceptual gap between the completed work and whatever plans may have preceded its making. Yet there is also an 'anti-intentional fallacy' that ought to be better known. For example, we badly misunderstand and fail to appreciate the specific value of Raku tea bowls (see Figure 2) if we are unfamiliar with the ideal of *wabi* and the artist's attendant designs, that is, if we do not know they were intentionally made to have irregularities (that advocates of a different aesthetic would later disparage).[1] As I claim in

FIG. 2: Teabowl, named 'Wakamizu'. Attributed to Raku 9th Ryōnyū. Black Raku Ware, pottery. Edo period, 17th Century. 8.6 cm (height), 11.5 cm (diameter). Courtesy of the Tokugawa Art Museum, Tokyo.

[1] The neo-Confucian scholar Dazai Shundai, for example, called such items 'filthy and damaged old bowls'; cited in Paul H. Varley, 'Chanoyu: From the Genroku Epoch to Modern Times', in *Tea in Japan: Essays on the History of Chanoyu*, ed. Paul H. Varley and Kumakura Isao (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989), 161–94, at 175; for background on the aesthetics of *wabi*, see Haga Kōshirō, 'The Wabi Aesthetic through the Ages', in *Tea in Japan*, 195–232; and Saito Yuriko, 'The Japanese Art of Imperfection and Insufficiency', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 55 (1997), 377–85.

Chapter 7, whether a work is fiction or not makes an enormous difference, and this distinction partly depends on the maker's intentions: to produce fiction is intentionally to express imaginings and to invite others to engage in correlative make-believe. In spite of their fallibility, intentions regularly contribute decisively to the determination of the story a fiction conveys, which makes a difference for those readers and viewers who want to understand the story told, as opposed to undertaking a new telling of their own.

There are various aspects of art and intention that I have not explored in any depth in this book, such as the rich topic concerning the ways in which works in a variety of genres and media depict or represent intentions. Finally, it may be worth saying outright that various topics in aesthetics do not similarly hinge on or require systematic reference to intentions. I do hope, however, that this book will help keep a wide range of intention-related issues—including those not taken up here—on the research agenda in aesthetics and the various fields devoted to the study of specific arts; such, at least, was one of my intentions in writing these chapters.

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