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INTENTION AND INTERPRETATION: A SHORT HISTORY

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Intention and interpretation from a historical perspective

Intention plays a complex role in human behaviour, intertwined as it is with the desire to understand, covering a range from oral conversation ("what do you mean?") to the appeal of challenging texts and their inevitable pitfalls including non-understanding, misunderstanding or uncertainty. The interpretation of literary texts is a strong case in point: over the years we have encountered many conflicting views about how far authorial intention should matter when readers deal with literature. These debates have grown increasingly fierce during the post-World War II period, not only regarding literature, but also in other domains such as the arts, philosophy or law. It is against this background that Stanley Fish – with his exceptional talent for hyperbolic one-liners – coined the phrase that intention is "a vexed topic that usually brings out the worst in everyone" (Fish 1989, 116). So I had better approach my topic with detours.

Let me start with a poem:

> **avenidas**
>
> avenidas
> avenidas y flores
>
> flores
> flores y mujeres
>
> avenidas
> avenidas y mujeres
>
> avenidas y flores y mujeres y
> un admirador

Even for someone who does not speak Spanish, the structure of this poem is easy to recognise. Formalised, the four stanzas could be something like: a / a + b // b / b + c // a / a + c // a + b + c +/ d. So translating the last stanza should suffice to understand the others: "avenues and flowers and women and / an admirer." The poem was published in 1953 by Eugen Gomringer, generally known as the father of *konkrete poesie*, Concrete Poetry (cf. Jackson et al. 1996). The poem could be taken as a prototype to illustrate the central features of this movement – its preference for word-material as opposed to sentences, for reduction, for repetition, for logical structures. Gomringer himself confirmed explicitly the exemplary dimension of *avenidas*. In his manifesto-like text "vom vers zur konstellation",

"from line to constellation", published in 1955, he uses *avenidas* to illustrate his core concept "constellation". He defines it as:

> the constellation is the simplest possibility of making poetry that is based on the word. It contains a group of words – as a group of stars turns into a constellation in the night sky. Within it, two, three or more words placed next to or below each other – it won't be too many – given a cognitive-material relationship. And that's it! (Gomringer 1955, 96–97; *my translation, RG*)

avenidas is for Gomringer such a "constellation" of, in this case, six words. The precise nature of the relationship within that group remains unsaid – but at least part of it circles around admiration, with three objects and one subject of admiration.

The iconic status of this poem for Concrete Poetry – and, one might add, the affinity of Concrete Poetry with being seen in public space – was illustrated when Gomringer received the poetics prize of the Alice Salomon Berlin University of Applied Sciences in 2011, a university that trains for professions in the sectors of social work, health care or early childhood care and education. As a sign of his gratitude, Gomringer authorised the university to make public use of *avenidas*. The rector decided to have it painted on the façade of the university. Until here, the story of reception and interpretation of this poem does seem rather clear: there is an explicit and plausible frame of interpretation given by the author himself, this interpretation is repeated, confirmed and extended by many scholars (Kyora 2015), all contributing to the canonical status of this poem within Concrete Poetry. More generally, the poem could be seen as iconic for the canonisation of neo-avant-garde poetry itself.

However, this is only one side of the story. The other started in 2016, when the AStA – the General Students Committee – at the Alice Salomon University argued in an open letter to the Senate of their university that the poem should be removed from the façade. Their interpretation was that the poem "not only reproduced a classical patriarchical tradition of art in which women are reduced to the beautiful muses that inspire male artists to their creative acts". What was more, "the poem reminds in an unpleasant way of the sexual harassment that women are exposed to on a daily basis". For the critics, the poem is not only an unpleasant reminder of unacceptable behaviour: the admiration for women expressed in the poem, according to the AStA, "leads to fear of harassment, and to the concrete experiencing of these acts". With this argumentation, the AStA convinced the Academic Senate of the university to vote for a procedure leading to redesigning the façade. In that procedure, design proposals could be made by all members of the university up to 31 October 2017. After an online vote, the Senate finally decided to remove *avenidas* from the façade, and decided

to replace it with a poem written by Barbara Köhler, itself to be replaced every five years from then on. In a public discussion in Berlin after the decision, Gomringer defended his poem against two representatives of the university with the argument that it did not aim at any message one could carry home, let alone a message on gender politics: "Art is absolutely free". For the student representative, however, the poem remained part of a sexist society that discriminates women: she reads the poem "from a social worker's perspective" and finds it important "that we will not be denied that reading" (cf. Ingendaay 2018).

The question now, which programmatic or specific intention of the author and/or his work can or should be taken as legitimate and plausible in comparison to competing ones, is fascinating and important. The same goes for theoretical reflections on whether the students' reading should be regarded as part of the meaning of the poem or just as its effect ("significance", cf. Hirsch 1967). So are general questions that take empirical-experimental approaches and try to specify the role of authorial intention in interpretation (cf. Guy et al. 2018; Horváth 2015). But these questions and reflections will not be at the core of the present book – though they will be touched upon from different angles. What the book will concentrate on are "readings" in their historical context, taken as documents of reception. They will be analysed from the perspective of to what extent they can be connected to specific historical structural changes in interpretation.

Looking back at the debate on *avenidas*, one might suspect different kinds of historical shifts at work. It might be used as a marker to indicate changes in the public discourse on feminism and sexism in the last decennia, or to indicate changes in the balance of power at universities in Germany in that period. Yet, the point I would like to make takes us to another dimension of this conflict: it can be seen, too, as indicating changes in the conventions of intention and interpretation in general – changes in reading behaviour of literary texts, if one likes. A first version of my central question might be: which role do concepts of intention play in the interpretation of texts? The aim of this book is, accordingly, the reconstruction of the concepts and norms regarding intention that are the most relevant ones for the debate on the interpretation of texts at specific moments in time.

A topic as vast as the history of interpretation with regard to authorial intention needs limitations. Therefore, the focus of this book will be on moments when conceptual changes can be traced. Inevitably, this will lead to omitting many names the readers might have in mind – and rightfully so! – concerning intention and interpretation, from Theophrastus via Jean de la Bruyère to Nietzsche, Freud, I.A. Richards and beyond. The only excuse for these and many other omissions is that this book must aim for a viable way of reconstruct-

ing the history of a debate lasting more than 2500 years. It tries to find that way in establishing a typology, on an exemplary basis. Not with the aim to cover most, let alone all participants in the debate on intention in interpretation. Not with the aim to join or oppose one or more of the parties. The primary aim is to get out of the trenches of Fish and his opponents by reconstructing from a historical perspective the specific implied normativity of the typical positions in the debates.

In order to illustrate this focus with regard to the conflict around the readings of the Gomringer poem, I would like to give an example of the kind of claims that this book will circle around. The claim will be modified in the course of this book, but in its anecdotic version it runs as follows: a conceptual handling of authorial intention as manifested in the interpretation of the students and the Senate of the Alice Salomon University has only been regarded as a legitimate reading of literature from the second half of the twentieth century onwards. This concept consists of at least three aspects:

1. The biographical author's intention x with regard to a text y has been made explicit and is known to the interpreter (or could have been known);
2. The explication of authorial intention x does not run counter to generally accepted values but is, also from the perspective of the interpreter, sincere, respectable, legitimate etc.;
3. The interpreter defends his interpretation ($\neg$x) with regard to y against the authorial intention x, even when 1. and 2. are the case.

In what follows, I will argue that the behaviour in 3. would *not* have been regarded as a legitimate dealing with literary texts until about the middle of the twentieth century. To state the same point positively: readings of *avenidas* such as those of the students and the majority of the Senate are only regarded as legitimate in the aftermath of the article "The Intentional Fallacy" by W.K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley, published in 1946 in *The Sewanee Review*. Put briefly, for the sake of the argument at this point, Wimsatt and Beardsley's famous intentional fallacy boils down to the view that in the interpretation of literary texts, authorial intention is "neither available nor desirable" in judging the meaning or the value of a literary piece of art (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1946, 468; cf. Wimsatt 1968). For Wimsatt and Beardsley this means turning away from established authorities: "The poem is not the critic's own and not the author's [...]. The poem belongs to the public" (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1946, 470) – which is rather close to the basis for the interpretation by the AStA of the Alice Salomon University. Therefore, I will argue that "intentional fallacy" can be regarded as an example of a conceptual shift in the history of authorial intention in the interpretation of texts. After this moment in history, interpretations of literary texts could be de-

fended as legitimate that had not existed before that moment, or at least could not have counted on applause of some significance.

The "Oven of Akhnai"

Such claims are also an invitation for readers to look for counter-evidence, or at least check in their memory for possibilities. In writing this book, I came across one such example that seemed to kill my 1946 darling right from the start. It is a famous story on interpretation from the Talmud, generally known as the "Oven of Akhnai" story, and one of the most frequently discussed traditional Jewish stories in modern times (Boyarin 2007, 354). The story dates from the fifth or sixth century AD (Rubenstein 1999, 58) and reports a debate on the ritual status of a special kind of oven. Rabbi Eliezer claims that the oven is pure, and the Sages (the Jewish authority in legal matters) claim it is impure – more details are not needed for the argument I'd like to make:

> It was taught: On that day R. Eliezer responded with all the responses in the world, but they did not accept them from him. He said to them, 'If the law is as I say, let the carob tree prove it.' The carob uprooted itself from its place and went one hundred cubits – and some say four cubits. They said to him, 'One does not bring proof from the carob.' The carob returned to its place. He said to them, 'If the law is as I say, let the aqueduct prove it.' The water turned backwards. They said to him, 'One does not bring proof from water.' The water returned to its place. [...] He said to them, 'If it is as I say, let it be proved from heaven.' A heavenly voice went forth and said, 'What is it for you with R. Eliezer, since the law is like him in every place?' R. Yehoshua stood up on his feet and said, '*It is not in heaven* (Deut. 30:12).' What is '*It is not in heaven?*' R. Yirmiah said, 'We do not listen to a heavenly voice, since you already gave it to us on Mt. Sinai and it is written there, *Incline after the majority* (Exod. 23:2)'. (qtd. from Rubenstein 1999, 36–37)

Departing from the axiom of God authoring the Torah – suspending disbelief and questions of who actually wrote it – this story seems to correspond exactly with the three points of the concept of intentional fallacy noted above: 1) God's intention is made explicit and 2) there is no sign of doubt concerning God's sincerity; nevertheless 3) God's intention is set aside by the majority in order to declare the opposite as valid law – and all this about 1500 years ago. To go from bad to worse, the suggested reading is not only hypothetical, but the story has actually been interpreted that way. For example by Moshe Halbertal, in his study *People of the Book*. For Halbertal (1997, 48–49), the story legitimises a way of interpreting that "detaches authoritative meaning from authorial intent". In his view "the Author's intention is not relevant to the interpretation of the Torah". Similar interpretations are defended by many other scholars, mostly within the poststruc-

turalist paradigm such as Susan A. Handelman (1982, 41–42) or in the fields of law and literature by José Faur who claims that Torah interpretation does not aim "to discover the mind of the author but to generate meaning" (qtd. from Stone 1993, 845; cf. 836, 841). So, is there already 1500 years ago a kind of turning away from authorial intention that according to my claim should not be much older than 75 years? I don't think so.

I have several arguments for this. To start contextually: such a reading of the "Oven of Akhnai" story would violate what is generally regarded as the ruling conventions of interpretation for the Torah. This tradition can be traced back at least to the third century BC. It does not show any doubts regarding the authority of God as leading principle. Of course one is sometimes not sure what the right interpretation is, but there is no doubt that it is *God's intention* his people should follow. James Kugel summarises this tradition in four principles that according to him are valid at least until the seventeenth century, and in some circles even much longer. The short version of these principles goes: "The Bible is cryptic, relevant, perfect and divinely granted" (Kugel 2007, 21).

Accordingly, and that is my second argument: all the interpretations I just referred to were written after my benchmark date (1946). A sceptical reader might find this interesting but not very compelling, since it might be a question of biased choice from someone trying to make his point. The only way to convince this sceptic would be a systematic, full historical analysis of the reception of Bawa Metsia 59b focusing on the concepts of intentionally. We do not have such an analysis yet, but what we do have are two articles – Englard (1975) and Stone (1993) – that reconstruct large parts of the reception history of the "Oven of Akhnai". To make a long story short: I have found no pre-1960s interpretation of this story that plays out the Sages and their interpretation against the intentions of God, and that in the end rejects God's authorial intent.

It is striking that the vast majority of interpretations before the mid-twentieth century do not even stress a tension between God's will and the ruling of the Sages. Instead, the reading conventions followed by these critics reduce this very tension. Many of them argue that God intended that his true will would be uncovered when the people followed majority decisions – as opposed to following prophetic words. For example, the fourteenth century scholar Nissim of Gerona (a scholar of Nachmenides also known as the Ran) wrote that the Sages did not want to transgress the majority rule of the Torah and believed that "whatever they decide it is what God commanded" (cf. Halbertal 1997, 64–66). Similarly, the famous seventeenth century Rabbi Loew (from Gustav Meyrink's *Golem*) saw majority rule as the best prescription for making a Godly-inspired decision because it compensated for the limitations of individual intelligence and therefore came closer to what he called the "Supreme Intellect"

(cf. Stone 1993, 862; Englard 1975, 143, 146). And the late nineteenth century Talmud expert Z.H. Chajes claimed that when God heard his people argue "it is not in Heaven" and "the majority should be followed", this was "evidence [of] how deeply implanted in their minds was the concept of God's eternity, i.e. it was not subject to chance or change" (qtd. from Englard 1975, 149).

These interpretations often claimed extra credibility from an additional passage in the Talmud directly following our story:

> R. Natan came upon Elijah. He said to him, 'What was the Holy One doing at that time?' He said to him, 'He laughed and smiled and said, "My sons have defeated me, my sons have defeated me"'. (qtd. from Rubenstein 1999, 37)

Although this passage is also open to different interpretations, the picture of a quite satisfied father is, as far as I can see, the dominant one: when all is said and done, God knows that all his children want to do is to follow his will.

A few earlier interpretations however *do* address the tension between God's intention and the ruling of the Sages. But these exceptions do not form counter-evidence for my claim, because in these exceptions the Rabbi's decision is judged as wrong and unacceptable – people make mistakes, also in interpretation, and this was one. Such a reading is for example given from a Christian perspective when in the twelfth century Petrus Venerabilis condemns the Rabbis as conscious violators of God's will, turning away from God. Similarly, but then within the Rabbinic tradition itself, Rabbi Moses ben Isaac of Bisenz (1595: *Darash Moshe*) claims that the decision of the Sages was wrong, and that God laughed because his children wished "to defeat him with fantasies and baseless argument" (qtd. from Englard 1975, 145). But rebellion, disobedience, wicked deceit or error do not shake the foundation of an interpretive model that in the end uses a concept of authorial intention as its focus and as its final aim, it only makes the conclusion of the Sages non-binding. And by this, the criticism of the Sages confirms in the end that authorial intention has been the guideline of all interpretations of this Talmud story until the second half of the twentieth century.

Points of departure

To what extent can these detours be made productive for research about concepts of intention in the interpretation of literary texts? To start with, I think that the claim has been made plausible that in the second half of the twentieth century structural changes have occurred in the academic conceptualisation and practices of using authorial intention in interpretation – changes obviously not

restricted to literary texts, but visible in other domains of interpretation, too. It seems that a conscious, sincere detaching of reader interpretation from authorial intention, and a consequent rejection of the author's intention, are rare exceptions before the 1946 benchmark. The brief glimpse at the exegesis of Bawa Metsia 59b – as a random example outside the sort of texts that are regarded as literature at specific historical moments – has confirmed the claim of the conceptual importance of Wimsatt and Beardsley's "The Intentional Fallacy" from a historical perspective.

Even more important for this book is a more general point, that can be taken from the two examples discussed so far: ideas about intention obviously have determining consequences for the kind of interpretations that are launched at specific moments in history. Interpretations seem inevitably connected to specific concepts of intention, whether these are made explicit or not. What is more, diagnosing the relevant conceptual changes concerning authorial intention seems to allow for predictions about the possible range of interpretations, at least to a certain degree, in the sense of "no interpretation of the type formalised above with the aspects 1. to 3. will be found legitimate before 1946".

Finally, the detour on the reception of the "Oven of Akhnai" has also shown a striking practice of contemporary interpretations: projection. As the interpretations by Halbertal and others quoted above show, they seem convinced that they can discover contemporary concepts of intention in historical texts on interpretation. But on closer inspection, these historical texts apparently follow other conventions of authorial intention than the ones projected onto them. The differentiated reconstruction of specific concepts of intention in interpretation in this book therefore has a double agenda: first, it wants to contribute to a more precise reconstruction of authorial intention in its historical development than has been given until now. Second, it also wants to stimulate the reflection of implicit normativity in contemporary conceptions of intention, by unveiling their historicity.

Such a reflection makes sense in so far as the debate on intention over the last 60 years can be characterised roughly as a growing polarisation between three competing approaches. With the necessary simplification, and without the pretension to do justice to all differences between them, one might draw the following tryptic. First, there are the so-called intentionalists who regard authorial intention as a norm that leads to the best interpretations. Internationally, this position is usually connected to E.D. Hirsch (1967, 1976). Second, there are those who criticise such a view as intentional fallacy in the sense given above, claiming that the relevant meaning is produced in an encounter between text and reader, separate from possible intentions of the author. In addition to Wimsatt and Beardsley, a more recent prominent adherent to that view is Umber-

to Eco (1994) with his concept of *intentio operis*. Finally, there is the third view that interpretation must be seen primarily as an endless production of new meanings that cannot be brought to a head due to uncontrollable shifts of meaning and ever new contextualisations that are impossible to limit. The inspiration for that view is usually traced to the work of Jacques Derrida (1993).

This is a very rough picture, indeed, that will have to be adjusted in the course of this book, but the point I want to make here will not be affected by all these necessary nuances and adjustments. It aims at what these views share, despite all differences: the claim to present a view on intention-in-interpretation-for-all-cases. As far as I can see, in the last eighty years, the question concerning the theorists' own historicity and normativity is not discussed and is not even posed regarding their own models. When the present book wants to do exactly that, then it does so – as I said before – *not* in order to recommend in the end one of these views or reject one or two of them. What it wants to do instead is to reconstruct which choices concerning intention in interpretation have been possible at specific historical moments and to which concepts of literature these possible choices can be related. Which options for conceptual choices were there for actors in the literary field at what time? Or, to put it differently, this book will ask how professionals actually *did* interpret texts with regard to intention. (It will not ask: how *should* texts be read professionally from an intentional angle?) In this enterprise, I am also interested in whether and how conceptual changes in the ideas on authorial intention can be explained and how they relate to other developments in the literary field.

This brings me to the last point of my preliminary remarks. Aiming for explanations needs a theoretical framework in order to answer "why" questions. This framework, as the careful reader already may have expected from vocabulary such as "actors" and "literary field", will be a variation of the field theory of Pierre Bourdieu. Variation means here that, of course, I will not project the existence of autonomous field structures onto all periods over the last 2500 years. For Bourdieu, the rise of a relatively autonomous French literary field with its dominant literary rules is clearly something that occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century (cf. Bourdieu 2008, 61, 144), or, according to others, at the earliest during the seventeenth century (cf. Viala 1985). Instead, field theory will be used here first of all as a tool for relating actions, actors or groups of actors at specific historical moments to what is seen today as field structures. In this way, I aim to produce a systematic descriptive framework for such a vast expanse of time. From that perspective, the behaviour of the different agents on the levels of production, distribution and reception (reception understood here as all activities of judging and interpreting literature) will be analysed as strategic acts in the fight for recognition within the different relevant institutions or institu-

tion-like constellations at specific historical moments (academies, universities, courts, secular and religious interpretative communities, literary critics, publishers, teaching etc.). Conceptions of literature – in the sense of ideas about the nature, function and properties of literature – are at all times an important instrument in these fights. These conceptions inevitably also contain ideas on the role that should be ascribed to the intention of the author in the production and reception of literature (cf. Van Rees 1994; Dorleijn and Van Rees 2006).

Except for guaranteeing minimal systematic relations over time, there are at least two more advantages of this theoretical framework for the questions pursued in this book. One is that the reconstruction of ideas on intention in interpretation may become more reliable when the strategic dimension of the utterances within the specific institutional framework is taken into account, from antiquity to academic criticism in the twenty-first century. The other is that this can also be reversed: the fight for positions through different interpretations can be analysed more convincingly when one takes into consideration which concepts of intention are available in specific historical constellations.

Content of this book

On the basis of these preliminary reflections, the overall question of this book can now be formulated more precisely: if we look at the debate on intention in interpretation from a typological historical perspective, how can the debate be structured and what does this structure tell us about our discipline, literary studies? In order to answer these questions, the main part of the book will consist of a historical reconstruction in chronological order in five chapters. The *First Chapter* reconstructs the birth of the concept of authorial intention from the sixth century BC onwards in opposition to an older poetics of divine inspiration (see Plato's *Ion* and *Apology*). Classical authorial intention with its emphasis on formal aspects of writing and genre will be traced through relevant passages from Plato's *Phaedrus* and *Republic* and Aristotle's *Poetics* up to Cicero, Tacitus and especially Horace's *Ars Poetica*. In the *Second Chapter*, the overlap and the differences between the Classical model of authorial intention and the medieval concept will be analysed in order to reconstruct what will be called the standard model of authorial intention. Both the Classical and the standard model are characterised by a continuum between the intention of the author, the intention to be derived from the text, the context in which the text functions, and the intention which the reader ascribes to the text. However, in the standard model of the long Christian Middle Ages authorial intention is generally conceptualised as the guiding principle of interpretation. This privileged role of authorial intention

very gradually receives a greater emphasis on individual intention at the level of content (as opposed to a more formal and technical understanding of authorial intention in the Classical period). This concept plays a central role in the medieval *accessus ad auctores*. Extracts from Petrarch's *Secretum* will be used to illustrate the relevance of the conceptual intentional distinctions for today's scholarship. The *Third Chapter* will show how Renaissance thinking explored and tested the boundaries of the standard model of authorial intention, without crossing them. Special attention will be paid to Erasmus and his *Praise of Folly*.

 Chapter Four will begin with an account of conceptions of authorial intention in early Enlightenment thinking and then focus on the rise of hermeneutics. Friedrich Schleiermacher's posthumous *Hermeneutik und Kritik* (1838) can be taken as representing the first relevant conceptual shift that devalues the standard model and provides the professional critic with new structural possibilities. Here the critic places himself in the position of aiming to understand the author better than the author understands himself because he – the critic, that is – possesses specialised literary expertise not available to an author. This emphasis is found too, for example, in Marxist literary criticism, as in Friedrich Engels' reading of Balzac's *La Comédie Humaine*. The perpetuation of this influential concept will be traced up to the writings of the Russian Formalists and their interpretations of for example Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. In *Chapter Five*, by contextualising "The Intentional Fallacy" within New Criticism, the normative choices enshrined within this version of intention will be analysed. In this context, the chapter will shed light on the poetic and other foundations that underpin "intentional fallacy". From there on, the *Fifth Chapter* will extend to the reception of the intentional fallacy in deconstructive criticism by Paul de Man and others. The implications of the declaration of the death of the author by Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault will be analysed and related to those of Jacques Derrida's de-centring of intentionality. From there, a link will be established to the most recent form of intentionalism ("actual" and "hypothetical") in interpretation, including some discussion of the work of those critics who are associated with what is called the return of the author.

 In *Chapter Six* the typology reconstructed from a historical look at literary criticism will then be held against relevant comparable discussions in the field of law. In legal matters, an equally intense debate on intention seems to have been raging, especially in the USA around the interpretation of the Constitution and the notion of "Framers' intent". This chapter will be used to tentatively explore the interdisciplinary elements of the topic, seeking to ascertain to what extent the functional dynamics of intention in literary criticism can be applied to legal debates. The book will close with a chapter *Conclusion and Outlook*, briefly summarising the typology from the preceding chapters. Furthermore, it will try to

reconstruct functional regularities on the disciplinary level that the historical succession of the different types indicate. I will argue that the conceptual changes concerning intention in interpretation over time basically seem to converge in establishing more room for differentiation and competition between professional interpreters of literature.

Of course the reader can choose to read only parts of the historical reconstructions – every chapter should be able to stand alone. But those who read all the chapters in the order given here will gain a sharper historical picture of the different types of concepts *an*d of the regularities at stake. Hopefully, due to the exemplary character of the book pursuing a typology, they will also feel tempted to look in every period and region of the world for names and concepts that have been omitted, and whether they confirm the general lines presented here or form counter-evidence. This way, reflection on one of the most fundamental topics of interpretation in literary studies should be triggered. If the book works in this way, then intention, for once, will have brought out the best in everyone, reader and author.

Acknowledgments

this book also a first version of Chapter Five can be found. An earlier version of Chapter Six has been published in *Arcadia* 49 (2014), 21–39.

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Chapter One
The shaping of authorial intention in Classical antiquity

The introduction of this book has argued that reading conventions oriented towards what the author meant are older than scepticism towards authorial intention. The concept of intentional fallacy, launched in 1946, which shifted authority in interpretation away from the author towards the text, was used to illustrate that point. But that shift is not the only possible source for doubting whether authors have something relevant to say about their poems, as one of the oldest relevant texts for our quest indicates: Plato's (ca. 428 – 348 BC) *Ion*. The first discussions in which authorial intention played at least a certain role show us that not only authorial intention comes in different shapes, but also the scepticism towards it.

The cradle of secular authorial intention: Plato, Phrynichus, scholia

In antiquity, be it Greek or Roman, authorial intention is not a major topic. But of course it is touched upon when poetry, rhetoric and interpretation are discussed. One of the first sources is *Ion*, one of Plato's oldest Socratic dialogues, probably from around 394 BC (Flashar 2002, 66). In it, Socrates talks to the rhapsode Ion who has just won a prize for performing Homer in a contest at Epidauros. Departing from the classical question on authorial intention, Socrates holds in the opening of *Ion* explicitly that no rhapsode can be a good performer of epic poetry when he has not understood "what the poet meant". The singer must become the intermittent between the poet and the public, which is impossible without recognising what the poet was after, Socrates argues (cf. *Ion* 530c). When Socrates has made Ion confess that he is able to say many worthwhile things about Homer, but not about other poets, the dialogue comes to its central point from our perspective. A rhapsodist performing well does so *not* because of specific knowledge or expertise but because of divine inspiration, we are told. And that goes for the poet as well as for the public, as Socrates explains in comparing the production and reception of poetry to magnetism:

> Do you know that the spectator is the last of the rings which, as I am saying, receive the power of the original magnet from one another? The rhapsode like yourself and the actor are intermediate links, and the poet himself is the first of them. Through all these

the God sways the souls of men in any direction which he pleases, and makes one man hang down from another. (*Ion* 536a, transl. B. Jowett)

It is clear from this passage that Plato – at least the younger Plato – conceives the process of understanding, if it is done well, as a continuity in which the aspects author, text, medium and public are bound together in a way that leads to homogeneity between them. However, it is not the human author and his intentions that bind them together, but divine inspiration and the intentions of the Gods. The author is only the medium, giving way to something of which he is not the source, that he cannot steer, let alone control by will.

The same thought can be found in another of Plato's early dialogues, the *Apology*, with again Socrates speaking:

I realized that it was not owing to wisdom that [the poets] compose their poems, but in virtue of some natural ability and inspiration, just as seers and prophets who also deliver many fine messages without knowing in the least what they mean. (*Apol.* 22c, transl. H. Tredennick)

The poet is not able to explain what the text is about since he is not the source of what seems to be his uttering. He is only the medium of the Gods, as the rhapsodist and the public are, all held together through divine forces, as through magnetism. Intention in the sense of a purposeful human action, in which an individual tries to establish with words a relation to some aspect outside the individual, is not part of this concept. The Muses are responsible for the "many fine messages" of poetry. From the perspective of this concept, it would make no sense to speak of authorial intention, let alone to speak of more or less pronounced individual messages which might be put on the bill of the author, not by himself, not by the intermittent as actors or singers, not by the spectators or readers. In that sense, what Homer (or the rhapsode, actor etc.) intended is irrelevant. But that is a completely different kind of scepticism towards authorial intention than the one after 1946 referred to in the introduction. It is one that ascribes intentions in the interpretation of literary text to Godly entities, not to human utterances of or about poetry. So a sceptic attitude towards human answers to the question "what the poet meant" in the oldest concepts of authorial intention we know is at its core an expression of the view of man as only an instrument in the hands of the Gods – also concerning poetry and interpretation.

But already at Plato's time, and within the writing of Plato himself, this view had to face a competing one. In it, the first outlines of authorial intention in a secular sense can be traced: Plato's later writings are dominated by a *younger* concept of mimetic poetry as a kind of craft originating in the work of the

poet as a maker of artworks. This constellation has been analysed by Margalit Finkelberg (1998, 1–33) as a poetic conflict between what she calls a traditional "poetics of truth" (as in *Ion*) versus a more recent "poetics of fiction", visible for example in Plato's *Phaedrus*, in which Socrates reflects on the function of writing: basically, writing only serves to remember the one who wrote about what he once knew (cf. *Phaedrus* 275a). Texts cannot answer questions and cannot contradict misunderstandings in their interpretation. Therefore writing is in need of the help of its "father", since it can neither resist nor help itself, Plato writes (cf. *Phaedrus* 275d). The metaphor of the father still leaves room for many interpretations, but what they do have in common is that a link of responsibility is established between the one who has written the text and the text itself – as a father is responsible for his child. Also from an intentional perspective, we can see a clear opposition between those who give no role at all to human authorial intention (divine inspiration, poet as an instrument, poetics of truth) on one side, and on the other authorial intention as part of the work of an author, basically on the level of an intentional composition according to the rules of the genre (poetry as "making", mimesis, poetics of fiction). Only within the second conception can the poet be held responsible for what he did.

This poetics was not invented by Plato – an early manifestation of this view on literature, authorship and interpretation can be found for example in the oldest trial against literature about which we have at least some information (Finkelberg 1998, 177–179). Herodotus (VI, 21) tells us that the playwright Phrynichus was taken to court because of his tragedy on the *Capture of Miletus*. Only one or two years after the destruction of the Ionian city of Miletus and the deportation of its surviving inhabitants by the Persians in 494 BC, Phrynichus turned these events into a tragedy for the stage to be performed during the Dionysia (the festival in honour of the god Dionysius probably established under the tyranny of Pisistratus in the second half of the sixth century BC, including a contest between dramatists). The effect of Phrynichus' play was that the entire theatre burst into tears. In consequence, Phrynichus was taken to court and the verdict was an eternal ban on the text never to be played again – which actually did work out, since it is lost. Furthermore, Phrynichus was held personally responsible for putting his text on the stage by being fined heavily (cf. Wilson 2000, 115 f.).

But what exactly was Phrynichus fined for? Obviously not for a specific message: Herodotus does not say a word about Phrynichus' individual intentions with his text or a specific message attributed to it, like criticising political mistakes of the past, the political or military lack of assistance to Miletus, or how to deal with the Persian threat in his times. The legal procedure was clearly dominated by another perspective: presenting the bill for the tragedy's extreme

emotional effect on the public to the one who wrote it. The judicial responsibility of Phrynichus seems to have been about his violation of the performative rules of the tragedy, which can be summarised, for the sake of the argument, as showing in a controlled setting a disturbance and restoration of universal order. In any case, a tragedy should not lead to the extreme grief that Phrynichus caused with his way of dealing with the still fresh Athenian trauma of the killing and deportation of the closely related inhabitants of Miletus. Therefore, in the words of Herodotus, Phrynichus was punished "for reminding the Athenians of troubles close to home (*oikeia kaka*)". Obviously, Phrynichus had neglected "the safe distance" that makes intense emotion in a tragedy pleasurable and valuable for the audience (cf. Wilson 2000, 115).

In this constellation, Phrynichus was held responsible for the disturbance of Athenian order – but at the same time the ban and the fine for Phrynichus were seen as sufficient for restoring that very order. The verdict did not restrain Phrynichus from taking his role as a poet in the future. If we go by the list of plays attributed to him after the trial, he still contributed to the feast of the Dionysia and even won the competition after *The Capture of Miletus*. Furthermore there are no indications that he changed his ideas about playwriting fundamentally, since some ten years later, he returned to the "contemporary mode" in *Phoenician Women* – in opposition to the vastly dominant mythological mode (cf. Cartledge 1999, 24). Apparently Phrynichus had been held responsible for *having written* what caused a violation of the conventions of performing and watching tragedy (what Gisèle Sapiro would call "objective responsibility"), a predominantly formal and technical responsibility. He was apparently not held responsible for any specific *view* on the Greek world expressed in his tragedy (what Sapiro would call "subjective responsibility", cf. Sapiro 2011).

It is clear that with regard to responsibility and authorial intention, the trial shows a completely different concept of authorship than the divine one, traced above in Plato's *Ion* and *Apology*. It is one that comes close to contemporary secular ideas in the sense that authors can be held responsible for what they do, for example in literary trials (cf. Grüttemeier 2016), since at the basis of their action is a will to go public with what they wrote. Obviously, authorial intention is crucial for this concept of responsibility. From our perspective, authorial intention in this sense can even be said to be the tool with which poetry was taken out of the arms of the Gods, and put into the arms of humans. As the writings of Plato indicate, this constellation must be understood as a conflict between two opposing poetics over many centuries, and not finished around 400 BC, as traces can be discovered much later on. Even in Rome, Horace for example can still be found ridiculing the Sicilian poet Empedocles from the fifth century BC who thought himself godlike ("deus inmortalis haberi", *Ars Poetica* 464). Ob-

viously, the opposition between the two conceptions of poetry was one of competition over many centuries. But there can be little doubt of what became dominant, when we look at the practices of interpreting in Classical Greece.

This impression can be taken from a source that reaches back to the time of Plato and beyond, the so-called scholia. These are available through the whole of antiquity from the fifth century BC onwards. René Nünlist has recently systematically analysed the vast amount of these glosses on Classical texts for the first time. According to Nünlist, they offer "a very good insight" into how the critics actually made use of the scholarly tools in the daily training of rhetoricians and grammarians (Nünlist 2009, 2). The picture that can be taken from Nünlist's study shows that what dominates is a view on authorial responsibility, primarily in a formal and technical sense. Also in the scholia, authorial intention is not talked about extensively and explicitly. Although Nünlist says he pays attention to "the topics that are discussed prominently in the scholia" and that he will do so "under modern rubrics" (for example focalisation) (cf. Nünlist 2009, 2–5), a chapter on intention is absent from his book.

Yet, authorial intention can be said to be the ground on which most topics of the scholia are rooted. According to the scholia, intention can be characterised primarily as a compositional effort on the part of the authors, uncovered by the professional readers through the question "how exactly it is done" (Nünlist 2009, 68). Following that question, the topics that dominate the scholia accordingly range from plot (chapter 1, Nünlist 2009, 23–68) via focalisation (chapter 4, 116–134) to very detailed stylistic questions such as three-word hexameters or the increase in the number of syllables with each consecutive word (cf. Nünlist 2009, 221 f.). The role assigned to the author with regard to all these and other formal aspects is giving "the text its particular shape and as such [he] is in control of things" (Nünlist 2009, 135). In other words: the author as he emerges from the scholia is someone whose formal and compositional choices are equivalent to what he intended to choose. The text in front of the reader is the result of those choices, and from the words on the papyrus the professional reader can tell what the author intended to do. What we have here seems to boil down to an intentional continuum between author, text and reader, with the author "in control".

This intentional continuum is primarily at work on the level of form and composition, given the "great interest that ancient scholars had in narrative technique in general and questions of structure in particular" (Nünlist 2009, 336 f.). Also the scholia seem to be less interested in content matters, as we have seen in the Phrynichus trial, too. What the author intended on the content level is thematised mostly on the level of specific words: "It is quite often the case that the scholia simply identify what or who is 'meant' in the passages" (Nünlist 2009, 226). In other words, also on the content level the author is "in

control" by saying what he intends to say. This allows the good reader to tell from the text what the author "meant". The job of scholarly experts is apparently not to let their light shine on the views or messages of the text as a whole – at least we have no evidence for this.

Shaping the outlines of the Classical Greek concept of authorial intention: Aristotle

After this reconstruction of the birth – before the fifth century BC – of a secular concept of authorial intention in interpretation, in opposition to an older concept of divine inspiration, one would expect to find more elaborated views on the secular version in the decennia after Plato. Given the profound role rhetoric plays in literature and interpretation in antiquity (cf. Russell 1981, 114–128 et passim), Aristotle's treatise *On Rhetoric* from the fourth century BC is worth a closer look. It was written several decades after the *Republic* and the *Phaedrus*. Although intention is not explicitly part of the systematic terminological order within the three books of *On Rhetoric* (neither is it part of the index that George A. Kennedy (2007) has made for the English translation used here), there are some aspects of intention that can be reconstructed from Aristotle's text.

Intentionally speaking, Aristotle departs from a concept of humans in which having "the capacity and the will" to do something is equivalent to doing it: "for all act when ability to do so coincides with desire" (*Rhetoric* 1392b; 2.19.18; Kennedy 2007, 160). This fundamental role of will and desire is valid for rhetorical actions, too: "it is an inescapable presupposition of rhetoric that the speaker knows what he wants and has formulated to himself the message he wishes to convey" (Russell 1981, 116). Therefore, in the words of Aristotle, one can define rhetoric as "an ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion" (*Rhetoric* 1355b; 1.2.1; Kennedy 2007, 37). This persuasion is the realisation of what Aristotle sees as the final intention, the *telos* of the three sorts of rhetoric he distinguishes: "deliberative" rhetoric (as in parliamentary speeches) aims at the "advantageous" instead of the harmful, "judicial" rhetoric at the "just" instead of the "unjust", and "epideictic" rhetoric, used for praising or blaming, aims at the "honourable" versus the "shameful" (*Rhetoric* 1358b, 1.3.5; Kennedy 2007, 49). This framework of intentionality has recently received sophisticated scholarly attention from a philosophical perspective (cf. Perler 2001; Caston 2005, 2007), aiming at "that feature of beliefs, desires, and other mental states, in virtue of which they are of or about something" in Plato, Aristotle and others (cf. Caston 2007). The focus here, however, is a different one,

guided by the question of to what extent we can reconstruct from *On Rhetoric* Aristotle's concept of authorial intention in the interpretation of texts.

Aristotle is most explicit about authorial intention in the context of the interpretation of laws. According to him, the interpreter should

> look not to the law but to the legislator and not to the word but to the intent [*dianoia*] of the legislator and not to the action but to the deliberate purpose [*prohairesis*] and not to the part but to the whole, not [at] what a person is now but what he has been always or for the most part. (*Rhetoric* 1374b; 1.13.17–18; Kennedy 2007, 100)

What Aristotle presents as guideline for the interpretation of laws is grounded on an argument for the contextualisation of the text of the law. According to Aristotle, when two interpretations of a law are in conflict, then the one arguing *only* with the "words" of the law is less persuasive as compared to one that can relate the words of the law to the legislator and his intent. Aristotle clearly conceptualises this role of authorial intention within a continuum that includes further contextual factors, such as biography ("the legislator", what a person "has been always or for the most part") and the whole situation in which someone uttered the words ("not [...] the action but [...] the deliberate purpose"). This contextualising further includes the words or sentences surrounding the law ("not [...] the part but [...] the whole"), as opposed to looking only at the words that cause uncertainty or dispute. More generally speaking, Aristotle argues for an interpretation on the basis of an intentional continuum of author, text, context and reader, in which biographical and other historical factors, combined with the words surrounding the passage under scrutiny, lead to better interpretations than looking at the "words" only. No opponent is mentioned explicitly. But what Aristotle attributes to the approach he finds less convincing is compatible with a poetics of divine inspiration and truth, uttered by Godly inspired actors: "the law", "words", "the action", "what someone is now". But that is clearly not what Aristotle has in mind with his secular model of interpretation on the basis of an intentional continuity, including relevant context factors.

Whereas Aristotle connects his model explicitly to the interpretation of laws only, there are quite some reasons to extend it to the interpretation of other texts as well. A strong case in point is that Aristotle himself in several places jumps from judicial to literary texts within the same argument: the basic rules of producing and interpreting both sorts of texts basically seem to be the same. For example, within the context of the arrangement (*taxis*) of a speech, Aristotle writes about the function of introductions: "As for the prooemia of judicial speeches, one should grasp that they have the same effect as the prologues of plays and the prooemia of epic poems". This effect is to present "a sample of the argument

in order that [the audience] may know what the speech is about and [their] thought not be left hanging". Or, even more intentionally formulated: "to make clear what is the purpose for which the speech [is being given]" (*Rhetoric* 1415a; 3.14.5 – 6; Kennedy 2007, 233). Obviously, for Aristotle judicial speeches and literary genres do not differ concerning the basic rhetorical aspects regarding intention. They are produced as texts with a purpose, and intentional steering of the reader or listener through the introduction is essential for the adequate reception of the texts – which is subsequently illustrated by Aristotle with short quotes from the first lines of Homer's epics and from Sophocles' *Oedipus the King.*

There are several passages in *On Rhetoric* from which the same osmotic conception concerning literary and judicial texts can be derived. Just to give one more, Aristotle distinguishes between two sorts of law, the one manmade and the other common in the sense of "natural". The latter is defined as follows:

> for there is in nature a common principle of the just and unjust that all people in some way divine, even if they have no association or commerce with each other, for example what Antigone in Sophocles' play seems to speak of when she says that though forbidden, it is just to bury Polyneices, since this is just by nature: 'For not now and yesterday, but always, ever / Lives this rule, and no one knows whence it appeared.' (*Rhetoric* 1373b; 1.13.2; Kennedy 2007, 97)

Again, Aristotle passes from the domain of law to that of literature and back again fluently: a line from a character in a tragedy is used as evidence for a factual claim about natural law. There is no reason to believe that in the interpretation of these lines Aristotle followed any other course concerning intention than this: the adequate characterisation of natural law has been understood by Sophocles, Sophocles intended to let Antigone articulate it in an appropriate context, Sophocles' intention is what his character in this play says and what must be read in it. In case of a dispute about these lines, Aristotle probably would have turned to the lines within their context of utterance, to the drama as a whole, to other tragedies by Sophocles and to what else is known about the character of Sophocles. In other words: he probably would have followed the model of authorial intention as outlined above with regard to the interpretation of law. Obviously, Aristotle has given in *Rhetoric* 1374b not a specific rule for interpreting laws, but a general model of interpretation, also for literature.

However, one must hold in mind that this generalisation towards literature is not argued for explicitly by Aristotle in his *Rhetoric*. If at all, such remarks most likely might be found in Aristotle's texts that focus on poets and poetics, especially in Aristotle's three books *On Poets*. These seem to have been "the main channel through which Aristotle explained his poetic theory to a wider public"

(Janko 2012, 390) with a powerful impact especially until the fourth century AD. At the same time *On Poets* probably was a major source for the *Poetics* itself. Yet, only fragments of *On Poets* exist – and the existing fragments do not touch upon intention, as far as I can see (cf. Janko 2012, 313–556). Therefore, in what follows, a closer look at Aristotle's *Poetics* shall be taken.

One must concede right from the start that although authorial intention in production and reception of poetry can be spotted in several places in the oldest poetics of mankind, its role is not centre stage and its outlines are not easy to reconstruct. For the sake of the argument, the *Poetics* can generally be characterised as an effort to clarify what mimetic art is, in which the genre of tragedy is discussed as exemplary. Consequently, most parts of the text deal with tragedy, especially from the angle of a wide notion of plot: the plot of tragedy is discussed first and at length, and from there on other genre aspects are touched upon: how to deal with actions, the presentation of the characters, the verbal shape, the forms of rhetorical argumentation in tragedy etc. (cf. *Poetics*, 1454a, 1456b). In dealing with these compositional requirements, authorial intention is sometimes explicitly mentioned in passing. For example, when the plot demands that someone unknown (or someone taken for someone else) is recognised as who he or she really is, then the best way of presenting this in tragedy is the way Sophocles has chosen in *Oedipus*. On the level of action, the recognition of who Oedipus really is has been left completely to what Aristotle calls "the combination of what is probable" through the acting persons themselves. Another, more "artless" way of dealing with the compositional problem of presenting a recognition on the stage might be to let the character say himself who he is, as for example when Orestes explicitly declares his identity to his not knowing sister in Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris*. Whatever a poet may have done, for Aristotle the choices on the level of plot and plot-related aspects are "what the poet wants" (cf. *Poetics* 1455a).

In general, one could hold that what the *Poetics* says about composition of the tragedy is what the author intended or at least should have intended. This also applies the other way round: what the poet actually has done in his text concerning composition is what he intended to do, for example with regard to the concept of catharsis (roughly, the purification of the audience from pity and fear through evoking pity and fear; i. e. the key feature of the tragedy according to Aristotle; cf. *Poetics* 1450a). Even if intention is not mentioned explicitly in this passage, there can be no doubt that catharsis and "tragic pleasure" is what the poet intends and should intend – though of course he can fail in his intention, as we have seen in the Phrynichus trial. Still, one has to conclude that in the process of writing poetry, authorial intention is for Aristotle a concept primarily on a technical and compositional level.

The most explicit mentioning of authorial intention in Aristotle's *Poetics* can be found in passages on the so-called Homer problems, referring to what seem to be inconsistencies or mistakes in Homer (cf. *Poetics* 1460a–1461b). Aristotle tries to systematically give "solutions" for these problems. One type of problems can be found on the linguistic level, where Aristotle defends Homer against criticism with alternative plausible readings of words in his epics. Here one finds sentences like "maybe Homer did not mean the mules, but the guardians", or: "he did not mean a distorted body but an ugly face" (*Poetics* 1461a). Obviously, for Aristotle, semantic and syntactical phenomena on the level of words or expressions, too, are intentional choices of the author, although they get less attention compared to choices about form and genre.

The same can be seen on the content level with regard to the options an author has regarding mimesis. According to Aristotle, an author can relate his work to reality in three ways: a representation of reality as how it is, a presentation of reality as how it should be, and a representation of how it is said to be. If someone criticises that an author does not write realistically, one might for example oppose that this was not the intention of the author because he wanted to present reality as how it should be:

> In general, the impossible must be justified by reference to artistic requirements, or to the higher reality, or to received opinion. (*Poetics* 1461b, transl. S.H. Butcher)

Such a way of arguing is clearly based on the idea that there is something like authorial intention outside the text and that the intention of the author is inherent in what he has chosen. Content is hardly touched upon, but if so, then it is used only in very general formulations ("show how it should be") and discussed only with regard to specific singular passages or words, not to the specific message of the text as a whole. Not only in Plato and the Phrynichus trial, also in Aristotle's explicit remarks on how to write a tragedy, the intention of the author nowhere comes near our contemporary ideas about expressing an individual view on aspects of reality in a work of art. Accordingly, William Allan and Adrian Kelly recently warned contemporary scholars not "to exaggerate the conscious political intentions of the poets" whose didactic function was never considered as "an explicit process" in which "Aeschylus, Sophocles, or Euripides consciously set out to endorse fifth-century Athenian values when they began to write a play" (cf. Allan and Kelly 2013, 87 f.). What they actually set out to do is probably close to what is generally seen as the function of this form of mass entertainment in fifth century Athens: appreciating the benefits of contemporary society rather than questioning the values of its audience, or, generally speaking, giving answers rather than asking questions: "tragedy aims to make mythological sense

of the audience's world, and does so in a way that is both appealing and pleasurable" (Allan and Kelly 2013, 87).

Having (or being ascribed) only very general intentions on the content level does not exclude, as we have seen, having (or being ascribed) rather specific intentions on the level of semantics and grammar or in relation to the kind of mimetic intention. The good critic – such as Aristotle – is able to identify these intentions of an established literary authority such as Homer, while those who criticise the author for wrong insights do not. Looked at this way, Aristotle's systematic reflections on the "problems and solutions" concerning possible faults in Classical texts contribute to building the specific knowledge a literary expert must have – on the basis of benevolence towards established literary authorities. Once the concept of literary texts as a result of human intentional actions is accepted, it gives the critic room to defend authors like Homer with his *assumed* intentions against criticism. Accordingly, the passages on the Homer problems can be seen as the conceptual basis for attributing more specific messages to parts of a text or to the text as a whole in the act of interpretation – more specific and individual than anything that Aristotle has explicitly said about authorial intention on the content level in *On Rhetoric* or in *Poetics*. As we will see later on in the Second Chapter, Aristotle's discussions of intention have paved the ground for the more privileged position of the individual author, for more individual messages and for more individual interpretations in post-Classical times.

In antiquity, the reception of the *Iliad* can be characterised as time and again trying to accommodate problematic parts of the canonical texts to contemporary demands – in accordance with the procedure we have reconstructed from Aristotle's *Poetics* on this point. Interpreters did so in reading the *Iliad* as the product of the intention of an author and in attributing plausible intentions to parts of the texts. These readings reach from Theagenes of Rhegium's allegorical interpretation of the battle of the Gods in the *Iliad* around 500 BC, to reading scientific and practical knowledge into parts of the text, including their own moral ideas, for example as Plutarch (ca. 46–120 AD) did regarding the concept of *aretê* (virtue) (cf. Finkelberg 2003). All these interpretations can be situated conceptually within the intentional continuum of author, text, context and reader. None of these interpretations signals any doubt that in the end they are about retrieving the intentions of Homer, be they obvious or hidden. This also applies for specific messages attributed to the text such as interpreting the whole of the *Iliad* according to the cosmological doctrines of Anaxagoras or interpreting the *Odyssey* as a poem about the fate of souls (cf. Finkelberg 2003, 154): it seems that all interpreters were convinced that they simply read what had to be read, on the basis of what was written.

This reconstruction of the dominant concept of authorial intention in interpretation is in tune with how Donald A. Russell has characterised criticism in antiquity in general. According to him and many others, throughout the Greco-Roman era, it was "the poet's business to give instruction of some kind" (Russell 1981, 84). The task of the critic was to unravel this instruction – "whether in factual knowledge or skill, or simply in the art of living" (ibid.) – from the text, assuming that this was the intention of the author. Already Heraclitus aimed in his critical remarks at "uncovering [...] the intention of the author", which was for Russell "the general assumption throughout antiquity": "ancient criticism was 'intentionalist'" (Russell 1981, 96 f.).

It is a typical example of modern intentional normativity and projection, though, that what sounds in the words of Russell as a description, is in fact a criticism of the "inadequacy of ancient criticism": in Russell's eyes, the ancient critics "could not do justice to the complex and sophisticated literature they were studying" (1981, 98). This justice Russell seems to seek in the wake of symbolism, autonomy of literature and a form of intentional fallacy. The judgment that ancient criticism "is fundamentally not equal to the task of appraising classical literature" (1981, 6) runs as a common thread through the whole of Russell's study. Accordingly, Russell cannot resist making a modern caricature of his object, for example when ancient critics are characterised as departing from the assumption that authors are "beginning with a message and embodying it in fiction" (1981, 97). That sounds more like polemics against a *roman à thèse* in modern times, but is not compatible with the concept of authorial intention reconstructed above, with is intentional focus primarily on genre conventions, composition, style, and words, accompanied by hardly disputable very general moral insights on the content level.

If we take a look back from this point to the predecessor of the Aristotelian concept of authorial intention (the concept of divine inspiration as the oldest answer to the question "what the poet meant"), it is striking that there are quite some overlaps between both views, despite all their differences. To start with, both conceptions share the idea of an intentional continuum between author, reader and text – be it Muses-driven or not. For both views it applies that to have one component of the continuum is to have all the others. However, Aristotle uses this intentional continuity concept now for a secular aim: as an instrument to reconstruct the most plausible interpretation in case of doubt. His guiding principle is contextualisation: of the passage within its textual surroundings, related to what is known about its author and the circumstances within which he acted.

Furthermore, both concepts do share the belief that moral knowledge and other insights can be found in poetry. Consequently, *human* responsibility for

texts inevitably leads to the new situation that the "many fine messages" (*Ion*) become part of dispute and changing consensus over time. When from this perspective parts of Homeric – already half a millennium old in Plato's times – or other canonical texts do not stand the contemporary test of offering "fine messages", then there are two major options. One is, as we saw above, reinterpreting the poets and giving "solutions" for what seems to be a moral problem, the other: correcting them. The *locus classicus* for the latter can be found in Plato's *Republic* (cf. *Rep.* 377) where he suggests supervising poets by selecting their good stories for use in the ideal state and to erase their bad ones. Both kinds of interventions, however, would be unconceivable with poetry whose source is divine. But what both options share with the older concept of divine inspiration is that all see Homeric and other poetry predominantly as a collective "encomium of virtue" (cf. Finkelberg 2003, 156). And in all cases, on the level of views on the world, in Greek antiquity the author as an individual remained nearly invisible – as have been the Muses per definition. Is the same valid for Rome?

How to avoid misreading: Cicero, Quintilian and Tacitus

Referring to the anecdote about the Pergamene scholar and diplomat Crates of Mallos, breaking his leg in Rome in 168 BC and then giving the first philological lectures to the eager Roman youth while recovering, Martin Bloomer has stated: "Romans receive literature and learning through an accidental, compulsory visitation" (cf. Bloomer 1997, 39). Whatever one thinks of this anecdote, it seems very likely that the Roman concept of intention in interpretation will be close to what we encountered in ancient Greece (cf. Schickert 2005, 123–127), and that the concept of Latinity (cf. Bloomer 1997) guarantees this closeness. The basic training rule in reading and writing in the Roman Empire was an orientation towards tradition to an extent that must seem alien to twenty-first century parents comparing their children's schools to their own, let alone to those of their parents. Departing from the question why Roman "schools and their prestige remain so impressively unchanged" in late antiquity for over 400 years, Robert A. Kaster points out that what from our view might seem like stagnation, was in the eyes of the Roman elite "nothing other than the stability of lasting achievement" and "a satisfaction with what was already effective" (Kaster 1997, 196). So it seems a safe guess that in Rome there must have been obvious traces of the model for interpreting texts that was shaped in ancient Greece.

One of the passages that come very close to what we have read in Aristotle can be found in Marcus Tullius Cicero's early handbook for public speeches, *De*

Inventione (ca. 84 BC). The parts that deal most explicitly with intention in interpretation are the judicial speeches in Book II, especially when talking about ambiguities in texts. For Cicero, controversy arises from ambiguities only when it is not clear what the author of the text has meant ("quid senserit scriptor, obscurum est", *De Inv.* II, 40, 116). Starting from a concrete example – a line from a testament leading to a dispute between two heirs – Cicero guides the good interpreter through several steps that should be taken: he should look at the preceding and the following passages, at the whole text, at other writings of the author, and at the biography of the author in order to corroborate his specific interpretation ("quod nos interpretamur") of the disputed passage of the testament. Summarising this part, Cicero thinks it easy ("facile") to conclude from the whole text ("ex omni scriptura"), from the character of the author ("ex persona scriptoris") and from the context (in Cicero's example of the testament: the other persons involved; "eis rebus, quae personis attributae sunt"), what is the most likely interpretation of the disputed passage. In Cicero's words: "quid veri simile sit eum voluisse, qui scripsit". A possible translation might be: what it is likely that the writer wanted; or more freely: when all these steps are taken, the most likely interpretation is what the author actually intended.

Cicero's guideline for rhetoricians can in general be seen as a blueprint for the interpretation of texts (cf. Krampe 1983, 197). This blueprint shows the conceptual continuity between author, text, context and reader familiar from the model we came across in the secular model in ancient Greece. When specific passages of a text are not clear – and, we might add, the author cannot be asked since he is dead – then the interpreter receives from Cicero a recipe for other steps that can be taken. The interpretation of a specific passage that takes into account the whole text and what is known about the author and the context of his utterance will lead to the most probable ("quid veri simile sit") interpretation. And this is what the author intended, according to Cicero ("voluisse, quid scripsit"). There is no doubt in *De Inventione* that this recipe will work: do your work well, and you get what the text and the author intended, Cicero seems to say.

Not only Cicero conceptualised the intentional continuum this way. In the first century AD, Quintilian (cf. *Instit. Orat.* VII, 9, 14) for example argued that when two interpretations are possible and at dispute, it is per definition impossible to settle the dispute on the level of the text ("scriptum") only. On that level both parties will be equal in case of a real ambiguity. A real ambiguity, Quintilian tells us, can sometimes be disambiguated when the possible interpretations are held against the question of what is more according to nature ("secundum naturam magis sermo"). When this fact check does not bring more clarity into what has been written or said, then what the interpreter *always* ("semper") has to

do is argue what is more equitable ("sit aequius") and according to the intention of the author, to what he wanted with what he said and wrote ("utrum is, qui scripsit ac dixit, voluerit"). Also Quintilian's concept of interpretation shares ideas with the Classical Greek model: the aspects author, text, context and reader should all point into the same direction concerning questions of intention. To reconstruct one well is to have all the others, too. Quintilian's rule is: when the text itself (mostly he gives examples from the judicial context such as wills, but sometimes also an example from Virgil) is ambiguous, turn to the other aspects "context" and "author" in order to solve the problem of interpretation – again, a perfect continuum.

When looking more closely at this continuity, it is obvious that in the process of interpretation, for Cicero and Quintilian the intention of the author seems on the same level as the other aspects of the continuum. There are no signs that authorial intention in interpretation is in any hierarchical sense different from text or context. It is "only" part of a continuity: the author wanted what is a probable interpretation of the text – think of the quote from Cicero. When looking at the examples, the model of communication seems to be one in which the interpreter just has to walk back along the road the author has taken in the other direction: when the author has chosen the right words in a specific situation in order to say something, then the interpreter must be able to arrive from specific words on the table and his knowledge of the context at the right intention of the author. In both directions, the procedure seems to be more about correct phrasing in a specific situation, and less about giving the contours of an individual view of the author. That impression is underlined by the fact that both recipes for dealing with debatable questions of interpretation are primarily situated on a judicial stage – a stage where in the end a factual decision has to be taken on the wrong or right interpretation of the words under scrutiny.

There is further evidence to confirm this impression. In the opening scene of Tacitus' *Dialogus de Oratoribus* (3,2) – published around 102 AD and with events placed in the 70s AD – a certain Maternus is visited by some friends, just after he has recited parts of his drama *Cato* in public – based on the life of Cato the younger, Julius Caesar's opponent. This public reading had irritated those in power and the whole city talked about it. The friends are surprised that they find Maternus with his *Cato* manuscript on his lap and one of them asks:

> [...] nihilne te [...], Materne, fabulae malignorum terrent, quo minus offensas Catonis tui ames? An ideo librum istum apprehendisti, ut diligentius retractares, et sublatis si qua pravae interpretationi materiam dederunt, emitteres Catonem non quidem meliorem, sed tamen securiorem?

> Has the talk of your detractors no terrors for you, Maternus? Does it not make you feel less enamoured of that exasperating *Cato* of yours? Or is it with the idea of going carefully over it that you have taken your drama in hand, intending to cut out any passages that may have given a handle for misrepresentation, and then to publish your *Cato*, if not better than it was at least not so dangerous? (qtd. from Leigh 2000, 469)

To which Maternus replies that he will write what he owes to himself ("quid Maternus sibi debuerit") so that the friend will recognise what he has heard ("agnosces quae audisti") – and that his next tragedy *Thyestes* will say everything that may have been left out ("omisit") by his *Cato*.

Let us first have a look at the interpretation of his friend: according to him, the reading of *Cato* by those who see it as political criticism of those in power might lose its ground by removing single passages of the play. But what is especially interesting from our perspective is that when talking to the poet about this critical political reading, he speaks of a distorted interpretation: "pravae interpretationi". The problem of interpretation is in the eyes of the friend not about a specific vision of Maternus on Cato or those in power, it is about right or wrong interpretation. Having said that, it must be added that when the friend – who is not an author himself, as far as we can tell from Tacitus – suggests to consider deleting certain passages of the text, he looks at authorial composition in a more gradual or maybe even strategic way. Deleting some passages might make the *Cato* "if not better than it was at least not so dangerous", because then the distorted interpretations are depraved of their textual foundations. Apart from that, the non-offending interpretation is the right one according to the friend, since the interpreters with the "wrong" interpretation are seen as evil-minded detractors ("fabulae malignorum").

On a conceptual level of authorial intention, Maternus seems to adhere to a similar view on intention and interpretation, but possibly a different one on intention and composition. First of all, he emphasises that he writes in the light of what he owes to himself – "quid Maternus sibi debuerit". But what he owes to himself is obviously not a specific vision on *Cato* or those in power. In case the published version of *Cato* should leave something unsaid, his next tragedy *Thyestes* will say it ("Quod si qua omisit Cato, sequenti recitatione Thyestes dicet", *Dial. Orat.* 3,3). There is not a word about a vision (be it critical, affirmative, or neither), it is only about saying or not saying. This attitude lends the greatest urgency and importance to the words uttered – and it implies also that what is uttered is the result of perfect and sincerest intentional care of the poet. Given this background it is plausible that Maternus is not even thinking about deleting whole passages: what he wrote on *Cato* was what had to be written. So his poetics seems to be one of a hard-working poet who presents his texts

only after extensive revising. This is why his friends find him with his *Cato* on his lap, still working even on the version that had already passed enough revisions to be read in public. Maternus is busy getting *Cato* finished for publication ("atque ideo maturare libri huius editionem festino") in order to be able to work on his *Thyestes* with his mind free.

Interpretation and intention in this dialogue are practiced in a different way to what the twenty-first century is used to. In Rome, both seem to be framed primarily in oppositions of right or wrong phrasing. The intention of the author is to write down what must be written and to keep on revising the words on the page. Once he has published his text, there is basically only one reading of the text, which is the right reading – and not the author's individual reading as opposed to contesting others'. When the author has not made mistakes in writing and composing, and nevertheless fundamentally other interpretations occur, then these divergent readings must be plain wrong and/or evil-minded towards the author: in our example in the eyes of his friend and of Maternus himself. All this is different from a view in which intention and interpretation are framed in terms of more or less plausible interpretations, of individual intentional views, or in terms of more or less hidden individual criticism of those in power: nothing points in Tacitus' story into that direction.

The relevance of this distinction can be seen in much recent literary criticism. Matthew Leigh for example wonders why Maternus is about to write a *Thyestes* – a tragedy "on the woes of ancient Mycenae" – in first century Rome. This is

> unclear until one notes the recurrent tendency of a succession of Roman writers from Ennius and Accius onwards to use this theme, and in particular the psychopathic rule of Atreus, to evoke the perils of autocracy. (Leigh 2000, 469)

Attributing critical intentions to Maternus' *Cato* and *Thyestes* is definitely compatible with contemporary views on the role of writers – but this view ignores that neither the text nor the Roman historical context corroborate this view. What is more: the claim that a *Thyestes* must be placed in the tradition "to evoke the perils of autocracy" is by far *not* as clear as it is presented. Think for example of the *Thyestes* written by Varius for the occasion of the triumph of Augustus in 29 BC that glorified the deeds of Augustus and Agrippa. Varius wrote this play in a way that pleased the emperor since he rewarded him with a substantial amount of money (cf. Schickert 2005, 17). Obviously, contemporary scholars find it hard to resist projecting back in time current individual, critical views on an unread play.

The same thought comes to mind when for example Christina S. Kraus (2000, 450) attributes to "fictional Maternus" a "delight" in "manipulating de-

clamatory themes [...] to push the boundaries out a little further each time" in "an exciting, intellectually challenging game". Many writers contemporary to Kraus could be subsumed under this characterisation. But in the light of what was argued above, it seems unlikely that this would have been compatible with the conception of authorial intention in Classical Rome – let alone with the intentions of an individual Roman 2000 years ago.

Summarising, there is quite some plausibility for the claim that, as in Greece, also in Classical Rome intention does not play a very pronounced role. Though there is no doubt in our sources that it exists outside the text, in the regular utterance authorial intention is what the text says in a specific context. Authorial intention does not seem to have a privileged position in interpretation. From this perspective, authorial intention is much closer to correct phrasing and understanding than it is to a more or less plausible reconstruction of an individual authorial message. However, one might raise the question of to what extent texts for the training of rhetoricians can be taken as exemplary for the domain of poetry. Therefore, a closer look should be taken at the text that in Roman antiquity was the most explicit concerning writing and reading literature, and by far the most seminal: Horace's letter to Piso and his sons about poetry that came to be known under the title *De Arte Poetica* or *Ars Poetica*.

How to write and read: Horace

In his *Poetics* – published probably shortly before his death in 8 BC (cf. Nisbet 2007, 20) – Horace offers conceptual frames for what has been observed in the texts of the rhetoricians. First of all, for Horace the core of writing poetry and being a poet is knowing how to put the right words in the right place: "scribendi recte sapere est et principium et fons" (*Ars Poetica 309*). This writing rightly ("scribendi recte") is guideline and source ("principium et fons") and leads to works that find their strength and beauty in verbal elegance and clarity of composition. On the content level, this means that the poet "just says now what has to be said just now" ("ut iam nunc dicat iam nunc debentia dici", *Ars Poetica* 43) – a formulation that seems congenial to what we have attributed to Maternus above. Also for Horace, writing as a poet is primarily a technical thing concerning words and their composition in a specific situation, and not about individual views: there is not a word in and around these passages about *what* exactly has to be said.

Many passages are used by Horace to emphasise that the struggle with words, metre, composition etc. of *recte scribere* is identical with first of all one thing: hard work. When Horace acknowledges that the craft of the poet is noth-

ing without some genius ("ingenium"), it is for him even more true the other way round (cf. *Ars Poetica* 411). Therefore his major advice for the two sons of Piso is that, after having written something, they should present it to Maecius (a competent critic), to their father and to Horace, and then: let it rest for nine years. What's not yet published, can be deleted – once the words are in the world, they can never be taken back, Horace argues (*Ars Poetica* 385 – 390). This is not only advice for the youths, it is Horace's conviction that this is what every poet should do, and what especially Roman writers have *not* done sufficiently in the past:

> Nec virtute foret clarisve potentius armis
> quam lingua Latium, si non offenderet unum
> quemque poetarum limae labor et mora. (*Ars Poetica* 289 – 291)

> Nor would Latium be more supreme in valour and glory of arms than in letters, were it not that her poets, one and all, cannot brook the toil and tedium of the file. (Fairclough 1978a, 475)

Rome would be as powerful through its language as it is now through its men's courage and arms, if poets had not disliked repeatedly revising their texts. Self-criticism in connection with working hard on the poem is the only road to good poetry, Horace tells us, and gives as a rule to refrain from any poem that has not been the object of many erasures on the wax tablet for many days, and of which the perfect polish has not been checked ten times (*Ars Poetica* 292 – 294). Again, for Horace, this revision is not about refining one's vision on the world. The working on the text is above all about detecting and eliminating mistakes in the composition of words, about signalling weak verses, deleting unnecessary ornaments, elucidating what is not clear enough, criticising ambiguity ("arguet ambigue dictum") etc. (cf. *Ars Poetica* 445 – 453). This expertise of the good poet and the good critic enables them to distinguish between right and wrong in *recte scribere*, as the references show to the exemplary critic Quintilius and the words put into his mouth. When Quintilius detects ill-made verses ("male tornatos versus"), he orders to correct ("corrige") or, after several efforts have been in vain, even to delete them and start over again. Horace recommends this practice with his *Ars Poetica* as a whole (cf. Holzberg 2009, 214 – 220), but also most explicitly in verses in which he calls the incriminated passages an offence ("delictum", cf. *Ars Poetica* 438 – 444). The goal and the final intention of the author must be to write in the right way and the good reader will be able to tell from the text where the author succeeded and where he failed. But what is said explicitly about intentional actions of authors in the *Ars Poetica*?

The word "intentio" itself or its variations do not occur in the text. What is found can be divided over three kinds of conscious acts aiming at specific effects. The first sort of intention is connected with the formal and technical efforts of the poet as outlined above, and again connected to the poet as a craftsman working hard on artistic form. Such an artist – in this case a painter – might for example intend ("cupit") to give more effect to a simple object such as a painted wood by inserting a dolphin, or more effect to stormy waves by painting a wild pig into them (cf. *Ars Poetica* 29–30). It is clear from Horace's introduction that this intention, formal as it may be, is intending the wrong thing, since his rule is whatever you want ("vis") to make, make it simple and one ("denique sit quod vis, simplex dumtaxat et unum", *Ars Poetica* 23).

There can be no doubt that, for Horace, the poet does have intentions outside the poem, wrong and right ones. Wrong ones can be avoided when poets – and the sons of Piso – learn what they should strive for instead. This includes clear rules like the ones quoted above or similar ones, for example: a poet should choose a topic according to his power (*Ars Poetica* 178), the Greek habit of consequently sticking to the metre should be followed day and night (*Ars Poetica* 268–269) etc. Still, having the right intentions concerning the formal side of the poem is not enough, since the literary product can fall short of its author's intentions, or these intentions may cause collateral artistic damage: if I want to be brief ("brevis esse laboro"), Horace writes, I become difficult to understand ("obscurus fio", *Ars Poetica* 25–26). In such a constellation, all a poet can do leads us back to Horace's basic principle of being a poet: *recte scribere* – try to write in the right way and keep on revising, whatever it may take.

The second kind of intention that is discussed in the *Ars Poetica* is about aiming at emotions and empathy. The most famous passage concerns Horace's rule that if a poet wants to make a reader cry ("si vis me flere"), the one speaking must have suffered himself before ("dolendum est primum ipsi tibi", *Ars Poetica* 102–103). The intention to shake the hearts of the ones listening with words ("animum auditoris agunto") is for Horace what poetry can and should do. But this goal is not easy to achieve and can be missed in many ways when the poet violates or forgets the rule that it is our inner disposition, shaped by nature according to circumstances ("format enim natura prius nos intus ad omnem fortunarum habitum"), that is the source of what we say or do (cf. *Ars Poetica* 108–109). Poets can therefore create faults when a gap falls between the words and the speaker, be it because of speaking a role badly ("male mandata loqueris"), of a mismatch between words and the expression on the face of the one speaking, or a mismatch between the words and the character speaking. In such cases, the intention of moving the audience will fail (cf. *Ars Poetica* 99–118).

Finally, there are also passages about desirable intentions concerning the view on the world that the reader or listener should take from poetry. As general and vague as they may be, they can be subsumed under the label of general moral intentions, expressed in a nutshell in Horace's well-known metonymic programme of mixing the useful with pleasure, *utile dulci:* the poets either want to teach or to delight or both ("aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetae", *Ars Poetica* 333 – 334). However, if after these lines one would expect programmatic reflections or at least examples of what should be regarded as useful and what should be taught, one will be referred back again to how things must be said: whatever your advice may be ("quidquid praecipies"), Horace continues, be brief ("esto brevis"), so that your readers quickly get what you are after ("ut cito dicta percipiant animi dociles") and faithfully stick to what you said ("teneantque fideles", cf. *Ars Poetica* 335 – 336). For Horace, authorial intention in poetry is not primarily about specific views and individual messages, it is about how to formally and technically present in a correct way what the poet is trying to say.

When one looks at the examples given by Horace elsewhere in his *Poetics* for what is *utile*, a possible explanation for the vague contours of intention on the content level comes into sight. This may be detected in what seems to be a basic moral homogeneity of the Roman view on the world, despite all jealous contests of philosophical schools (cf. Mayer 1986). Look for example at the function of the chorus in drama:

> ille bonis faveatque et consilietur amice
> et regat iratos et amet pacare timentis,
> ille dapes laudet mensae brevis, ille salubrem
> iustitiam legesque et apertis otia portis,
> ille tegat commissa deosque precetur et oret,
> ut redeat miseris, abeat Fortuna superbis. (*Ars Poetica* 196 – 201)

> It should side with the good and give friendly counsel; sway the angry and cherish the righteous. It should praise the fare of a modest board, praise wholesome justice, law, and peace with her open gates; should keep secrets, and pray and beseech the gods that fortune may return to the unhappy, and depart from the proud. (Fairclough 1978a, 467)

It will not be too bold to see in this list of tasks of the chorus also a list of moral intentions Horace would expect generally – in parts or in the text as a whole – in poetry that counts as *utile*. From today's perspective, two things are striking in this list. First, the focus lies on encouraging in very general terms behaviour by citizens that is regarded as ethically desirable. This concerns pretty basic things like a positive attitude, advising, reasoning, calming, praising, keeping secrets, praying etc. Second, the absence of any form of criticism or even a critical

attitude towards authorities in any field whatever is striking. Instead, the list is about a well-minded attitude to worldly and religious authorities, but also about praising Roman heroic acts ("celebrare domestica facta", *Ars Poetica* 287). The only shade of criticism regards an unwanted individual character disposition: pride ("superbis"). If this is what should be "taught" by poets, the underlying worldview must be rather homogenous, indeed. And in such a context, it seems plausible that Horace in his *Ars Poetica* is primarily concerned about how poets say things as well as about what should be their formal and topical intentions. Authorial intentions in terms of an individual "worldview" are not part of his argument. This is demonstrated most clearly with a similar list that combines moral intentions with artistic skill:

> qui didicit, patriae quid debeat et quid amicis,
> quo sit amore parens, quo frater amandus et hospes,
> quod sit conscripti, quod iudicis officium, quae
> partes in bellum missi ducis, ille profecto
> reddere personae scit convenientia cuique. (*Ars Poetica* 312–316)

> He who has learned what he owes to his country and his friends, what love is due a parent, a brother, and a guest, what is imposed on senator and judge, what is the function of a general sent to war, he surely knows how to give each character his fitting part. (Fairclough 1978a, 477)

All these moral expectations fit perfectly into the gist of the list earlier given. But what is even more important, Horace connects these possible intentions with a poetic rule that reminds us again where the focus of the *Ars Poetica* lies: once you have found your topic, if you are a good poet and work hard, words will follow easily ("verbaque provisam rem non invita sequentur", *Ars Poetica* 311). Horace reformulates here Cato's famous "rem tene, verba sequentur". Poetry is primarily about writing the right words in a specific situation, it is not an individual view on content or moral, let alone a critical one.

The *Ars Poetica* does confirm the impression formulated earlier that in dealing with literature in Rome, the authors and their intentions are part of a continuum connecting the intention to be taken from the text, the context and what the readers understand as intentions. There are no signs that the intention of the author is in any way a privileged point of orientation in interpretation. This goes along with – from today's perspective – a not very pronounced interest in what the author as an individual is saying in specific passages. That view is corroborated in general terms by Paul Veyne, in his effort to characterise what antiquity did or did not understand when someone talked or wrote about an "I":

No ancient, not even the poets, is capable of talking about himself. Nothing is more misleading that the use of 'I' in Greco-Roman poetry. [...] He speaks in the name of all and makes no claim that his readers should be interested in his own personal state of mind. To talk about oneself, to throw personal testimony into the balance, to profess that personal conviction must be taken into account provided only that it is sincere is a Christian, indeed an eminently Protestant idea that the ancients never dared to profess. (Veyne 1987, 231 f.)

The role of authorial intention in antiquity concerning content is basically a collective moral one, on the level of the production of poetry as on that of its reception.

This impression, derived here basically from some exemplary passages and a closer look at Horace's *Poetics*, is also in tune with what the *Thesaurus linguae Latinae* tells us under "intentio". The meaning concerning interpretation roughly hovers between "plan" (VII, 1, 2120, 30 – 2121, 27) and the general sense or the gist of what authors say (VII, 1, 2121, 28 – 44). From a Roman intentional viewpoint, literary authors do have a general plan, but this plan is primarily a technical one about which words to write in a specific combination and composition (cf. Vogt-Spira 2008, 32 f.). Concerning content, the author's *intentio* can be summarised in a general sense, but this authorial intention remains without sharp edges and very osmotic. It seems that it is more about generally accepted moral *faits divers* or a hardly contestable moral summary, not about an individual moral message, neither in parts nor in the literary text as a whole. Compared to our twenty-first century world, the difference to that apparently rather homogenous Roman world of production and interpretation of literature – in which the principle rule of being an author is expressed as "just to say what has to be said" – can hardly be emphasised enough (cf. Mayer 2003). In order to illustrate the relevance of this difference for contemporary scholarship and the analytic applicability of a historical perspective on concepts of intention in general, a brief glance at the reception of Virgil's *Aeneid* shall be taken.

The reception of Virgil's *Aeneid* from the perspective of intention

The choice of the *Aeneid* as a case for a historical analysis of concepts of intention in interpretation with regard to Classical Rome is not completely arbitrary. What makes this case a very suitable one is that impressive groundwork has been done already, notably with the publication of *Critical Assessments of Classical Authors* on Virgil by Philip Hardie (1999a and 1999b) and with some studies reconstructing parts of the reception history of the *Aeneid* in depth (for example

Comparetti 1892; Williams 1969; Wlosok 1973; Martindale 1993; Kallendorf 2007; Burkard 2010; Perkell 2014).

The *Aeneid* itself offers only very vague indications concerning the intention of its author. However, there is one passage in which a remark on the effect of the text is made, related to an episode in which two young Trojan warriors, Nisus and Euryalus, go out of their surrounded camp at night in order to support the mission of Aeneas, but are killed in action (*Aeneid* IX, 176–445). The episode ends with the verses:

> Fortunati ambo! si quid mea carmina possunt,
> nulla dies umquam memori vos eximet aevo,
> dum domus Aeneae Capitoli immobile saxum
> accolet imperiumque pater Romanus habebit. (*Aeneid* IX, 446–449)

> Happy pair! If augh my verse avail, no day shall ever blot you from the memory of time, so long as the house of Aeneas shall dwell on the Capitol's unshaken rock, and the Father of Rome hold sovereign sway! (Fairclough 1978c, 143)

If all works out well, Virgil writes, the *Aeneid* ("si quid mea carmina possunt") will save these two from being forgotten. In other words: Virgil articulates the intention that his verses should erect a lasting memorial for the two brave youngsters. Such a goal fits perfectly in the range of general intentions we derived above from Horace's *Ars Poetica*. But however courageous the two may have been, Virgil talks here about rather marginal characters of whom nothing else is known except what is told in the less than 300 verses of the *Aeneid* about them. Therefore, from our perspective, more important than their actions and character is the explicit connection of their memorising to the duration of the house of Aeneas ("domus Aeneae") – which rules at the moment of publication of the *Aeneid* in the person of Augustus (cf. *Aeneid* I, 286–288). Assuming the intentional continuity between author, text and reader as outlined above, it is more than likely that a Roman reader consequently will have taken the memory intentions expressed explicitly concerning Nisus and Euralyus in the *Aeneid* as a regular function of poetry in general – exemplarily related in this passage to the two youngsters. From here, it is more a syllogism than an interpretation to suppose that Roman readers will have taken the *Aeneid* as a whole for a praise of Augustus. Take for example the prophecy of Anchises in the underworld to his son Aeneas:

> hic vir, hic est, tibi quem promitti saepius audis,
> Augustus Caesar, divi genus, aurea condet
> saecula qui rursus Latio regnata per arva

> Saturno quondam, super et Garamantas et Indos
> proferet imperium [...]. (*Aeneid* VI, 791–795)

> This, this is he, whom thou so oft hearest promised to thee, Augustus Caesar, son of a god, who shall again set up the Golden Age amid the fields where Saturn once reigned, and shall spread his empire past Garamant and Indian [...]. (Fairclough 1978b, 561–563)

This man, Augustus – who has been promised by fate, a son of the Gods, who will bring the Golden Age back to Latium and who is the Emperor at the time of publication – receives in the *Aeneid* an epos that relates him back to another favourite of the Gods, the Trojan hero Aeneas: if the power of Virgil's songs is sufficient ("possunt"), the *Aeneid* will be an eternal memorial for and praise of Augustus as long as the House of Aeneas rules in Rome, one could say with the lines on Nisus/Euralyus (*Aeneid* IX, 446–449) in mind.

Apart from this one passage on Nisus/Euralyus, no explicit remarks are made on the intention of the author *within* the *Aeneid* (cf. Holzberg 2006, 188). This very general praise of memorable acts fits into the conceptual outlines around intention as reconstructed. Also Suetonius' first biography of Virgil – written more than 100 years after his death – embeds the text into a context in which Virgil was personally close to Augustus and in which Augustus himself ordered after Virgil's death in 19 BC that the not yet finished *Aeneid* should be published by Virgil's heirs, apparently in significant numbers (cf. Schickert 2005, 59 f., 22): a plausible context for a memorial intent.

More pronounced documents on the reception of the *Aeneid* with regard to intention are available from the fourth century onwards. One of the earliest commentaries on the *Aeneid* is the one by the grammarian Servius from around 400, which is quite explicit concerning authorial intention by saying that when you introduce an author, seven things have to be mentioned by the grammarian: from, one, the life of the author to, seven, the explanation of words and sentences. Number four in Servius' list is "scribentis intentio", authorial intention (cf. Servius 2015, 26). As a good teacher, in the introduction to his commentary Servius discusses each of the seven points he mentions, ascribing under the fourth aspect a dual intention to Virgil: "Intentio Vergilii haec est Homerum imitari et Augustum laudare a parentibus" (Servius 2015, 28) – it is Virgil's intention to imitate Homer and to praise Augustus by going back to his ancestry.

Both intentions can be traced easily in the *Aeneid* itself, Servius explains. Concerning the praising of Augustus, Servius argues with the family line running via Augustus' mother, who was the daughter of Julia, who in turn was the sister of Julius Caesar, and from there on back to the son of Aeneas, Julus: "ut confirmat ipse Vergilius 'a magno demissum nomen Iulo'" (Servius 2015, 28) – which is

confirmed by Virgil himself when he says "name coming upon him from the great Julus".

Accordingly, already the first verse of the *Aeneid* "Arma virumque cano" – about wars and the man I sing – can be read as indicating the enormous influence of Homer: "arma" points not only to the wars of Aeneas after his landing in Italy, but also to the battles around Troy and therefore to the *Iliad*, and "virum" not only to the wanderings of Aeneas, but to those of Odysseus in the *Odyssey*, too. Consequently, the first line of the *Aeneid* can be seen as preluding that the first six books of its twelve are *Odyssey*-like, while the last six books are *Iliad*-like. In other words: Virgil aims at "Homerum imitari" – to imitate Homer.

Of course Servius was not the only commentary on Virgil and these commentaries differ – but hardly concerning authorial intention. Tiberius Claudius Donatus for example argues around 430 AD that *rhetoricians* should teach about Virgil (and not *grammarians* like Servius), but also *his* intentional frame was that Virgil praised Augustus through Aeneas (cf. Servius 2004, xviii). So it seems that *intentio* as "plan" or "general sense" draws the outlines of the early reception of the *Aeneid:* the plan to imitate Homer and to praise Augustus via Aeneas. Roughly speaking, one could draw a line in which Servius' remarks on intention are recycled by many scholars in the centuries to come (cf. Casali and Stok 2008, 194–261; Comparetti 1892) until today, with Niklas Holzberg (2006, 56–61, 129–210) as a recent German example:

> On the one hand the poet wanted, I think, to present to his contemporary public literary entertainment on a high level. On the other, he obviously wanted to express his esteem for the politics of the first man of the state in which he lived, and connect this to the praise of Augustan Rome. (Holzberg 2006, 8; *my translation, RG*)

Similar contemporary interpretations in British-American reception are by Francis Cairns (1989), Karl Galinsky (1996) and Joseph D. Reed (2007). Galinsky for example holds that "the *Aeneid* does not present abstract ideals but was meant to be true to Roman life. This truthfulness or Roman realism is ennobled precisely by the poetic richness of Vergil's allusions to both the philosophical and the Homeric traditions" (qtd. from Hardie 1999b, 454). Of course, different accents can be given to authorial intention, basically on a scale between political content ("Augustum laudare") and artistic form ("Homerum imitari"). But what is also important here is that over time these basic intentions seem to turn from general to specific, from collective moral values to more individual views.

To illustrate this impression with a more or less arbitrary jump in time: the British reception in the early seventeenth century for example was most interested in "Augustum laudare". But at the same time it connected this praise of the

Roman Empire and its values with, in the words of Charles Martindale, "the merits of royalism and one-man rule" (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 29) – a rather specific and contemporary British message of the time. Concerning the artistic tradition, Richard Heinze's *Virgils epische Technik* from 1901 for example clearly emphasises Virgil's artistic intention ("künstlerische Intention") in very specific textual solutions of the many formal problems that the *Aeneid* had to face. More than a dozen of the 47 articles reprinted by Philip Hardie in his documentation of the reception of the *Aeneid* in the twentieth century explicitly or implicitly refer to Heinze, including for example efforts from the 1970s to explain with Virgil's *künstlerische Intention* such questions as "Why Did Venus Wear Boots?" in the *Aeneid* (1.314 f.) (cf. Hardie 1999b, 59 – 75). These artistic intention problems can arise for example from the fact that Virgil had decided to include a set of games into his epic, and then had to face such questions as: who would hold them, in whose honour, where exactly in the *Aeneid* should they take place etc. But Virgil's more specific artistic intention can also be shown in his artistic control of the Dido episode, including Virgil's amazing ability for empathy with victims (cf. Hardie 1999a, 2 f.). While all interpretations, as already mentioned, agree that authorial intention exists outside the text and that normally author, text, context and reader do form an intentional continuum, there seems to be a tendency over the course of time towards attributing more specific individual intentions to Virgil and *Aeneid* than Servius did. From our perspective, this indicates a gradual shift in the domination of more individual concepts of authorial intention from the intentionally less outspoken Classical model – at least from the Renaissance onwards.

Yet, this is definitely not the whole reception history from an intentional perspective. It seems to be only one half of it, since according to the German classicist Gregor Vogt-Spira one of the key questions of classicists is whether the *Aeneid* is pro- or anti-Augustan ("staatstragend oder insgeheim doch antiaugusteisch", Vogt-Spira 2008, 28). Vogt-Spira does not give any historical or other qualifications for his claim. Therefore, combining the 1946 intentional watershed (intentional fallacy) touched upon in the introduction of the present book, with the massive homogenous evidence around a pro-Augustan intention given above, we might dare to predict that anti-Augustan interpretations of the *Aeneid* as opposed to Virgil's authorial intentions will not be found before 1946 in the interpretations of classicists. In fact, as far as I can see, this is the case.

The starting point of such an opposition is generally located in the pro-Augustan reading of the *Aeneid* by Adam Parry in an essay dating from 1963. Parry distinguishes between the traditional "explicit message of the *Aeneid*" and "a different suggestion" carried by the last books. This different suggestion was "that the formation of Rome's empire involved the loss of pristine purity of

Italy" (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 52). This loss triggers an ambiguity between "the public glory of the roman achievement" and "the terrible price one must pay for this glory": "We hear two distinct voices in the *Aeneid*, a public voice of triumph, and a private voice of regret" (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 63). In this polyphony, the sympathy of Parry is with the private voice:

> The *Aeneid* enforces the fine paradox that all the wonders of the most powerful institution the world has ever known are not necessarily of greater importance than the emptiness of human suffering. (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 64)

There are quite some signals that, intentionally speaking, the foundations of this interpretation are close to the concept of intentional fallacy of the New Critics. To begin with, there is circumstantial evidence such as allusions to Cleanth Brooks' *The Well-Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* and to other New Critical tropes (cf. Hardie 1999a, 19). In addition, there are passages in which Parry tries to liberate the meaning of the poem from traditional restrictions of historical authorial intention. He warns for example "not to let orthodox interpretations of the *Aeneid* obscure our sense of what it really is" (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 53). And what the *Aeneid* "really is", is felt by the *modern* reader:

> The nostalgia for the heroic and Latin past, the pervasive sadness, the regretful sense of limitation of human action in a world where you've got to end up on the right side or perish [...]: all this I think is felt by every attentive reader of the poem. (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 53)

Nevertheless, what most "orthodox interpretations" have been doing is putting forth a hypothetical "Roman reader" against this "sense" of what the *Aeneid* "really is". This historical reader had to correct contemporary impressions: "*He* would have taken the poem ultimately as a great work of Augustan propaganda", and this hypothetical Roman reader would also have "clapped his hands when Aeneas abandons the overemotional Dido":

> Generations of Latin teachers have felt it necessary to defend Aeneas from the charge of having been a cad. Modern readers are romantic, but a Roman reader would have known that Aeneas did the right thing. So the student is asked to forsake his own experience of the poem for that of a hypothetical Roman. (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 60 f.)

Parry's turning away from history and from author-based historical readings, while at the same time upgrading the importance of contemporary readings of "the student" and his "own experience" in opposition to "orthodox" readings by literary historians do form clear parallels with Wimsatt and Beardsley's claim quoted above that the poem "belongs to the public". For Parry, too, the in-

tention of the historical author is not "desirable", at least not when it is used to correct and overrule contemporary readings.

Parry's interpretation triggered many similar ones to come, for example Wendell Clausen's article "An Interpretation of the *Aeneid*" only one year later, 1964: "But there is another reason why the *Aeneid* moves us: its larger structure enlists our sympathies on the side of loneliness, suffering, defeat" (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 69). Pointing in the same direction, Michael Putnam held in 1965 that Aeneas' killing of the already defeated Turnus reduces Aeneas to the level of his enemies and compromises "his moral authority and therefore the legitimacy of empire" (cf. Perkell 2014, 1). Many similar interpretations that stress defeat, loss, suffering and unethical behaviour on the side of Aeneas/Augustus can be found in the wake of Parry's essay, for example in Gian Biago Conte's *The Rhetoric of Imitation* (1986) with his explicit conceptual choice for Umberto Eco's *intentio operis* in order to show that the *Aeneid* aims at "freeing language from its ideological fixity"(qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 28; cf. Hardie 1999b, 336–344). In all these cases, a clear devaluation of the importance of authorial intention can be observed, accompanied by a corresponding growing importance of views that contemporary readers attribute to the text. These interpretations are explicitly or implicitly based on concepts close to intentional fallacy and, I would add, would not have been regarded as legitimate ones before the emergence of such concepts in scholarship.

The same historical correlation between the introduction of a new concept of intention in interpretation and corresponding interpretations of the *Aeneid* could be shown regarding more recent work employing a poststructuralist concept of intentionality: for example Don Fowler who, from a deconstructivist perspective, turns against intentional fallacy readings in the wake of Parry and warns that to "praise the *Aeneid* for its resistance to power can be seen as a way of underestimating that power, and thus reinforcing it". Instead, he argues that the scholar should head for "creating problems rather than solving them", for "confusing rather than clarifying" (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 318). For other poststructuralist readings see David Quint (1989, in Hardie 1999b, 117–157) or Alessandro Barchiesi (1994, in Hardie 1999a, 324–344) but poststructuralism is not the point here. The point is that the reconstruction of the reception of the *Aeneid* has confirmed that every interpretation is – implicitly or explicitly – based on an underlying concept of intention. This makes it possible, in turn, to relate in principle all interpretations of the *Aeneid* to specific concepts of intention. At this stage of our reconstruction of types of intention, at least four different intentional strands of reception can be distinguished: a Classical one (for example Servius: departing from an intentional continuity between author, text, context and reader, with only very generic articulations of the plan of the *Aeneid*); one that, on the

basis of the Classical model, gradually seems to evolve towards more individual messages on the content level (for example the British reception in the early seventeenth century with sharper and more contemporary/individual edges to authorial intention); one according to the concept of intentional fallacy from 1946 onwards (for example interpretations in the wake of Adam Parry 1963); and finally poststructural ones (for example Fowler, Quint and others).

Implied in that attribution, there seems to be a certain degree of predictability of types of interpretation on the basis of the intentional prototypes available at specific historical moments. For the time being, this predictability can hardly go further than historical exclusions of the kind "not before 1946". But related to this last point, there seems to be another analytic use of a historically differentiated typology of conceptions of intention in interpretation: to check historical claims of scholars who seem unaware of the historical dimension of the debates they are leading. For example, in the context of the analysis given above, I think Vogt-Spira should probably reformulate his claim about one of the key questions of Classical studies into: one of the key questions of the last 60 years. But there are more convincing examples to give.

Taking the British reception of the *Aeneid* in the early seventeenth century just mentioned as point of departure, we can read that Aeneas was seen as reflecting the qualities of Augustus, who in turn was seen as exemplary for the Christian prince and leader, for royalism and one-man-rule. Shortly afterwards, according to Charles Martindale (born 1949), the English Revolution, with the victory of Parliament, favoured the old Roman Republic more than Augustus, which led to a different reading of the *Aeneid*, too: "Virgil could be represented as, covertly or in reality, a Republican and friend to liberty (so Gibbon, citing the story of Mezentius)" (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 29). The intentions attributed to the *Aeneid* here are more specific and individual than the one by Servius, as mentioned before. But even more interesting from our perspective is Martindale's remark between brackets: "(so Gibbon, citing the story of Mezentius)". If Martindale's reading of the famous British eighteenth-century historian Edward Gibbon were correct, then long before 1946 there would already be a reading of the *Aeneid* that ascribes anti-Augustan republican messages to Virgil. A closer look at Gibbon however reveals that he would not have agreed with Martindale's summary of his view, at least not when Martindale claims that Gibbon did hold Virgil "covertly or in reality", for "a Republican and friend to liberty".

To begin with, there can be no doubt that Gibbon does read in 1763 in Virgil's lines about Mezentius, the Etruscan king and enemy of Aeneas, ideas that are exemplary for the right of a people to rise against a tyrannical ruler, "having justice and the gods on its side" (Gibbon 1837, 560). With regard to these passages Gibbon holds that "Every line breathes republican sentiments" – and Gibbon

supposes that Augustus must have read this "with terror". However, Gibbon nowhere ascribes a republican view to Virgil, not even in parts of the text. According to Gibbon, the passages on Mezentius were simply a mistake by Virgil that happened in the writing of the *Aeneid*. That mistake was not corrected due to Virgil's untimely death. Virgil wrote the passages on Mezentius without thinking "of the general plan of his poem", in a kind of slip of the pen. Gibbon's interpretation is here not only in line with Servius' remarks on Virgil's intention, but also with what since Horace's *Ars Poetica* (359) is known as the nap of Homer: "quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus", sometimes even good Homer takes a nap. Meaning: all poets make mistakes from time to time – even in Homer we can find them. If the good reader has detected such a mistake, and if he could go to the author and present it to him, then the good author would happily correct it – that is Horace's idea. And Gibbon does think he has caught Virgil napping:

> I am sensible that had Virgil lived to revise his work, he would have given to it uniformity and unity; and carefully effaced all those marks by which an attentive reader in it may perceive detached parts, not originally written the one for the other. (Gibbon 1837, 560)

In other words: Gibbon does not question at all the pro-Augustan view of the *Aeneid* and of Virgil. This pro-Augustan view was "the general plan of his poem", according to Gibbon in the tradition of Servius. Nevertheless Gibbon, from *his* historical position after the victory of Parliament against the King, reads the lines on Mezentius as rousing anti-tyrannical sympathies. But according to him, if Virgil would have been given the time to publish his *Aeneid* himself, he would have noted this possible interpretation triggered by his own words on the page, too – and then would have changed or deleted the Mezentius passages. And what is more: these lines definitely don't make Virgil "a Republican and a friend of Liberty" in the eyes of Gibbon. So in the end, Gibbon's interpretation turns out to be in tune with the Classical model of authorial intention reconstructed so far. At the same time, it confirms the tendency towards more specific messages in the wake of the Classical Roman (and Greek) model of intentional continuity between author, text, context and reader. However, what Martindale and others do when they say that Gibbon presented Virgil as a Republican is ahistorically projecting back contemporary interpretations and contemporary concepts of intention. This projection does not withstand a historical examination of the sources from an intentional perspective. What is confirmed, therefore, in general, is the analytical capacity of reconstructions of concepts of intention from a historical perspective.

In the modern reception of the *Aeneid*, there are many similar examples, as Thorsten Burkard for instance has shown with regard to Virgil interpretations of

the Renaissance (cf. Burkard 2010). I will limit myself to discuss one more, taken from *The Virgil Encyclopedia*, launched in 2014. Christine Perkell (2014, 5) writes in an entry:

> The power of the Dido episode to absorb readers' interest and to question the imperial mission is attested in Ovid (*Tristia* 2.533–36) and Augustine (*Confessions* 1.13.22), as well as in later centuries.

While there is little doubt that the quotes by Ovid and Augustine confirm the fascination of these two readers (and not only *their* fascination) for the passages on Dido in the *Aeneid*, nothing can be found in Ovid and Augustine where they would "question the imperial mission". Without going into details, one might hold that in the lines referred to by Perkell, Ovid defends his own erotic poetry, addressing Augustus who banned him with the argument: even Virgil does it, just look at Dido. In the other reference Augustine criticises his own pre-Christian fascination for "phantasies" such as the death of Dido, the Trojan horse or the shadow of Aeneas' first wife Creusa. A questioning of the imperial mission through the *Aeneid*, as we have come to know it in interpretations in the wake of Adam Parry, is nowhere to be found in the writings of the readers Ovid and Augustine – as our reflections until here would have predicted. So when Perkell (2014, 5) argues in the same entry that "failure to realise one's assumptions is the major obstacle to new discoveries", I couldn't agree more with her. But I would add that in much recent literary scholarship, there seems to be a serious failure in realising and reflecting modern assumptions concerning concepts of intention from a historical perspective. G.K. Galinsky (in Hardie 1999b, 434–457, here 435) for example holds that criticism on Aeneas for his killing of the already defeated Turnus was absent in the vast tradition of non-Christian criticism of the *Aeneid* until 1965, "though his modern critics do not seem to acknowledge it" (here 435). For such modern criticism see Putnam (in Hardie 1999b, 414–433) or Nisbet (in Hardie 1999b, 263).

This failure of conceptual reflection is accompanied by a failure to reflect what one might call a "critical-towards-power-bias" present in much post-1960s scholarly work on the *Aeneid*. For example, when looking back from today at Parry's seminal essay on the two voices in the *Aeneid*, one cannot help asking whether this article is more about the USA in the 1960s than about Rome 2000 years ago. In ambiguous formulations the article draws our attention several times towards losses "which cannot survive the complex forces of civilization" (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 52), to losses in "the steady march" of a state "to world dominion" (1999a, 53) and to losses "in the service of what is grand, monumental and impersonal: the [...] State" (1999a, 62). One may wonder

whether Parry is only talking about the Roman state when he speaks of "the wonders of the most powerful institution the world has ever known" (1999a, 64). But not only the general formulations might put readers on the track of also thinking of criticism of the USA in the 1960s. There are also passages where Parry explicitly draws parallels between Rome and the USA, for example regarding the loss of the "pristine purity" of the Marsi people east of Rome, brought under the rule of Rome in the first century BC: Virgil's "feeling for them had something in common with what Americans have felt for the American Indian." (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 51) Or, in another passage, the same blending of Rome and the twentieth century is triggered by the heroic motto under which the Allies won the Second World War. According to Parry, the *Aeneid* shows that during "the establishment of peace and order and civilization", something more precious "than blood, sweat and tears" is lost: "human freedom, love, personal loyalty" (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 63). It seems as if, on the basis of the concept of intentional fallacy, Parry and others made the *Aeneid* an ally in a contemporary criticism of those in power, be it criticism of "Augustan propaganda" in the *Aeneid* (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 53) or of the US government and its wars in the name of "peace and order and civilization".

I will end this short look at the reception of the *Aeneid* with what seems to be counter-evidence to my "not before 1946" claim: an example of an anti-Augustan interpretation of the *Aeneid* as early as 1935. In that year, a certain Francesco Sforza argues in a 12-page article without notes in the *Classical Review* that the *Aeneid* is "the most virulent libel against Rome and its rule" (Sforza 1935, 102). Also his view seems to be inspired by political opposition, putting himself and the *Aeneid* on the side of freedom and democracy (cf. Sforza 1935, 108) – and thus in 1935 against totalitarian regimes such as those of Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin, we might add. In his interpretation, two things are relevant from the perspective of the present book. First, Sforza does not argue with an opposition between the intention of the author and an intention taken from the text. Instead, he presents his interpretation as the hidden meaning of Virgil himself and the *Aeneid* as a "disguised pamphlet", of which the disguise has been lifted by Sforza now, after 2000 years (cf. Sforza 1935, 102). There can be little doubt that Sforza argues on the basis of the Classical model of authorial intention as reconstructed above: authors may make mistakes, they may lie or they may try to deceive us, but despite these irregularities the task of the interpreter simply remains to reconstruct authorial intention as part of an intentional continuum with the text. That is at least what Sforza says should be done in 1935.

Second, there are no indications that the message he attributes to Virgil and the *Aeneid* is regarded as a legitimate interpretation by Classicists, not even in the reception in the wake of Parry. If it is mentioned at all, then it is generally

dismissed as not according to professional standards. For example, for his judgment Thorsten Burkard quotes Rudolf Rieks from 1981 and agrees with him that: "The absolute one-sidedness of the argument, which dramatically distorts even correct observations, makes a refutation redundant" (Burkard 2010, 35; *my translation, RG*). From the perspective of the present book, Sforza's text primarily seems to have been a "disguised pamphlet" against contemporary totalitarianism and not so much about interpreting the *Aeneid*.

Whatever one may think of these parallels between criticism of Rome, totalitarianism in 1935 and the USA from 1963 onwards – Antonie Wlosok (1973, 146), P.H. Schrijvers (1978, 254) and Rudy van der Paardt (1982, 35) already signalled that parts of the modern American *Aeneid* reception have mixed pacifistic anti-Vietnam War and anti-Cold War tendencies into their discourse on the *Aeneid* – I hope to have made my point: historical awareness of concepts of intention used in specific interpretations allows for classifying historically specific types of interpretation. The historical typology of documents of reception presented here hopefully offers an extra stimulus to unravel hidden assumptions in interpretations and to correct ahistorical scholarly projections. Therefore, given the background of what I argued above, there is reason to seriously doubt the claim of Philip Hardie (Hardie 1999a, 3) that "the history of twentieth-century Virgilian criticism [...] has largely been that of the rediscovery in the *Aeneid* of contradiction, disharmony, incoherence even" on at least two points: first, contradiction, disharmony etc. has only been the story from *the last third* of the twentieth century onwards, and, second, probably more suitable than the word "rediscovery" in this quote would be "discovery" or maybe even "construction".

After this closer look at the concept of authorial intention in antiquity from different angles, let me try to summarise. The claim of this chapter has been that the Classical concept of secular authorial intention was shaped in Athens. It was in operation from around 500 BC onwards – primarily in opposition to a concept of poetry as coming from divine inspiration – and conquered a dominant position from then on until the final days of antiquity. In Greek and Roman antiquity, authorial intention is conceptualised as part of the intentional continuum between author, text, context and reader. The literary aspects that this intention is related to are primarily technical and compositional questions in which the author makes choices for which he has to take responsibility and of which he is supposed to be in control. The role of authorial intention on the level of content generally is only a rudimentary one that reflects a broadly shared *doxa* of morals in which all texts, including literature, participate. In this view, authorial intention hardly goes further than tautologies such as: the author says what he meant, and meant what he says. The most explicit Roman version of this concept can be found in Horace.

Authorial intention became and remained for many centuries a concept whose primary function was to make literature part of human activities (as opposed to divine inspiration), a cultural practice for which the actors could be held responsible via the concept of intention. While this does not seem a very individual and sophisticated concept of authorial intention from today's perspective, its importance on the level of the functioning of poetry within antiquity can hardly be overestimated, since our reconstruction has also shown that one must not think too monolithically about authorial intention in antiquity: it was born out of a poetic conflict between a divine poetics of truth and a more secular poetics of fiction.

This summary can be further specified in two regards. First, authorial intention was the tool with which the concept of divinely inspired art could be successfully attacked and eventually dominated over the course of the centuries. It was this poetic rupture at some point before the fifth century BC that shaped the foundation for professionally dealing with literature as an expert. The cradle of the concept of authorial intention must be placed in a process that eventually led to a differentiation of poetry as an art work primarily on the level of composition and form. Second, while the vast majority of critics and scholia in antiquity stick to a more technical view, especially in contexts in which highly valued authors are defended against criticism, by Aristotle and others, more specific views on message come into sight. This will ultimately permit presenting interpretations with plausible individual authorial intentional messages. But when exactly can that individualisation of authorial intention on the content level be triggered? The next two chapters on the long Middle Ages and on the Renaissance will try to answer that question.

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Chapter Two
The standard model of authorial intention in the Middle Ages

From the second half of the twentieth century onwards, there seems to be a growing conviction among literary scholars about the inappropriateness of an intentionalist conception of meaning and interpretation (cf. Danneberg and Müller 1983, 104 et passim). As we have seen, a benchmark role is played in that process by Beardsley and Wimsatt's concept of intentional fallacy with its bottom line that the "intention of the author is neither available nor desirable" (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1946, 468). Therefore it is surprising when in relevant works of medievalists one encounters a *medieval* concept of intention that comes very close to intentional fallacy. Even more so, since Wimsatt himself seems to have been completely unaware of possible allies in the Middle Ages which for him were not a time "of literary theory or criticism" (Wimsatt 1975, 175) at all.

The renowned German medievalist Jan-Dirk Müller for example holds in an article concerning the concept of the author in Latin texts of the early and late Middle Ages that there is no authorial intention outside the text that in any sense might be reconstructed. What does exist, is an intention of the text which its author did not necessarily have to know about (Müller 1995, 20 f.: "Es gibt keine irgend zu eruierende Autorintention jenseits des Textes, wohl eine *intentio* des Textes, von der sein Verfasser nichts wissen musste"). Müller's highlighting of the *"intentio* of the text" at the expense of authorial intention, in combination with the unavailability of any concept of authorial intention outside the text and with raising the possibility of the authorial intention structurally falling short of the meaning that can be taken from the text, makes one wonder whether there is any difference in how scholars in the Middle Ages and how many scholars in the twentieth century think about authorial intention. It seems as if already in the Middle Ages authorial intention was "neither available nor desirable".

Müller is not alone with his view. Mary Carruthers argues in exactly the same direction in her seminal book on memory in the Middle Ages when she writes: "there *is* no extra-textual authorial intention – whatever *intentio* there is is contained in the words of the text" (Carruthers 2008, 235). Some pages further on she makes her view on the medieval concept of intention even more explicit: "Authorial intention in itself is given no more weight than that of any subsequent reader who uses the work in his own meditative composition; the important intention is within the work itself, as its *res*, a cluster of meanings which are only

partially revealed in its original statement" (Carruthers 2008, 237). Such a playing out of authorial intention against the intention to be taken from the text sounds – especially in the context of the argument of this book – so modern that the question arises again whether this might be a projection of twentieth-century theoretical concepts back onto medieval thinking. Yet it is possible that in the Middle Ages something changed radically in comparison with what we have seen in Greek and Roman Antiquity – and then fell from sight again in the ensuing centuries. Therefore, I shall first take a closer look at the arguments Mary Carruthers gives for her view – a view, by the way, that Jan-Dirk Müller explicitly agrees with. After that, in a second step, the most relevant sources of medieval thinking about authorial intention in interpretation will be analysed in order to establish the dominant concept of authorial intention in the Middle Ages from the fifth to the fifteenth century.

Intention of the text versus intention of the author?

A passage towards the end of the second book of Petrarch's *Secretum* plays the central role for Carruther's view on authorial intention in the Middle Ages. The English translation by William H. Draper already gives a short summary of this book in its title: *Petrarch's Secret or The Soul's Conflict with Passion. Three Dialogues between himself and S. Augustine*. The *Secretum* examines Petrarch's faith in three dialogues between himself and Augustine, with also "The Lady Truth" present. In the first dialogue, Augustine has explained to Francesco – by using quite some quotations from Cicero, Virgil, Ovid and others – what he does wrong. Being prone to the world of senses, Francesco neglects what must count most: human mortality. What Francesco should do instead is also beyond doubt: striving for faith with all his will. Within the second of these dialogues, then, Francesco presents an allegoric-ethical interpretation of some verses from the beginning of Vergil's *Aeneid*. There, Juno is heading for help so that Aeneas and the other Trojan refugees at sea will be hindered by a storm from reaching their destination. It is king Aeolus she turns to, and before she gets there and addresses him, Virgil introduces Aeolus in twelve verses as the powerful ruler over the winds who binds their rage with his sceptre and keeps them in a giant cave (*Aeneid* I, 52–63). The core of the interpretation by Francesco is that it is the task of reason to temper fury and other heavy passions, the same way as Aeolus tempers the winds. To which Augustine answers:

> Laudo hec, quibus abundare te video, petice narrationis archana. Sive enim id Virgilius ipse
> sensit, dum scriberet, sive ab omni tali consideratione remotissimus, maritimam his versi-

bus et nil aliud describere voluit tempestatem; hoc tamen, quod de irarum impetu et rationis imperio dixisti, facete satis et proprie dictum puto. (Dotti 1993, II, 16.9 – 10)

I cannot but applaud that meaning which I understand you find hidden in the poet's story, familiar as it is to you; for whether Virgil had this in mind when writing, or whether without any such idea he only meant to depict a storm at sea and nothing else, what you have said about the rush of anger and the authority of reason seems to me expressed with equal wit and truth. (Draper 1977, 102)

From this quote Carruthers (2008, 236 f.) concludes: "the point is that his interpretation is not attributed to any intention of the man, Vergil, but rather to something understood to reside in the text itself". She then continues with the quote from above: "Authorial intention in itself is given no more weight than that of any subsequent reader who uses the work in his own meditative composition; the important intention is within the work itself, as its *res*, a cluster of meanings which are only partially revealed in its original statement" (Carruthers 2008, 237). However, I think there are some reasons to doubt her interpretation.

To start with, if one looks closely at the quote from Petrarch, then the opposition is not, as Carruthers holds, between the author ("the man, Vergil") and the text ("the text itself"), but between two possible intentions of the author (*sive ... sive*). The bottom line of Augustine's judgement is: regardless of whether Virgil intended the one possibility or the other, your interpretation is good. So the interpretation by Francesco is related by Augustine to two possible intentions of Virgil – as opposed to "not attributed to any intention of the man, Vergil". What is more, Augustine nowhere claims the irrelevance of the intention of the author. All he is saying is he approves Francesco's interpretation considering the background of the two possible intentions of Virgil mentioned. So, to phrase it carefully, the quoted passage could be read as: we do not know whether Virgil just wanted to describe a storm or give an allegorical ethical lecture – as opposed to: it does not matter what Virgil thought.

Also the explicit judgment by Augustine on the interpretation by Francesco points in the same direction: *facete satis et proprie dictum puto* ("seems to me expressed with equal wit and truth"). Both *satis* and *proprie* imply a scale and criteria that make a measured relation between text and interpretation possible – but on which level are these criteria situated? On the level of a "res" lying within the text itself, as Carruthers holds; on the level of Virgil's composition and truth; or on the level of Augustine as the didactic teacher who applauds the interpretation by Francesco in a context where Francesco is looking for help, even if Augustine is not completely convinced by the interpretation?

Maybe we will come closer to an answer to these questions if we look at the phrasing with which Francesco has presented his interpretation of the *Aeneid*

passage under scrutiny. After Francesco has elaborated about his suffering, Augustine told him that reason had to guide the lower instincts. Francesco immediately agrees und wants to show to Augustine that he himself has extracted this insight not only from the writings of the philosophers, but also from those of the poets (*quod ut me non tantum ex philosophicis sed ex poeticis etiam scripturis elicuisse pervideas*, II, 16.5). Looking closely at the exact words Francesco uses to give his ensuing interpretation, one can hardly avoid the impression that Francesco obviously believes that he is giving his interpretation in the name of the author, Virgil. All the verb constructions in Francesco's interpretation in the Second Book of *Secretrum* (cf. II, 16.5 – 8) refer to Virgil, and it is Virgil's view he tries to reconstruct: from *posse denotari* ("he may have meant to denote", Draper 1977, 100 f.) via *dedit intellegi* ("he has given us to understand he meant"), *quasi diceret* ("It is as though he said", Draper 1977 101) to *ut* [...] *constaret* [...] *addidit* ("However, lest any one should miss the truth [...] he adds the line", Draper 1977, 102). The grammatical subject of *posse denotari, dedit, diceret* and *addidit* is always Virgil.

It is interesting, by the way, that in a recent German translation from 2004 the Virgilian grammatical subject is deleted in nearly all these places: "Was sind Länder anders als" (what are countries other than), "dass dies über die Seele und den Zorn [...] gesagt wird" (that this is said about the Soul and the Fury), "bedeuten doch die Berge" (yet mountains mean). In this context, the only remaining reference to Virgil in that translation ("Als wollte Vergil damit sagen", as if Virgil wanted to say,) becomes more like a subjective impression of the interpreter, not an objectivating argument aiming at establishing consensus between an interpretation and an authority, in this case Virgil (cf. Hausmann 2004, 304 f.). This recent translation not only deviates in these places from the Latin, but also from some others I randomly checked: from the British 1911 translation by Draper, from the Dutch (cf. Tazelaar 1990, 89 f.), from a recent Italian (Dotti 1993, 109 – 111) and from an earlier German one (cf. Hefele 1910, 72 f.). Concepts of intention not only seem to steer interpretation, but also translation – but that would be another book.

In order to get back to our main argument: at least as far as Francesco himself is concerned, he does not show any signs of a separation between the intention of the author on the one hand and on the other an intention residing in a text, as its *res*. On the contrary: he seems eager to legitimate his interpretation with an explicit reference to the intention of Virgil. This way he structurally gives much more importance to authorial intention than Carruthers suggests. Neither in Francesco's reaction to Augustine's "either ... or" summary, nor in Augustine's reaction to Francesco's interpretation are there any indications for one party wondering about some different conception of authorial intention in the

mind and practices of the other. Holding this in mind, we cannot but attribute to both a model of interpretation that integrates authorial intention. Indeed Augustine seems to be saying: I do not know whether this was the intention of Virgil, but I can approve of your interpretation. Whether the criterion for the judgment of I-Augustine on Francesco's interpretation ("expressed with equal wit and truth") is taken from Virgil or from the performance of his pupil with regard to Virgil, must remain open at this point.

A final argument can be taken from the *Secretum* as a whole that contradicts Carruthers' (2008, 237) view that "Virgil's intent" should be "unimportant": the high authority ascribed to Virgil in other places in the text. When for example in the preface to the dialogues Francesco encounters personified Truth, he addresses her with a quote form Virgil's *Aeneid* (I, 327–328; cf. Draper 1977, 2). And when the second dialogue with Augustine – the one with the allegorical interpretation of the winds – ends with Francesco very much looking forward to the third, then he decorates his pleasure with a quote from Virgil's *Eclogues*, saying that God's blessing rests on uneven numbers (*numero Deus impare gaudet*) – a quote from "my beloved Virgil" (*Virgilius meus*; Draper 1977, 106). Francesco's evident implicit and explicit admiration for Virgil makes it very unlikely that Petrarch held the view that interpretations of texts by Virgil should *not* regard – let alone: disregard – the intentions of Virgil, or that Virgil's intention would *not* be of any more weight than that "of any subsequent reader" (see above).

If there is any indication of criticism of interpretation on the part of Augustine to be found in this dialogue, then it might be with regard to allegorical interpretation in general. Such a criticism looms at the horizon when one places the passage from Petrarch on the winds from the *Aeneid* in the context of the *sortes Virgilianae*. These "Virgilian lots" refer to the widespread habit in antiquity and early Christianity of finding out the will of the Gods or God by arbitrarily pointing to specific passages of authoritative books, here: those of Virgil. According to Richard Hamilton, however, since the fourteenth century the *sortes Virgilianae* no longer belong in the context of sources of truth, but in one of an "amusing scholarly pastime" (Hamilton 1993, 331). In this light, it is possible to hear some bemusement in Augustine's applause quoted above (*Laudo hec, quibus abundare te video, petice narrationis archana)*, translated by Draper (1977, 102) with: "I cannot but applaud that meaning which I understand you find hidden in the poet's story, familiar as it is to you" (cf. Mann 1984, 31). The translation by Hefele points more explicitly into the same direction, when he translates the open Latin *sive … sive* (whether Virgil wanted either … or…) into scepticism on Augustine's part against Francesco's allegoric interpretation. According to Hefele's translation, Augustine answers explicitly that this is probably just a description of storms at sea: "Fraglich ist freilich, ob Vergil mit diesen

Versen solche Gedanken ausdrücken wollte, oder ob ihm diese nicht ganz ferne lagen. Er wollte wohl nur einen Meeressturm schildern [...]" (Hefele 1910, 73) – which is a very free translation compared with the Latin. Looked at this way, Augustine's agreement could be said to have a clear didactical component: encourage the student who is on the right path, and trust that his further development will make him see for himself the problem of allegorising too easily.

But whether this passage should be read ironically or not: neither from the quoted passage itself, nor from the passage within the text as a whole, nor from the position of Virgil in cultural life around 1350 can we take any indication that Petrarch held a concept of interpretation in which authorial intention played a minor or even irrelevant role. Again, it has turned out that scholars tend to project backwards in time what is regarded as contemporary *state of the art* concepts of intention, despite signals from the historical texts and authors under interpretation that point in other directions. The medievalists quoted above definitely do not stand alone in this regard. Just to give two more examples: an interpretation of the *Secretum* passage very similar to the one by Carruthers' and playing textual intention against authorial intention is given by C.E. Quillen (1998, 207). More generally, the renowned German scholar Joachim Bumke has connected his principal appeal to pay attention to the historical conditions of medieval literary texts with the same principal plea to do so without looking at (supposed) authorial intent (cf. Bumke 1997, 114). This way, research into the medieval concept of authorial intention stops even before it has started. If one tries to avoid such projections and normative obstacles, which concept can then be reconstructed from the most important medieval sources concerning authorial intention in interpretation?

The standard model of authorial intention

Writing and interpreting written texts in the early Middle Ages means: the cloister as the place of reading, interpreting and writing; Latin as the language in which it happens; and Christianity as the framework for all practices. Therefore one could start off from a closer look at Christian religion and the role of the author in interpretation there. Generally speaking, there are quite some passages that give humans the role of being just an instrument of God in the production of sacred texts. An exemplary source in this regard is the commentary on the Bible Book of *Job* by Church Father Saint Gregory the Great. Towards the end of the sixth century Gregory wrote in his *Moralia in Iob:*

Sed quis haec scripserit, valde supervacue quaeritur, cum tamen auctor libri Spiritus sanctus fideliter credatur. Ipse igitur haec scripsit, qui scribenda dictavit. Ipse scripsit, qui et in illius opere inspirator exstitit, et per scribentis vocem imitanda ad nos ejus facta transmisit. Si magni cuiusdam viri susceptis epistolis legeremus verba, sed quo calamo fuissent scripta quaereremus, ridiculum profecto esset epistolarum auctorem scire sensumque cognoscere, sed quali calamo earum verba impressa fuerint indagare. Cum ergo rem cognoscimus, quia scriptorem quaerimus, quid aliud agimus, nisi legentes litteras, de calamo percontamur? (Migne 1984, I 1)

But the question of who wrote this is rather redundant, because for those who believe, the Holy Ghost is the author [*auctor*] of this book. The real writer of what has been written is the one who dictated to the one who wrote; the real writer is the one who inspired the work of the one writing, and who recommended to us Job's deeds for imitation via the words of the one writing. When we receive the letter of a great man and read his words in it, but then ask, with which pen the words have been written, this will be ridiculous: to know the author [*auctorem scire*] and to understand the meaning of the letter, but still to enquire with which pen the works have been laid down. So when we know the meaning [*rem*], is then asking about the writer [*scriptorem*] not the same as asking about the pen when we read letters? (*my translation, RG*)

After this passage, Gregory takes back parts of his comparison when he acknowledges that in the Book of *Job* there are traces of the author Job – as someone who has become a purified person through his struggle with his sufferings (cf. Minnis 1984, 37). But the basic instrumental understanding of authorship concerning sacred texts can be legitimated with many authoritative quotes, for example referencing Matthew 10:20: "for it will be not you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you". Accordingly, Peter Lombard (who died in 1160 AD) presents David in his commentary on the Psalms as a "trumpet" of the Holy Ghost (cf. Minnis and Scott 1991, 105). The parallels we saw above regarding the ancient Greek model of the Gods speaking through the poet – as in the magnetism metaphor in Plato's *Ion* – or regarding the older Jewish tradition of prophesies visible in the "Oven of Akhnai" story of the Talmud, are obvious: the sacred version in which humans are only instruments seems to have been present in many of the oldest religious conceptualisations of writing and interpreting we have seen so far. And, as the Greek and Jewish historical context touched upon above has shown, it was against the background of this "poetics of truth" that the outlines of more secular practices can be drawn. This also goes for the Christian version.

The contours of a secular medieval concept of authorial intention are already visible in the above quote from Gregory, especially in his comparison. It would make no sense to ask about the pen with which someone wrote a letter if we know the author and understand the letter (*epistolarum auctorem scire sensumque cognoscere*). What Gregory mentions here in one stroke is "knowing of

the author" and "understanding the text", as if these two are inseparable. For Gregory, to have contextual knowledge about the author plays an important role in the understanding of secular writings. But does his brief and implicit formulation allow to add, from our perspective: as far as secular writings are concerned, "knowing the author" and "understanding the text" means knowing the intentions with which he wrote the letter? There is quite some circumstantial evidence that suggests a positive answer to that question.

The most explicit indications concerning a secular concept of authorial intention in the Middle Ages can be taken from the so-called *accessus ad auctores*, the "introductions to authors" – an encyclopaedia of authors for beginners, one might say. Since the end of the eleventh century these played a central role in the medieval teaching of language and literature when introducing students into reading Classical authors. The origin of this genre is usually located in the Virgil commentaries of the fourth century, such as the one by Servius discussed above. The importance of this sort of texts can be taken from their massive use and the differentiation in the course of history, including their application to vernacular authors still in the fifteenth century (cf. Minnis 1984, 15–29; Minnis and Scott 1991, 1–11; Wogan-Browne 1999, 17, 64–72 et passim).

As we have seen in Servius, authorial intention did play an explicit role in the Classical predecessor of the *accessus*. The model used by Servius is not hard to recognise when at the beginning of the twelfth century Conrad of Hirsau writes down a dialogue on authors between a teacher and his student, his *Dialogus Super Auctores*. In it, the teacher explains that the scholars of antiquity asked seven questions when interpreting texts: who the author was, what was the title of the work, to which kind (*qualitas*) it belonged, the intention of the author, the composition and the number of books, and the exposition (*expositio*) of the text. Contemporary interpreters however would concentrate on four aspects: object, authorial intention, aim, and the domain of philosophy to which the work belongs. At least conceptually, authorial intention obviously plays a role in the medieval handling of interpretation. But we can also trace it easily in the practices. In Conrad's introductions to such authors as Juvenal, Homer, Statius, Persius or Virgil we always find explicit remarks concerning their authorial intention (cf. Huygens 1970, 71–131; Minnis and Scott 1991, 39–64). This is also the case in the twenty representative *accessus* chosen for the anthology of *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism:* fourteen of those talk about *intentio auctoris* (or variations like *intentio scribentis*) and six about *intentio operis* (or its variations). The kind of intentions mentioned are rather general, either ethically in the sense of showing the path to the right faith, or more rhetorically-technically, such as showing how to write in a good way (cf. Minnis and Scott 1991, 15–39). At the same time, neither in the kind of intentions, nor in any other way can a

systematic differentiation between authorial intention and intention of the text be reconstructed, as far as I can see. In other words: the terms "intentio auctoris" and "intentio operis" cannot be described as a complementary distribution, as the linguists would have it. As we assumed already on the basis of the quote from Gregory above, in medieval thinking *intentio auctoris* and *intentio operis* seem to be part of a conceptual unity, in which using the one must be understood as metonymically using the other.

 One might object at this point that the exchangeability between the two concepts could also be read as an indication that *intentio auctoris* simply means what the signs on the parchment, papyrus or paper mean, i.e. the intention of the text. It might just be a synonym for *intentio operis*, which only "indirectly" points towards their physical origin by some writer, as for example Müller (1995, 20) holds. Yet, when one looks at the extensive and explicit use of the word *auctor* in *intentio auctoris* and in didactic books in general, that does not seem likely. Why should one so often talk about *intentio auctoris* when what one means is nothing but *intentio operis* in the sense of a meaning residing in the text, a *res?* Especially when from the commentary by Boethius on Porphyry onwards, it was perfectly possibly to do so and talk only about *intentio operis* (cf. Minnis 1984, 18), if that was what one meant. But maybe more convincing is the argument that the actual biographical information in the *accessus* does not confirm that *intentio auctoris* might be a synonym for *intentio operis*. Every *accessus* tries to give at least some biographical data, and these can hardly be summarised in general as scarce or irrelevant (cf. Müller 1995, 21). Several introductions not only tell us rudimentary facts such as the author's name, where the author came from, which further works he wrote etc., but these *accessus* also do their best to combine the biography with general authorial intention in a plausible way.

We can read for example in the Sedulius *accessus* about the life of this author of the fifth century AD that he was a pagan who studied philosophy in Italy in the times of Theodosius and Valentinus: "Then he was converted and baptised by a Macedonian priest, and came to Achaia, where he composed this book to demolish the erroneous teaching of the pagans" (Huygens 1970, 28 f.; transl. Minnis and Scott 1991, 19). The combination of the biography of a convert with the central message of Sedulius' *Paschale Carmen* in the sentence quoted above is taken up in the next sentence, stating explicitly that the *intentio* of the text was the destruction of pagan religion and unfolding the path to true faith, which, by the way, in the introduction to this *accessus* ran under the heading of authorial intention (*intentio scribentis*) (cf. Minnis and Scott 1991, 20).

An even more explicit intertwining of biography and intention can be found in the *accessus* concerning Ovid's letters from exile. First we read that the *inten-*

tio auctoris is to convince the recipient to help a friend in need, after which the circumstances of the banning are explained in the context of Ovid's longing to return to Rome (cf. Huygens 1970, 34 f.; Minnis and Scott 1991, 25 f.). In a similar way, the *accessus* on Cicero combines biography, context and intention: first, the prehistory of the text is related, beginning with Cato's formative years in Greece, his return to Rome, the many *sententiae* he uttered in the Senate but never wrote down. Then, after his death, we read that his enemies tried to destroy his legacy, and how his relative Brutus tried to prevent them from doing so. Brutus asked his friend Cicero, whose abilities in the domain of logic he was aware of, to confirm (*confirmare*) Cato's *sententiae* and so make the tricks of his enemies fail. Because Cicero wanted to fulfil this wish, the *accessus* continues, the author (Cicero, that is) had two *intentiones:* his main intention (*principalis intentio*) had been to confirm Cato's *sententiae* and to refute Cato's enemies – another intention (*alia intentio*) however had been to bring his readers teaching and delight. So next to a Classical, general ethical intention, inspired by Horace and his *Ars Poetica* (see above), the *accessus* articulates a more context-bound intention (cf. Huygens 1970, 44 f.; Minnis and Scott 1991, 30).

Against the backdrop of our argument so far, the examples given indicate a continuity between author and text in production and interpretation. Within this continuity, the outlines of an authorial intention outside the text – *ante opus*, before the work, to use the term of Aelius Donatus from the fourth century AD (cf. Brummer 1912, 11; Minnis 1984, 15) – are clearly discernible. Still, authorial intention is always presented in close combination with the work and the context. Therefore, the impression we can take from our examples is that authorial intention, the intention to be attributed to the text and the context of both are conceptualised as a kind of inseparable unity. By the same token, there are quite some texts in the Middle Ages that make this continuity explicit.

Exemplary in this regard is the *Didascalicon* (VI, 11) from around 1127 by Hugh of Saint Victor, whose appeal "was to be echoed over and over again by the theologians of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries" (Minnis and Scott 1991, 67; cf. Illich 1996). In terms of the present book, the following quote contains what can be called the standard model of authorial intention:

'Cum igitur divinos libros legimus, in tanta multitudine verorum intellectuum, qui de paucis eruuntur verbis, et sanitate catholicae fidei muniuntur, id potissimum diligamus, quod certum apparuerit eum sensisse quem legimus. Si autem hoc latet, id certe quod circumstantia scripturae non impedit, et cum sana fide concordat. Si autem et scripturae circumstantia pertractari ac discuti non potest, saltem id solum quod fides sana praescribit. Aliud est enim quid potissimum scriptor senserit non dinoscere, aliud a regula pietatis errare. Si utrumque vitetur, perfectae se habet fructus legentis. Si vero utrumque vitari non potest,

etsi voluntas scriptoris incerta sit, sanae fidei congruam non inutile est eruisse sententiam.'
(qtd. from Offergeld 1997, 398)

'When, therefore, we read the Divine Books, in such a great multitude of true concepts elicited from a few words and fortified by the sound rule of the catholic faith, let us prefer above all what it seems certain that the man we are reading thought. But if this is not evident, let us certainly prefer what the circumstances of the writing do not disallow and what is consonant with sound faith. But if even the circumstances of the writing cannot be explored and examined, let us at least prefer only what sound faith prescribes. For it is one thing not to see what the writer himself thought, another to stray from the rule of piety. If both these things are avoided, the harvest of the reader is a perfect one. But if both cannot be avoided, then, even though the will of the writer may be doubtful, it is not useless to have elicited a deeper meaning consonant with sound faith.' (qtd. from Taylor 1991, 150)

The seminal authority of this passage can be explained to a large extent by the fact that Hugh presents here a quote in quotation marks, to be precise one from Augustine, written towards the end of his life (he died in 430 AD) from *De Genesi ad Litteram Libri Duodecim* (I, 21), on the literal meaning of Genesis in twelve books. At the centre of the quote is clearly a pledge for an orientation towards authorial intention when interpreting. More specifically, the interpreter should take into account what appears certain to have been the opinion of the one we are reading (*quod certum apparuerit eum sensisse quem legimus*). What Hugh/Augustine do establish here is a model of interpretation with a clear hierarchy and authorial intention on top: follow authorial intention is what we as reader first and foremost must chose to do (*id potissimum diligamus*).

The following instructions show that this authorial intention must be placed within the intentional continuum – familiar by now from antiquity – that includes the text, the specific circumstances of writing and the general context, too. For, according to Hugh/Augustine, it can happen that we do not know the intention of the author – then the interpreter should take into account the special circumstances he knows about writing the text (*circumstantia scripturae*). If nothing is known about those, too – i.e., if one does not have any information on biography, information for or against what or whom one has written, at whose request or command etc. – then the minimal request for interpretation is to be in tune with Christian faith (*sana fide*). In other words: the model of interpretation that rises from these lines is one with authorial intention as the guideline for interpretation. This authorial intention can be put into words and can be distinguished from the text and the context, but, normally speaking, authorial intention does form a continuity and a unity with the intention that can be taken out of the text, out of the specific (biographical and textual) and the general context, and with what the reader regards as the intention of author and text.

The model that has been described above with regard to Holy Books (*divinos libros*) is extended in a more general way by Augustine in *De Utilitate Credendi* (On the Advantage of Believing) where he systematically tries to make a distinction between authorial intention and intention reconstructed from the text by the reader. Augustine is most explicit on this difference when he distinguishes three sorts of typical errors in reading. In the first category of errors, one holds something for true that is not, although the author himself had presented another view that was the right and true one. In the second category, both author and reader take something wrong to be true. Finally, the third type is when someone reading a text by someone else comes to an insight that is true, an insight which the one who wrote the text has not had himself (*Tertium est, cum ex alieno scripto intelligitur aliquid veri, cum hoc ille, qui scripsit, non intellexerit*; Hoffmann 1992, 104). Augustine does not deny a certain usefulness (*utilitas*) of this third type and the result of the interpretation is, looked at in isolation, sound (*totus legendi fructus est integer*), but still: it remains an error (*tria sunt erroris, quibus homines errant, cum aliquid legunt*, Hoffmann 1992, 104 ff.). Authorial intention, existing independently from an erroneous interpretation, remains the guideline for a non-erroneous interpretation by the competent reader in Augustine's model.

This guideline can be compared – my words, not Augustine's – with the role of the pole star in navigation. Of course Polaris is sometimes hard to find, it may be invisible due to a cloudy night, one may doubt whether one has taken the right star for it, one even may have taken the wrong one to navigate with: all these problems do not undermine this model of navigation as such. The same goes for Augustine and Hugh of Saint Victor concerning the guideline of authorial intention in interpretation – as it would for medieval thinking on authorial intention in general, it seems. Even if one has made an error in determining the North Star and despite this error, more or less by chance, in the end finds the harbour one has been looking for, this does not establish a new or alternative model for navigation – though a safe arrival is always a pleasure for the one travelling.

The robustness and validity of the standard model is also shown by the fact that, to stay with the comparison, safe arrival in the harbour can obviously be taken as indicating that this was the sailor's intention, and that on his way he used the pole star correctly. Or, more literally speaking: the standard model obviously implies that it can be taken, step by step, in the opposite direction than Hugh/Augustine used it for explicitly. The "Christianisation" of Cato – who died before the birth of Christ – in the Middle Ages is a case in point. The glosses and commentaries on the *Disticha Catonis* from the thirteenth and fourteenth century not only show an interpretation of the text in accordance with Christian faith, but some try to do this by making Cato himself their ally, as Richard Hazelton

has shown. Cato's *carmina* are turned into *carmina sacrorum*, songs of the saints, or into Holy Scripture, *Scripture Sancte*, while adding that this was the better interpretation as well as the intention of the author (*lectura melior et auctoris intentio*; cf. Hazelton 1957, 168). Even if Augustine would have judged this as an error of type three – the undisputed dominance of authorial intention and of the intentional continuity is underlined by this example once more. Errors, faults, lack of knowledge and ambiguity are not seen as a problem of the model or interpretation reconstructed above – only as problems of special cases of interpretation.

A different accent within the standard model in the later Middle Ages

The medieval standard model of interpretation in the explicit version by Hugh of Saint Victor (based on Augustine), conceptualises authorial intention as a mental relation of an individual towards something outside itself. This relation is established in using a written text whose production is situated within the Christian faith as general context. The general context is also the frame for the reception of the text and authorial intention is the most important guideline for interpretation. Therefore, in regular cases, authorial intention is conceptualised as part of an intentional continuity between author, text, context and reader. In that sense authorial intention is always intertwined with the text. This model seems stable and dominant during the long Middle Ages concerning understanding and interpreting what is written.

Accordingly, when he asks what the authorial intention of Aesop from around 600 BC was, the already quoted Conrad of Hirsau answers to his student at the end of the eleventh century:

> Ex ipsa materia patet auctoris intentio, quia per hoc opus variis compactum figmentis voluit et delectare hominumque naturam quasi rationis expertem ex brutorum animantium collatione ad se revocare. Causa finalis lectionis fructus est. (Huygens 1970, 86)

> The author's intention is clearly seen from his choice of subject-matter. For through this work, assembled as it is from various invented stories, he wanted to delight and also to recall irrational human nature to its true self by a comparison with brute beasts. The final cause is the profit (*fructus*) to be derived from reading the book. (Minnis and Scott 1991, 48)

The quote resembles what we have read in Horace, not only regarding the general aiming at teaching and delight, but also in the intentional inseparability of authorial intention and subject choice, the way of arranging the text, and how

readers interpret the text. Albertus Magnus expresses about 200 years later in his *Summa Theologiae* the same continuity even more briefly when he writes "intentio dicentis expressa in littera, est litteralis sensus" (Borgnet 1895, 28) – "the intention of the speaker as expressed in the letter is the literal sense" (Minnis 1984, 73). Carruthers (2008, 237) misses the point when she characterises this quote as a "tautology". It is not a tautology in the sense of a needless repetition of the same, but the careful expression of a concept of interpretation in which two intentional entities can be distinguished in principle. Both, *intentio auctoris* and *intentio operis*, form part of an interpretive continuum in which – in regular cases – they point in the same direction, with authorial intention as the guideline for interpretation. Aiming at reconstructing "the intention of the speaker as expressed in the letter" and calling this "literal sense" (which is what Albertus Magnus says) is something completely different than aiming at reconstructing the literal sense as expressed in the letter and adding: Albertus Magnus calls this tautologically "authorial intention", but it remains "literal sense" (which is basically what Carruthers says).

In the same sense, Albertus Magnus' student Thomas Aquinas follows his teacher, Augustine and others, when he distinguishes in his commentary on Paul's *Epistle to the Romans* between commentators who write in accordance with the intention of the apostle and those who deviate from it – and dismisses the latter option (cf. Cai 1953, 59; Minnis 1984, 73). Instead of adding more examples, at this point of the argument it might suffice to state that to the best of my knowledge, I have found no counter-evidence in the Latin sources between the first *accessus* and Petrarch that doubts the validity of the standard model as reconstructed here.

I would argue the same concerning the vernaculars in the late Middle Ages. The case of Reginald Pecock, bishop of St Asaph in Wales (1444–1450) and then of Chichester in West Sussex can serve as exemplary since we can trace explicit remarks about authorial intention in interpretation in his defence against the accusation of heresy. In his trial – which led to openly renouncing and burning his works in 1457 – Pecock defended himself with arguments that were presented as a general guideline for interpretation:

> Ferthirmore, sithen an errour or heresye is not the ynke writen neithir the voice spokun, but it is the meenyng or the undirstonding of the writer or speker signified bi thilk ynke writen or bi thilk voice spokun, and also nevere into this daie was enye man holde jugid or condempnid for an errer or an heretyk but if it were founde that his meenyng and undirstonding whiche he had in his writyng or in his speking were errour or heresie, therfore Y desire and aske, for charite, that noon harder or hastier holding or juging be made anentis me. (Wogan-Browne 1999, 99)

According to Pecock, it is not the interpretation of the ink – we might say: the literal text taken by itself – that should be the basis for an interpretation. It should be grounded on the ideas and the intention of the author (*his meenyng and undirstonding*), he argues. And how can this authorial intention be reconstructed? By reading the incriminated passages in the context of the text as a whole and in the context of the other writings of the author:

> And to knowe what myn undirstonding and meenyng is and schal be in wordis of my writingis, Englische and Latyn, certis, oon ful goode weie is to attende to the circumstauncis in the processis [i. e., *in the context of the argument, RG*] whiche Y make there bifore and aftir, and whiche Y make in othire placis of my writingis. (ibid.)

Authorial intention should be the guideline for interpretation, based on an intentional continuum between the incriminated passage, the text as a whole, and the context of other writings of the same author. Even the explicit reference to the model by Augustine is added by Pecock in the end: "For bi this weie Seynt Austyn leerned what was the right meenyng in the wordis of Holi Scripture, as he seith in his book of 83 Questiouns, the [lii] questioun" (Wogan-Browne 1999, 99).

Apparently, the Pecock case can be taken as another exemplary demonstration of the medieval standard model of authorial intention in interpretation. What makes it interesting for the argument of the present book is firstly that it indicates how the conceptual continuity of the dominating model of interpretation is transferred from texts in Latin or Greek to texts in the vernacular. But this shift has consequences. Immediately following his legitimation of the standard model via Augustine, Pecock adds: "And if this weie be not for alle placis of my writings sufficient, recours may be had to my persoon for to aske of me while Y am in this liif." (ibid.) Just follow the standard model of interpretation, and it will turn out that my writings are compatible with Christian faith, Pecock holds. And for those who still doubt it, I will happily explain this myself, he adds. This recourse to authorial intention as something a living author might tell the interpreter has no counterpart in the classical sources, as far as I can see: in interpretation, they generally dealt with authors who could no longer be asked.

Obviously, the position of authorial intention as pole star within the standard model is used by Pecock as a tool to claim more space for specific individual intentions on the content level: here, Pecock's theological ideas which attract the criticism of the Church but which he defends to be compatible with Christian faith. Pecock makes strategic use of the standard model and its primary orientation on authorial intention to legitimise the living author as the best interpreter of his own writing. He departs from the established interpretative convention of

the author as a guideline in interpretation to defend a living writer whose authority is challenged. Looking at the trial this way, the use of the standard model in the Middle Ages with regard to the vernacular shows here its potential to function as an instrument leading to more individual messages – in comparison with the more general ones we saw in antiquity.

But from our present perspective, it also becomes clear that Pecock is only preparing the ground for a tendency towards more individual content in literary writing and interpretation. For what he does in the first place is to emphasise what has *not* been his "entent" (Wogan-Browne 1999, 99), hereby using the term that was in use to translate *intentio* into Middle English since the glosses on the Psalms by Richard Rolles in the early fourteenth century (cf. Minnis 1984, 190 f.). His intention was *not* to be against faith and God's laws. What Pecock did not do was stress his own personal view and defend it. The space for individual positions in the fifteenth century in Britain is clearly still limited in writing and interpretation.

However, this preliminary step towards more individualisation of authorial intention in the medieval standard model is not a rare exception. As we have seen, the prototype of the *accessus ad auctores* often thematised biographical elements and intertwined them with text, context and Christian faith. In the later Middle Ages then, the genre stood at the cradle of the growing interest in Biblical authors such as David or Salomon as humans made of flesh and blood, too. According to the Yale medievalist Alastair Minnis, the most important reason for this development was the reception of Aristotle in Europe from the thirteenth century onwards – as referred to briefly in Chapter One. Especially Aristotle's differentiation between primary intention (God as *causa efficiens*, as unmoved mover) and secondary intention (the human author inspired by God) offered the instruments that were used to shape more space for specific views of the individual authors on the content level (cf. Minnis 1984, 5, 28 f., 72–117). A telling example of this shift is Bonaventura's *Kohelet* commentary *Prooemium commentarii in Ecclesiasten* from the middle of the thirteenth century. Bonaventura defines Salomon's intention as articulated explicitly at the end of his book: to live in fear of God. Bonaventura continues: everything compatible with this intention is said by Salomon himself, everything that is not compatible, Salomon has made other persons say (cf. Minnis 1984, 111).

Similar indications of authorial individuality can be discerned at the level of the secular production of texts, too. One could think of the chivalric romance as an example, traditionally weaving together secular elite ethics, religion, spectacle and humour (cf. van Oostrom 2006, 320 et passim). At the centre of this genre was, until the end of the twelfth century, not the individual view of an author, but serving the norms and values of the elite recipients at the courts and in

the cities (cf. Meves 1976, 98 et passim). From the thirteenth century onwards, however, one finds more and more "explicit self-inclusions" of the authors in their texts (cf. Kimmelman 1999, 235). Although authors such as Rudolf von Ems – writing in the first half of the thirteenth century – still claim to be inspired by God, they insist at the same time on explicitly stressing their own good intentions, as for example in the epilogue of Rudolf's first piece of work, *Der guote Gêrhart* (cf. Asher 1962, 231; Coxon 2001). Similarly, in England around 1400, authors such as John Gower tried to steer the moral reception of their manuscripts with prologues (cf. Minnis 1984, 177 f.) and Geoffrey Chaucer used the exegetical function of the notion *entent* in order to claim a specific intention for all of his work in the vernacular (cf. Copeland 1991, 186–188).

I hope I have made my point: during the Middle Ages and especially from the thirteenth century onwards, conceptual instruments were available that might be used for shifting the standard model towards more individual messages. These were basically (1) the standard model with the author as guideline in interpretation, (2) the extension of this model towards the vernacular and by this to living authors and their intentions, and, (3) in this context, using the differentiated Aristotelian conceptional apparatus of intentional interpretation. In principle, this conceptual apparatus could trigger off a tendency in the direction of sharp individual distinctions on the intentional level.

Summarising, the standard model includes an intentional continuity between author, text, context and reader, with the author as primary point of orientation. It became dominant from the fifth to the fifteenth century in writing and interpreting. Its conceptual plausibility for contemporaries was not affected by cases in which they did not have any information about authorial intention or if their information was ambiguous: these special cases did not challenge the model as such. Errors, mistakes, lack of knowledge or deceit may play a role in interpretation. But in the regular course of things, determining one component of this continuity carefully means having reconstructed all the others – and the result was in principle regarded as the intention of the author, which the interpreter aimed at. A playing out of authorial intention against intention taken from the text is not to be found anywhere in the relevant sources, let alone a conceptual opposition in which authorial intention might be seen as irrelevant or only as second best. This model remained dominant during the shift from writing in Latin to writing more and more in the vernacular in the later Middle Ages. In that process indications of a change towards more individualisation in medieval interpretation and writing are visible from the thirteenth century onwards. Authorial intention of *living* authors as a guideline in interpretation can be seen as an important tool to make this process possible. But the indications of an actual use in that direction are sporadic.

Reviewing our argument in the first two chapters, the conceptual foundations for the models of authorial intention have turned out to be strikingly robust for 2000 years, from Greek Antiquity via Rome to the fifteenth century, despite all major changes in history. Secular human responsibility – in opposition to Godly inspiration – is at the basis of the first type of authorial intention in interpretation that has been reconstructed here. At the conceptual core of this type is the intentional unity between the author, text, context and reader: in regular cases, getting one is getting all the others. Nevertheless, shifts have occurred within this type. One, a shift from the level of form, composition, genre, and collective moral towards more attention being paid to the content level and individual views; two, and closely connected to the former, a shift towards a relative hierarchisation within intentional continuity with the author as the focus in interpretation from around 400 AD onwards. These shifts from the Classical to the standard model seem to be intertwined with the ideological and educational contexts in which they functioned.

While ideological and educational continuity, despite all differences, seems to have dominated the relationship between ancient Greece and ancient Rome, as far as our model of intention in interpretation is concerned, this was different from around 400 AD onwards. The birth and rise of Christianity as – compared to Latinity – an alternative system of faith led to a constellation in which the homogeneity of collective moral beliefs was no longer a given, as it had been to a much higher degree in the writings of, let us say, Plato, Aristotle, or Horace. In the context of competing worldviews, the question of which position authors take is less self-evident and it receives significantly more relevance for interpretation, too. Against this backdrop, one might hold that Augustine, located at the juncture between Classical Rome and the Christian Middle Ages, is writing in an ideologically less homogeneous world than 400 years earlier. This ideological heterogeneity lends at least some plausibility to a shift away from the Classical concept towards a more central role for authorial intention as the pole star in interpretation. There is no explicit evidence in the sources for a causal connection between competing worldviews on the one hand and the rise of the standard model with the author as primary point of orientation on the other. But I hope this speculative thought will have made the reader at least curious about what happens with concepts of intention around the time of a similar clash of faith systems, that is: around the splitting up of Christianity from the sixteenth century onwards. This will be discussed in Chapter Three.

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Chapter Three
Sharpening the edges of the standard model of authorial intention in the Renaissance

As the preceding chapters have shown, the basic concept of authorial intention in interpretation has been fundamentally stable over hundreds of years from the fifth century BC far into the fifteenth century AD – despite all major ruptures in political structures from Greek city states via Hellenism to the Roman Empire and beyond. Someone teaching about the *Iliad* in a Greek polis in the fifth century BC and then all of a sudden finding himself in a Latin school in the fourteenth century AD in the Netherlands would notice many differences, but not regarding how his colleague dealt with intention in the interpretation of, lets us say, Homer or Virgil. Like him, his colleague would start with reading the words on the page, explain them, add context and knowledge where thought necessary, and assume that the author had written what he intended to write, concerning genre and form. With regard to content, both would find many fragments of knowledge and morality in the text at hand. In regular cases both teachers would assume the concept of an intentional continuity of text, context, author and reader. If at all, this continuity can only be disturbed because of corruption in transmission or because of a "nap of Homer" (or Virgil). But such a disturbance would have been the exception: the general benevolence towards the classical authorities would have left little room for criticism. Amongst a rather homogenous readership concerned with the interpretation of texts, this benevolence would make teachers and critics tend more towards defending established authors against unjust or maybe even unfair criticism.

Looking the other way in time with the argument of the present book in mind, one might predict even more intentional continuity to come, using Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine's *From Humanism to Humanities* as an argument. Behind Renaissance western culture and societies they see "the legacy and the example of an idealised Rome, and Cicero, perfect orator" (Grafton and Jardine 1986, 220). Similarly, Classical rhetorical theory has been characterised as "the terrain onto which the Renaissance inevitably projected itself" (Dunn 1994, 1). If the rhetoric of antiquity is the compass by which the Renaissance production and reception of speech and texts sailed, it is most likely that the standard model of authorial intention in interpretation will prevail during the Renaissance, too.

Leaning on antiquity: Continuities in concepts of intention

Many examples that confirm this expectation can be taken from Ian Maclean's seminal work on *Interpretation and Meaning in the Renaissance* (1992). Concerning legal interpretation – the domain with the most outspoken views on intention in interpretation in the Renaissance – Alessandro Turamini for example shows in his *De Legibus* (On laws, 1590) a perfect illustration of the concept of intentional continuity. For him, the function of the words of the law is to "make the sense of the law and the intention of the legislator visible" ("nec verba legis existimanda sunt lex, nisi quatenus sensum legis et legislatoris voluntatem manifestant", qtd. from Maclean 1992, 88). The relation between the meaning of the text of the law (*ratio*) and the intention (*mens*) of the lawmaker is conceptualised as communicating vessels which under regular circumstances allow for knowledge about the level in all parts of the system, even if the observer has a clear view on one vessel only.

This view on intention was widely spread. One can find it already in the writings of influential jurists as early as Bartolus de Saxoferrato (1313–1357), but also in publications that did not make their way into contemporary judicial discussions such as those of the Jesuit philosopher Francisco Suarez. His *De Legibus* (Coimbra, 1612) was reprinted several times though apparently never quoted by contemporaries, but he shared the same view on intentional continuity. For Suarez, there is no doubt that one must depart from the words since "no man can perceive another's thoughts except through his words" ("homines non possunt mentem alterius hominis percipere, nisi ex verbis eius"). To grasp the intention (*mentem*) and the meaning of the words, one has to take into account the context ("conjunctae omnes circumstantiae"): what the law was about and why it was made, its relation to other laws, to justice or injustice etc. All interpretive efforts serve the same thing: to extract the *mens legislatoris* from the *ratio legis*. The intention of the legislator, the context in which the law came about, the meaning of the words of the law and what the good interpreter makes of this are in normal cases perfectly compatible with each other (cf. Maclean 1992, 49 f., 89 f., 179 f.).

Yet, one must not forget that the idea of this intentional continuity in legal interpretation is the foundation for giving a persuasive interpretation in a situation where there is a dispute at stake, or at least possible – it is not a mathematical equation in which one side can be simply determined from the other. Johannes Goeddaeus prescribes in his *Commentarius* (1597) on the first book of the *Digest*, Emperor Justinian's collection of texts on Roman law in 50 books, dating from the sixth century:

> in legis latore et publice quid statuente primum attenditur, quid dixerit; deinde, qua occasione, quo intuit, qua mente.

> We must pay attention, in considering the words of legislators and those who lay down the law in public first to what they say; then to the occasion on which they said it, their meaning and intention. (qtd. from Maclean 1992, 97–98)

The rule "first to have a close look at the word" tries to remedy what the Renaissance sees as the basic problem of all interpretation: that the author goes from thought to expression, while the readers go from expression to thought (cf. Maclean 1992, viii). This phrasing not only shows in a spatial metaphor the concept of intentional continuity and the problem it is designed to tackle. It also indicates where the aim of the interpreter's efforts lies in the Renaissance: in the thought of the author.

This conviction is explicitly and generically phrased by Alberigo Gentili in his *In titulum Digestorum de verborum significatione commentarius* (Commentary on the meaning of words in the *Digest*, 1614): "I have said already, and it is true, that intention comes before words, as rhetoricians always conclude" ("dixi, verbis antestare sententiam, et verum est quod semper et Rhetores concludunt", qtd. from Maclean 1992, 146). Gentili found his confirmation concerning the priority of authorial intention in the rhetors – ancient *and* contemporary – and also in the *Digest* itself. The Roman politician and jurist Celsus holds for example that "the intention of a speaker is prior to and more important than speech" ("prior atque potentior est quam vox mens dicentis"), though he immediately adds the other part of the intentional continuum we touched upon: "yet nobody is thought to have said anything without having spoken" ("tamen nemo sine voce dixisse existimatur", qtd. from Maclean 1992, 145). Similarly, Paulus holds in D 26.2.30 concerning a case in which a "Titus" is appointed tutor in a testament, while both father and son have the same name Titus: "the man who is appointed tutor is the one intended by the testator" ("quem dare se testator sensit", qtd. from Maclean 1992, 129). The same privileging of authorial intention in combination with insisting on the relevance of the words spoken can be found in Marcellus' D 32.96: "one should only depart from the sense of words when it is clear that the testator meant something else" ("non aliter a significatione verborum recedi opportet, quam cum manifestum est aliud sensisse testatorem", qtd. from Maclean 1992, 96).

A representative example for the continuities in intention between the Renaissance and antiquity can be found in the work of the Italian jurist Andrea Alciato, who is often seen as the founder of humanist jurisprudence. Alciato's programme of interpretation from 1529 (*De verborum significatione*, On the meaning of words) goes as follows:

> Cum inuenta sunt uerba, ut dicentis sententiam exprimant, merito eius uoluntas in primis spectanda: Cognoscitur autem ex eo quod verba ipsa indicant.

> Because the words are chosen in order to express the intention of the one speaking, one has to focus primarily on what he wanted: But we recognise what he wanted from what the words themselves indicate. (qtd. from Kriechbaum 2001, 47)

Alciato's conceptual foundation is a perfect articulation of the standard model of authorial intention that we have come across on many occasions before: authorial intention is the pole star by which the interpreter should navigate, while this very aim is part of an intentional continuity that begins with the words of the text and the context in which they are written or spoken. Maximiliane Kriechbaum is therefore right when she attributes to Alciato that he conceptualises words (*verba*) and intention (*mens*) not as an opposition, but as related to each other, and that Alciato gives priority to authorial intention without neglecting the words in relation to the *mens* (cf. Kriechbaum 2001, 47, 48, 50). Kriechbaum is wrong, however, when she presents Alciato as an innovator turning away from what Kriechbaum claims to have been the standard until then ("wie bis dahin üblich") – a claim, by the way, that is corroborated only by selective quotes, not by a systematic historical argument. None of the examples we have given for the standard model since Augustine via Hugh of Saint Victor and beyond can be said to neglect the words spoken or written, nor would they see words and intention as an opposition in which one has to choose one side or the other – and the same goes for the Classical model, from Aristotle to the Classical Roman period. Kriechbaum seems to have been tempted into the pitfall of upgrading her object of study – Alciato – with claims of originality and newness. Apart from that, her analysis of the concept of authorial intention proposed by Alciato is very sound. Only, Alciato has to be situated within the tradition of intentional continuity of the Classical and the standard model dominating by then for at least two thousand years.

Circumstantial evidence for this historical contextualisation of Alciato's concept of authorial intention can be taken from Alciato's famous *Emblematum libellus*, which invented a new genre with its seminal three part text-image combination: an emblem consists of a title or motto (*inscriptio*), an image (*pictura*) and a poem on the connection between the former two (*subscriptio*). The first edition of Alciato's emblem book was published in Augsburg in 1531 by Heinrich Steyner. In the preface by the publisher, Steyner argues that the *pictura* in the book are not meant for the professional reader who does not need illustrations to understand the meaning of the poems. The illustrations are aimed at less experienced readers in order to help them understand what the author wants to say ("authoris intencio") as quickly and directly as possible (cf. Enenkel 2015, 578 f.). Al-

ciato will not have found any differences on a conceptual level in Steyner's preface compared to his own views on interpretation and authorial intention. The overall aim and focus of interpretation is on understanding the intention of the author ("eius uoluntas in primis spectanda"). But at the same time there is no doubt for Alciato, as we have seen, that a good reader must be able to arrive at this intention from the words on the page: "Cognoscitur autem ex eo quod verba ipsa indicant." The same concept can be recognised behind Steyner's views when he argues that experienced readers will not need the illustrations along with the poems – for them, the words should do.

In all the evidence given above, within the standard model of authorial intention, the different aspects of intentional continuity (words, authorial intent, context) can of course be emphasised differently at different moments, depending on what is regarded as didactically necessary, misunderstood, underestimated, disputed etc. at a specific historical moment by the participating authors in the dialogue. But these different emphases must not be taken for different concepts, as our overview has shown. The idea of a choice between either the words on the page *or* the intention of the one who wrote them – as two distinct answers to the same question – would not have been regarded a legitimate concept of interpretation from Classical Greece until the Renaissance.

This broad consensus in the Renaissance concerning the dominating concept of interpretation is indirectly confirmed by the fact that up to 1630 only one single university disputation "which addressed directly the question of interpretation" (Maclean 1992, 31) can be found. Interpretation itself is obviously *not* seen as a problem as such and therefore hardly attracts systematic reflection in these centuries, too – it is "only" specific texts to be interpreted and the spectrum of different emphases within the standard model that trigger different wordings and foci of interpretation. This homogeneity includes two assumptions: the priority given to authorial intention as the point of orientation in interpretation, and the conviction that the words on the page will bring the good reader there. As Maclean (1992, 146) summarises: "I have found in none of these texts any argument which disputes the priority of thought over language or the impossibility of thought without language." Of course participants in the debate do differ regarding explicitness, range (genre, form, plot, moral etc.) and individuality of intention over time as they do regarding explicitness of stressing the importance of words. But the homogeneity presented here indicates that these differences are just variations of the standard model of authorial intention.

The edges of that picture might become sharper when we take into account the perspective of modern criticism, for example that of Maclean on Turamini (see above) and Renaissance criticism in general. According to Maclean, Turamini

ingeniously distinguishes *mens* and *ratio* by describing them as the material and formal causes of the law; but he, like others, fails in the end to separate them except in so far as *mens* may be pursued through extraneous contextual matter to the law; and this contextual matter takes the form of historical information and inferences which belong to the category of *ratio legis*. Thus the opposition *mens/ratio* fails in the final analysis. (Maclean 1992, 151)

In other words: because Turamini uses arguments as contextual information and text (*ratio*) in order to determine intention (*mens*), he fails in distinguishing between *mens* and *ratio*, Maclean argues. Or, even more briefly: Turamini's failure lies on the level of argumentative hygiene of a very strict kind. Maclean's argument only holds on the basis of conceiving *mens* and *ratio* as an "opposition *mens/ratio*", and then even an opposition in the sense of an alternative: it is either *mens* or *ratio*. In that opposition, *mens* is about "recovery", while *ratio* is about "discovery" (ibid.). But these exclusive oppositions are nowhere to be found in the sources used in Maclean's book. None of the quotations in his book indicates an effort to distinguish between words, context (*ratio*) and intention (*mens*) as an alternative or exclusive *opposition*. The *distinction* is made in the Renaissance only in order to tackle a problem of interpretation in a systematic way from different angles, conceptualising text, context, author and reader on the basis of a concept of intentional continuity between its components. So Turamini did not fail on this point in the eyes of any of his contemporaries, nor in those of any of his predecessors, but only in the eyes of a twentieth-century view on intention in which a choice between either the text or the authorial intention has become conceptually possible *and* legitimate. And only those for whom this choice has become obligatory, and who are sceptical about a preference for authorial intentention (*mens*), can judge the mixing of the different aspects of Turamini's intentional continuity a "failure".

The impression that here Maclean is projecting modern concepts of intention back in time is strengthened by the fact that elsewhere Maclean holds "There is no originary *ratio* or *mens* to be recovered" (Maclean 1992, 158) and that intention is "totally irrecoverable" (Maclean 1992, 202) – views that sound familiar to the ears of "intentional fallacists", but definitely not to those of Alciato, Goeddaeus, Turamini or any of their contemporaries. Maclean's task of reconstructing historical views and reflecting on the differences between one's own and others' concepts and norms is lost here under an ahistorical normative judgment on matters of intention. What is more, this historical discrepancy is not limited to norms concerning the "best" concept of intention but also plays a central role in Maclean's book as a whole. In the introduction, he describes the goal of his book as setting out "to call into question the adequacy of the system of communication and language" of the Renaissance and to identify "those points where

the Renaissance conceptual scheme breaks down" (Maclean 1992, 10). This predictably leads to Maclean stating many "collapses" of Renaissance thinking on interpretation and meaning (cf. Maclean 1992, 97 f., 155, 158, 177 f., 202) – "collapses" that went unnoticed at the time of his object of research.

However, I agree completely with Maclean when he argues that there are no indications of "blindness or naivety on the part of Renaissance jurists", since they do see the limitations of their work and nowhere claim access to "apodictic knowledge of the real" (cf. Maclean 1992, 212). But they tackle what they see as problems of interpretation within the standard model of authorial intention – which is not problematised itself, and had no contemporary competitors as an alternative in their times, I would add.

New trends: More content, more individual intentions

The story of tradition and continuity that has been told in this book so far about Renaissance thinking on intention in interpretation would be incomplete without an elaboration on the changes within the framework of the standard model. In Chapter One, we already have quoted Paul Veyne in his effort to characterise what antiquity did or did not understand when someone talked or wrote about an "I":

> No ancient, not even the poets, is capable of talking about himself. Nothing is more misleading than the use of 'I' in Greco-Roman poetry. [...] He speaks in the name of all and makes no claim that his readers should be interested in his own personal state of mind. To talk about oneself, to throw personal testimony into the balance, to profess that personal conviction must be taken into account provided only that it is sincere is a Christian, indeed an eminently Protestant idea that the ancients never dared to profess. (Veyne 1987, 231 f.)

But apart from the confirmation that in antiquity individual messages in the sense of "personal convictions" expressed in poetry can hardly be found, the quote indicates something else. For Veyne, something has changed since the emergence of Christian faith, especially since the rise of its Protestant version in the early sixteenth century. Probably Veyne had the famous statement in mind with which Martin Luther ended his speech at the Diet of Worms on April 18, 1521, at least in its printed version:

> I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. I cannot do otherwise, here I stand, may God help me, Amen. (qtd. from Dunn 1994, 28)

Luther's view on Christian religion is expressed in his books, and it is expressed in such a carefully composed way that his conscience does not allow him to take back a single line or word. In the context of the argument presented here, it is not the careful composition that is new. What is new, is Luther's insisting on the individuality of his principled view, taken from an interpretation of the Scriptures, as being part of his authorial intention. In this case, the point for us is not so much whether Veyne is right in connecting this innovative shift with Protestantism, but whether it can be corroborated as a general tendency in the Renaissance by other sources.

To start contextually, there are indications for general changes in the interpretation and production of secular texts for the time under scrutiny here. Ian Maclean (1992, 35) for example speaks about an "interpretation boom [...] in all disciplines after 1550". This boom can be traced back to developments more than 400 years earlier. From the end of the eleventh century onwards, the rise of universities in Europe and especially the work of the glossators on the Roman *Corpus Juris Civilis* had started off a collective judicial interpretation enterprise in developing more and more material for specialists (cf. Maclean 1992, 13). This growing number of jurists' opinions was further boosted by towns employing academic lawyers: "in some cities, the whole university law faculty was involved in producing opinions after the documents and facts of the case had been submitted to them" (Maclean 1992, 17). The effect was what Maclean calls "the heyday in a broad European context of investigations into legal interpretation" between 1460 and 1630 (cf. Maclean 1992, 18 f.). The significant growth in interpretations was further fuelled by a steady rise in the number of students of law, climbing in all faculties especially since the founding of the new universities of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation from the sixteenth century onwards. The direct impact of Humanism can therefore be localised "in producing growing numbers of people fluent in the ancient languages" (Grafton and Jardine 1986, 122). More scholars and more students fluent in Latin (and to a lesser degree Greek) also meant a growth in the number of potential readers and producers of books, which was indicated by the number of books on offer at the Frankfurt Book Fair. This figure doubled in the first two decades of the seventeenth century compared to the last two decades of the sixteenth (cf. Maclean 1992, 18 f.).

The process was not restricted to law and Latin – there are many indications that something similar was occurring in poetry and the vernaculars. One case in point is the example of the spectacular growth of *poetae laureati*. It was not before 1341 that Petrarch was the first to revive this tradition and accept the title in Rome for himself. Between 1451 and 1600, already 282 investitures of a *poeta lau-*

reatus can been counted, only to double again in the 50 years to come until 1650 (cf. Enenkel 2015, 281).

As we have seen above, the exponentially growing number of interpreters and interpretations as well as producers of books did not lead to questioning the standard model of authorial intention. Nor did it lead to questioning any other basic convention of interpretation we might add, given the dearth of principle reflections on interpretation. What it did lead to, however, was more competition between scholars and poets for recognition and positions (be it at university, in town administrations, or under any other religious or worldly authority). The trigger for more distinction within the professional behaviour of a growing group of experts found its manifestation in more individual expressions of views within the standard model of authorial intention in interpretation (and in production, as the *poetae laureati* show).

This process was nurtured by a cultural policy which rewarded individual and original views with positions and money: "Eminent humanists with reputations for particular ways of approaching their teaching texts found up-and-coming students only too eager to tell them that everything they did was wrong." (Grafton and Jardine 1986, 63) There are quite some examples in which aggressively presenting one's new views in opposition to an established and well-paid scholar was the way to fame and income. Domizio Calderini had followed this track for becoming a professor under the Medicis, a track that also Angelo Poliziano followed when he tried to position himself against Calderini and the reigning master of the old school at Florence, Christoforo Landino (cf. Grafton and Jardine 1986, 94 ff.). Of course these scholars could claim that in antiquity there was disagreement, too. But what can be observed at Renaissance universities is another quality, given the number of positions, the closely watching of each other's moves and rewards, the aggressiveness of the personalised attacks and the actual rewards from the authorities in the form of professorships and other material securities. The following letter from 1499 shows that the scholars act within one arena, watching and documenting their competition for fame very closely:

> And so that you may see some examples of the fame that humanistic studies still enjoy in our time: Platina was head of the papal library with a salary of 700 ducats; not to mention Leonardo Bruni, Gregorio Tifernate, Lorenzo Valla and other early examples, Pomponio was famous throughout the world; Angelo Poliziano had eight hundred ducats at Florence and left immortal fame; Beroaldo has three hundred ducats at Bologna and more fame than any lecturer in that *studio* and more students … Giorgio Merula had four hundred ducats at Milan, Francesco Filelfo eight hundred, and he went about dressed entirely in cloth of gold, since he was one of the Duke's highest-ranking courtiers. (qtd. from Grafton and Jardine 1986, 97 f.)

This document shows not only the rivalry between peers and a cultural policy rewarding that rivalry. In the context of the growing number of universities, staff, students, and books on the market, it is also a document that raises the question of how distinction works in the interpretative behaviour of these eagerly competing scholars.

As we have seen, the traditional way of commenting on canonical texts was taking out single words or lines and then adding all kinds of information regarded as relevant, from semantic and grammatical to related facts, be they geographical, historical, mythological, moral etc. The school of Guarino Guarini of Verona for example – according to Grafton and Jardine (1986, 1) "the greatest teacher in a century of great teachers" – worked in this tradition that can be dated back via the commentary on the *Aeneid* by Servius to the Greek scholia. The student notes on the lectures in Guarino's school show a vast dedication towards small and smallest details of the texts. Grafton and Jardine give an illustrative comparison for this kind of teaching and interpreting:

> It is as if the teacher had on his desk a beautiful completed jigsaw puzzle – the text. Instead of calling up his students to look at the puzzle, he takes it apart, piece by piece. He holds each piece up, and explains its significance carefully and at length. The students for their part busy themselves writing down each explanation before the piece in question vanishes into the box. And the vital question we have to ask ourselves is whether the accumulation of fragments which the student made his own could ever take shape as the whole from which they originated. (Grafton and Jardine 1986, 20)

The compelling comparison is perfectly in tune with our findings concerning authorial intention in antiquity: it does play its part in interpretation, but primarily on a technical level of details concerning genre and form. For the Classics, but also for the early Renaissance interpreters working in this tradition, it is authorial intention that gave the singular parts of the puzzle their shape. Grafton and Jardine's question – on the ability of students to reshape "the whole" – is "vital" only from today's perspective: none of the contemporary sources discuss this problem, as far as I can see. Having the knowledge about the pieces, their beauty and function in combination with the consecration of the text and its author was obviously sufficient for many to carry on with the vastly growing enterprise of interpretation. "The whole" was touched upon briefly in the introduction of the commentaries (as we have seen for example in the commentary by Servius above), as a miniature reproduction of the jigsaw puzzle always at hand, but not really necessary for the experts, since they already knew.

How did scholars then try to distinguish and position themselves within this tradition? Apart from aggressively attacking opponents or applying the traditional approach of detailed study to texts that were rarely taught – including Greek

ones (Grafton and Jardine 1986, 83 ff., 99 – 121) – scholars increasingly tried to give original explanations of difficult or corrupt passages (cf. Enenkel 2015, 570). A typical example can be taken from the work of Poliziano on Statius in which he (nowadays historians say: wrongly) tried to argue that Statius had married Polla, Martial's widow. Poliziano still focused on details: words that Statius had used in a single sentence about Polla within a letter that precedes book II of his *Silvae*. But the way Poliziano dealt with these formal aspects was different from the grammarian tradition running from Servius to Guarini:

> Smell these words one by one. You will see that they are too familiar to fit another man's wife. He says "rarest of wives" – "wives", not "women" – "wives" because she both venerates the memory of her dead husband and sweetly loves her living one. "When we by chance considered this day" – both the adverb "by chance" and the plural number of the verb "we considered" clearly have a certain familiarity to them. (qtd. from Grafton and Jardine 1986, 96)

Even if Poliziano was wrong, the passage shows his striving for persuading his readers with an interpretation that no one had given before – and he does so *not* by exposing existing knowledge, but by paying attention to hidden knowledge only a very careful reader can bring into daylight. Poliziano's professional approach to interpretation is still close to holding up pieces of a puzzle, but now the holding up is combined with a specific argumentation to make one's point, or, in the comparison by Graff and Jardine: interpreting is more about the individual cleverness of how the critic holds up specific pieces of the puzzle and puts some of them together.

This individualisation on the level of interpretation is accompanied by a similar development on the level of the production of texts. In his substantial research on neo-Latin literature based on about 240 publications between 1350 and 1650, Karl Enenkel (2015) has shown very convincingly that there was an enormous increase and differentiation concerning paratexts over this timespan: prefaces by the author and/or others, dedications, standardisation of the title page, illustrations of dedication acts etc. More technically speaking, the paratexts grow in number, content and function. Since the beginning of the fifteenth century nearly all publications include for example a dedication (cf. Enenkel 2015, 53 et passim).

For Enenkel, this development can be explained primarily as an effect of authorisation ("wesentlich eine Sache von Autorisierungsprozessen", Enenkel 2015, 51). He understands authorisation as a compulsory proof of the right to be part of the Republic of Letters ("verpflichtender Berechtigungsnachweis", Enenkel 2015, 14). Apparently, the gates to the Republic of Letters open only after showing different passports ("Ausweise") or tickets ("Zugangspässe", Enenkel 2015, 51, 521

et passim) – the paratexts under analysis. However, from a field-theoretical perspective the rise of the number, content and functions of the paratexts between the fourteenth and the seventeenth century indicates primarily one thing: increasing individual efforts for self-presentation on the part of authors trying to distinguish themselves and their books from others. Authorial individualisation in this sense more and more uses the possibilities of paratexts as its form of distinction from 1350 onwards.

No doubt the paratexts contributed to the authorisation as an author, too. But concerning dedications for example, the material exposed by Enenkel shows even more a competition for honour and ranking than just for being "in" or "out". The ranking *within* the Republic of Letters is done in degrees, using different parameters such as books/authors without dedication and those with, and within the latter group those who dedicate to socially and/or intellectually more marginal figures and those having achieved permission from higher authorities to dedicate a book to them, with all shades in between. Paratexts clearly function in a complex game of individual distinction. What Kevin Dunn (1994, 9) has called "the space of the fullest exercise of self-authorising rhetoric in the Western literary tradition before the Romantics" turns out to be the space of the fullest exercise of fighting for positions in the Republic of Letters before the time around 1800, too.

Enenkel's criticism of existing research on this topic implicitly points in the same direction. Concerning the paratexts in the period 1350–1650 he writes:

> The strikingly increasing manifestations of prefaces and dedications in larger text formations with a richer argumentation and much more complex tasks cannot be explained plausibly with Reformation and the progress in the sciences (Dunn), nor through the rules of marketing printed books (Schottenloher), nor through what is called obsessive reproduction of existing topics (cf. Janson, Simon), nor through hypothetical philological filiation (Janson), nor through what is called the Individualism of Early Modernity (Dunn), nor through an emphatic need for self-expression of the Humanists (Schottenloher), nor through a suddenly strengthened self-consciousness of the Humanists (idem). (Enenkel 2015, 47, cf. 24–47; *my translation, RG*)

Enenkel argues convincingly that none of these aspects alone is able to explain the enormous growth of paratexts. But for our argument, the most important conclusion from his overview over the range of competing explanatory factors is that all of these factors separately may be seen as contributing to a literary arena in which the pressure on authors to distinguish themselves and the possibilities to do so increase vastly during the time span between 1350 and 1650. This distinction is functional given the background of a growing number of scholars and poets, increasingly perceived by themselves as rivals for a growing number

of positions, conducting their rivalry within the realm of more or less prominent competitors. From our perspective, this is the context in which the edges of the standard model of authorial intention become sharper through a tendency towards individualisation, expressed for example in individualised paratexts trying to steer the fate of a publication in the contest for more honour and reputation.

As far as the material presented by Enenkel shows, the paratexts are primarily about getting a specific text a maximum of attention and reputation in the competition with other texts – they hardly discuss content or individual messages. Paul Veyne's quotation above can be confirmed insofar as, compared with antiquity, Renaissance authors in fact do speak about themselves (at least to a greater degree than in antiquity) and their "I" is much closer to the one modernity is used to. But this development seems to have started long before Protestantism and Luther's "Here I stand", in the fourteenth century already. What Lutherism, Calvinism and other forms of Protestantism did bring about, though, was a polarisation within the Republic of Letters between the different kinds of Christian faith. Writing books in the context of clashes of different beliefs seems to go along with a shift towards moral content and more individual messages within the standard model of authorial intention in interpretation.

This tendency can be discovered among others in the domain of poetics, for example when comparing the *Poetices Libri Septem* (Seven Books on Poetry) by Julius Caesar Scaliger, published posthumously in 1561, with the poetics developed in the first decennium of the seventeenth century by Daniel Heinsius, professor at Leiden university – the *star pupil* (Otterspeer) of Scaliger's famous son Josephus Justus Scaliger (1540 – 1609).

Julius Caesar Scaliger's large work was encyclopaedic in purpose and grew to be the largest poetics of the sixteenth century, directed at poetry in Latin and oriented towards antiquity (cf. Deitz 1994, xxxii). In effect, much of what Scaliger writes sounds familiar after having read the preceding chapters of the present book. According to Scaliger, every aspect of the form of poetry is intended by the poet – and the very best poet is Virgil. Virgil was able to choose his words in a way that perfectly describes what he wants to describe ("Quod vero addidit, consummate opus"). If the object of description was for example a storm, Virgil even was able to choose the number and kind of vowels in such a way that one hears the opening of the door behind which the storms were bound ("audis portam in tota vocalibus", cf. Scaliger 5.3, p. 72 (217b)). Scaliger's interest in many formal details seen as intentional choices of the poet is evident. Furthermore, there is no doubt for Scaliger that the final end of poetry is and should be its moral teaching, ideally presented in a pleasant way (cf. Deitz 1994, 48). What that moral is, is only touched upon in very general tones. Scaliger for example

finds the poetry of Dampetrius full of insights ("sententiarum ver plena omnia"), but in such a way that they please, satisfy, tempt the hearer and do not repel and force him ("ducant, non angant, saturent, non afficiant fastidio, alliciant, non rapiant", Scaliger 6.4, p. 118 (304b)). In short, Scaliger can be subsumed under the standard model of authorial intention. Accordingly, for him the role of the critic is to bring out that what the author intended to do, from genre to vowels, under a general moral heading, including more specific *sententiae*. However, to judge from the amount of pages spent on signalling errors and shortcomings, the most important role of the critic for Scaliger seems to have been that of a self-conscious corrector (cf. Deitz 1994, xxxii–xxxiv).

For Heinsius as well, criticism is essentially about correcting errors. In the first chapter of his *De Tragoediae Constitutione* (1611, transl. in 1971 into English as *On Plot in Tragedy:* all quotes from this edition: Sellin 1971) he praises Aristotle concerning tragedy for being the first one "to note faults" ("vitia notavit") *and* construct a coherent poetics of a specific genre of art himself ("unam fecit artem"). After the remark on "to note faults" Heinsius comments: "the mark of a precise critic" ("quod critici est accurati", cf. *On plot in tragedy*, I, 7). Also concerning the concept of authorial intention, there can be no doubt that Scaliger and Heinsius basically share the same view: "The fundamental premise of his interpretation is to come to an understanding of the poet's intent." (Meter 1984, 85) This authorial intent is part of the intentional continuity we saw above, including reader, text and context. With regard to tragedy, for example, for Heinsius – following here and elsewhere primarily Aristotle – the main purpose of the tragedy is *katharsis*. This is what the whole structure of the text should lead to, what the author should strive for, and what the reader should undergo from reading or watching a tragedy: catharsis is "utility and end of tragedy" ("usus tragoediae et finis", cf. *On Plot in Tragedy*, II, 11) By arousing pity and fear through events on the plot level ("misericordia et horror"), the structural design of the tragedy, as a result of intentional choices by the poet, should in the end lead to purifying the reader from exactly these affects (cf. *On Plot in Tragedy*, II, 10). Looked at from this angle, the poetics of Heinsius does not show any differences to what we have seen in other sources, including Scaliger.

But there is at least one aspect that does differ. In his writings on poetry, Heinsius is particularly concerned to give a substantial moral legitimation for the existence of the genre of tragedy. The psychological-aesthetic motivation along the lines of genre on an Aristotelian foundation, as elaborated in *De Tragoediae Constitutione*, is closely intertwined with the more ethical function of tragedy as discussed in Heinsius' inaugural lecture from around 1610, "On the utilities to be taken out of reading tragedies". The legitimation of the genre is grounded upon a distinction between a general and a more specific moral lesson

tragedy teaches (cf. Meter 1984, 156–174). According to Heinsius, the general one is that tragedy reminds all mankind that life is short, and that everything that humans can do on this planet is vain and idle against the backdrop of eternity. The specific message is taken by Heinsius from the unhappy fate of many rulers in the plots of the tragedy which he sees as a warning for those in power: those who fall from high positions will never climb up again and therefore should rule wisely. It is not difficult to see behind this careful presentation of the poetics of tragedy in the first decennium of the seventeenth century a necessity felt by Heinsius to legitimise tragedy on specific, especially moral grounds. Given Heinsius' biographical background, it is plausible to connect his poetics with the fact that his Calvinist Leiden University, from 1596 onwards, had banned all theatre performances. This ban could be lifted only in exceptional cases: Heinsius' tragedy *Auricacus siue Libertas Saucia* (Orange or Freedom Violated) from 1602 on the murder of the Dutch father of the fatherland, Willem of Orange, was one of the exceptions. Meter (1984, 36) notes convincingly: "It is obvious that Heinsius's struggle to justify poetic art can be related to the strict stand which Calvinist preachers took against it at the time in the Netherlands as well as in England, France and Switzerland."

Apparently, the pressure of conflict and polarisation along religious lines fostered a more moral, more specific and more explicit shaping of the intentions attributed to poetry on the content level, and not only in the case of Heinsius. It shall be argued in the rest of this chapter that from the perspective of the concept of authorial intention, Heinsius' turning towards a more explicit and specific moral intention in interpretation is exemplary for (1) the historical context of growing pressure along religious lines from the sixteenth century onwards, and (2) the growing number of possible positions to compete for from Renaissance onwards. Our case to underline these points will be the reception of Erasmus' *Praise of Folly*.

"My intentions were good": The case of Erasmus' *Praise of Folly*

Erasmus' *Praise of Folly* – "moria" in Greek – was published under the title *Moriae Encomium* in 1511 and was widely spread over Europe, as the first four editions between August 1511 and October 1512 from Strasburg, Antwerp and Paris indicate. According to Erasmus, *Moria* was even reprinted more than seven times within a few months after its first publication (cf. Miller 1979, 14 f.). During Erasmus' lifetime (he died in 1536) 36 editions from 21 different printers in 11 different cities are known (cf. Miller 1979, 29). The *Moria* was pop-

ular, but it was controversial, too. The first official steps against it were taken in Paris: in 1527 Erasmus learned that the university had condemned his book as not compatible with Christian faith and morals. But this was only the beginning: no sixteenth century index "that included any works of Erasmus ever omitted his masterpiece" (Miller 1979, 29). From our perspective, the *Moria* therefore promises not only a fierce discussion about its meaning, but also a relatively high degree of explicitness about authorial intention (on the part of the author as well as on that of the readers), given the pressure on Erasmus and the book. This constellation promises to make the *Praise of Folly* an exemplary case study for the concept of authorial intention in interpretation in the sixteenth century. In the following, all Latin quotes from Erasmus' *Moria* are taken from the historical critical edition by Clarence H. Miller from 1979 and will be quoted as *Moria*, plus page and lines. The English translations are by Hoyt Hopewell Hudson, edited by Princeton UP 2015, and will be quoted as *Folly*, plus page.

Right from the start, Erasmus tried to steer the reception of his *Moria* with a preface in the form of a dedication. This launch is basically according to the rules of the paratextual boom we touched upon earlier. In addition, the content of Erasmus' preface is conventional in the sense that his primary concern seems to be about the question of genre. His intention in that regard is clear and explicit: "I was pleased to have some sport with a eulogy of folly" (*Folly*, 1; "visum est Moriae encomium ludere", *Moria*, 67, l. 10). This "eulogy of folly" can be characterised in terms of genre as a paradoxical encomium, taking as object of praise someone or something usually not regarded as worthy of such a treatment. Accordingly, the playful aspect expressed in the word "ludere" and its variations (*lusus*, *ludicrum*) is mentioned five times in the introduction (*Moria*, 67–69, l. 14, 26, 37, 38), underlined elsewhere in the dedication by characterising the book as "jokes of a kind" ("huius generis iocis", l. 14).

Such a "eulogy of folly" is, according to Erasmus, not only about laughing but also about bringing weaknesses to light: along with the lightness of humour ("partim leuiores", l. 22; "argumenti leuitas", l. 25–26) goes criticism ("partim mordaciores", l. 23; "mordacitatis", l. 46), though not a biting one, as in satire. In a prophylactic answer to possible critiques on his work, Erasmus defends the genre profile he has chosen with the argument of tradition: something similar had been written for example by Homer, Virgil and Plutarch (ll. 26–33). Plutarch had presented in his *Gryllus* a dialogue between Ulysses and Gryllus (as an enchanted pig): the latter prefers pigs to men, among others with regard to reason and virtue. Concerning the two dimensions of a paradoxical encomium, humour and criticism, Erasmus is very explicit about his main intention: "my end is pleasure rather than censure" (*Folly*, 4; "nos voluptatem magis quam morsum quaesisse", *Moria*, 68, ll. 60–61). But at the same time he makes clear that he

is not aiming at humour for humour's sake: witty play is a route that can lead the reader to serious thoughts ("nugae seria ducant", l. 37) from which he will profit more than from long serious reflections of some scholars ("ex his aliquanto plus frugis referat lector non omnino naris obesae", ll. 37–38). Conceptually speaking, the preface by Erasmus aims at intentions on a technical, genre level. The effect on the content level is only touched upon in general terms: intending to write the *Moria* as a paradoxical encomium means intending primarily to please, but in such a way that the readers will be amused *and* profit from reading it, too. What the profit will be exactly, is not made explicit.

This authorial intention is in tune with the circumstances of writing that Erasmus sketches (cf. Miller 1979, 13 f.). His preface tells us that the idea of writing the *Moria* came to his mind on his way back from Italy to England. While travelling, no serious work was possible and so he kept himself busy with composing a "eulogy of folly". Within this context of production – however stylised it may be (cf. Enenkel 2015, 517 f.) – playfulness is embedded in different ways. First of all, there is the pun of the praise of *Moria* being also a praise of (Thomas) More. Furthermore, we read in the dedicatory letter that More likes this kind of joke. The dedication of the *Moria* to More is persuasive against this background – and the context sounds plausible, given the dedication, too. Opposing or even doubting this authorial intention would be equivalent to a disturbance of intentional continuity of the standard model: it can only be the result of misreading or other errors on the side of the reader, such as those in search of a quarrel ("vitilitigatores", *Moria*, 68, l. 22), for example. But a fair and reasonable reader ("cordatus lector", l. 60) will easily ("facile", l. 60) derive the same meaning and intention from the *Moria* as the author had given it: it is primarily about pleasure, less about critique.

More generally speaking, Erasmus seems to assume that an explicitly given authorial intention in terms of genre, general remarks on the level of content, and a suitable context of production should be sufficient to steer the reception in the right direction. In this case, as in all the others within the range of the standard model of authorial intention, the choice of genre and the function of the genre chosen seem to be something like communicating vessels: with writing a paradoxical encomium, Erasmus aims at being witty, and, as a side effect, exactly through this wit giving some serious thoughts on what people should or should not do. Choosing a genre is choosing its general intention, and that intention can be retrieved in the interpretation on the basis of knowledge of the genre. Within this manifestation of the standard model of authorial intention, at least two aspects can be said to show a tendency towards individualisation. The first is Erasmus' participation through dedication and preface in the paratextual boom of his times. On top of that, one could also say that the genre of the paradoxical

encomium is a quite exceptional choice: the genre did exist in antiquity, but only very few examples have survived (cf. Miller 1979, 17).

However, there are early indications that there seems to be a problem with precisely this general genre intention of *Moria*. In a letter from Erasmus in July 1514 to Servatius Roger – former fellow-monk and now Prior of the Augustinian cloister in Steyn to which Erasmus still belonged at that point, although he had left it with permission in 1492 – he tells Servatius about the books he has written in the meantime. Erasmus starts with his *Enchiridion*, his handbook for the Christian, that has inspired many to a life of piety ("quo non pauci fatentur sese ad pietatis stadium inflammatos"), then turns to his collection of proverbs (*Adagia*) that has been a very useful work for any kind of learning ("ad omnem doctrinam vtilissimum") and to his *De rerum verborumque copi* which has proven a very helpful work for those preparing to preach ("opus vtilissimum conciona-turis", Allen 1906, 570). Furthermore, Erasmus mentions his revisions of St. Jerome's epistles and of the New Testament from a collation of Greek manuscripts as well as the series of commentaries on Paul's epistles he is working on, only to end with his decision that he will dedicate the rest of his life to the study of the sacred literature ("Nam mihi decretum est in sacris immori litteris", Allen 1906, 570). The genre intentions Erasmus connects to his writings (a Christian handbook that convinces to lead a pious life, studies are useful etc.) look familiar from our perspective. Yet, it is most interesting what Erasmus does not mention: there is not a word about the *Moria*, though it had appeared nearly three years earlier and had attracted a lot of attention.

The probability that this omission was on purpose grows when we add the context of this letter: the Prior of Erasmus' monastery had just demanded that Erasmus should return to his cloister after 22 years of leave (cf. Enenkel 2008, 467 ff.). Erasmus does not like this idea at all, dragging a wide range of arguments into battle: he cannot see what he should do in Holland; the climate and the diet would kill him; in Holland he would have the contempt of the lowest while now he receives the respect of the highest (of whom he gives many examples), etc. (Allen 1906, 564–573) – and finally he gives the list of his works just quoted. The strategic dimension of the letter is obvious: to get dispensation from returning to the cloister (cf. Enenkel 2008, 467–512). The presentation of Erasmus' books as pious, useful etc. fit perfectly into his strategic goal. But the striking thing is that in 1514, Erasmus judges it not appropriate to include his *Moria* in the list.

Authorial intention regarding genre under pressure

A letter by Erasmus' friend and later rector of the university of Leuven, Maarten van Dorp, from some months later (September 1514) gives an idea why Erasmus might have omitted the *Moria*. Dorp tells Erasmus that many in Leuven feel greatly offended by the book and only very few defend it at all points, especially within the theological faculty – a faculty for which it is very important to keep the respect of the public, Dorp adds. With regard to this faculty he asks "what good did it do, indeed how much harm it will do, to attack it [i.e. *the faculty, RG*] so bitterly" ("quid profuit, immo vero quantam oberit, tam acriter suggillasse?", Allen 1910, 12; transl. Mynors and Thomson 1976, 18). This group of readers obviously did not follow the intentional line of play, humour and mild criticism – instead they saw the intention of Erasmus and the book as sharply ridiculing ("acriter suggillasse"). The members of the theological faculty feel they are the target of a biting attack by Erasmus.

This clash is fuelled by another argument Dorp chews on. According to him, there is one passage in the *Moria* that must be felt as impious. Dorp writes:

> Praeterea de Christo vitaque beata, an hoc piae ferant aures, quod illi stulticiam tribuat, hanc nihil aliud dicat futuram quam demenciae quiddam? (qtd. from Allen 1910, 12)

> And then Christ, and the life in Heaven – can the ears of a good Christian endure to hear foolishness ascribed to him, while life in Heaven, [*Moria*] says, is likely to be nothing but a form of lunacy? (Mynors and Thomson 1976, 18 f.)

The passage that Dorp here refers to can be found towards the end of the *Moria* and reads as follows:

> Sed posteaquam semel *tìn leontìn* induimus, age doceamus et illud, felicitatem Christianorum, quam tot laboribus expetunt, nihil aliud esse quam insaniae stulticiaeque genus quoddam; absit inuidia verbis, rem ipsam potius expendite. (*Moria*, 190, ll. 156–158)

> Come, now that I have "put on the lion's skin," I shall show this also, that the happiness of Christians, which they pursue with so much travail, is nothing else but a kind of madness and folly. Let these words give no offense; instead, keep your mind on the point. (*Folly*, 119)

The benevolent Dorp himself does not simply ascribe to Erasmus the hidden intention of picking on his former brothers, as Dorp's faculty members do. But Dorp does not agree with the publication of the *Moria* either, be it for other reasons: "Et profecto, Erasme eruditissime, quid isthuc sit velle solis litteratis place haud satis intelligo." (Allen 1910, 13; "And that is the point, Erasmus most learned friend: I cannot see what you mean by wishing to please only those who are steeped in humane studies." (Mynors and Thomson 1976, 19).

From both readings, that of the Leuven faculty of theology and that of Dorp, a polarisation of the readership can be derived that sets Erasmus' explicit authorial intention regarding genre under pressure. The *Moria* obviously has encountered a readership too heterogeneous for a reception along the lines set out in Erasmus' preface. There are academic readers who see Erasmus' explicit intention with the *Moria* either as a bad disguise under which the real intention (biting satire by someone from the other side) is hidden, or as an unintentional insult due to an in-crowd pleasure between humanists. Dorp's own suspicion of witnessing here the irony of exclusionary elitist in-groups at work (cf. Hutcheon 1994, 47) might have been corroborated with a quote from Erasmus himself, when he stated at the end of the dedication letter to More: why do I say all this to you, More? ("Sed quid ego haec tibi patrono tam singulari", Miller 1979, 70, l. 65), implying: since you know all this already.

Looking at the three clashing interpretations – that of Erasmus' letter to More, that of large parts of the Leuven faculty and Dorp's – from a conceptual level, they can be taken as another illustration for the heterogeneity and polarisation among the readership at the beginning of the sixteenth century that sets authorial intention under pressure. Dorp himself, though, has not given up the hope of keeping the heterogeneous groups and readings together:

> Atqui humanum quid paciuntur qui te tuaque damnant; infirmitate faciunt, non malicia; nisi forte putes sola humanitatis studia, non eciam philisophiam, non sacras litteras, bonos efficere. (qtd. from Allen 1910, 13)

> But those who condemn you and your work are only human; they do it from weakness and not wickedness – unless you think nothing but the humanities, not even philosophy or sacred study, can make a good man. (Mynors and Thomson 1976, 20)

Dorp is not implying that Erasmus was not sincere with the authorial intention given in his preface, nor that there is something wrong with Erasmus' intention. What he sees as problematic, though, is that Erasmus has not been thinking enough about the reception of his book by others, especially non-humanists. That Dorp attributes "weakness" to these readers shows that he has no doubts whatsoever about the legitimacy and adequacy of Erasmus' intentions: the readings that are critical towards Erasmus are the result of shortcomings on the part of some readers. But Erasmus should have anticipated such "wrong" readings, Dorp is implying.

Sharper edges of the standard model

The pressure from polarisation and distinction on authorial intention has been made plausible, I think. At least with religious topics, following the established procedure to explain one's intention with the genre chosen is obviously no longer sufficient to steer the relevant parts of the reception. Accordingly, Erasmus' answer to Dorp from more than half a year later, May 1515, is long and principled. Its programmatic character can be seen in the fact that it was part of all future editions of the *Moria* during Erasmus' lifetime (Miller 1979, 25). In parts, the answer was along the lines that Erasmus had set out earlier. In all his books, Erasmus claims, his only intention has always been ("hic unicus semper mihi fuit scopus", Allen 1910, 92) to do something useful ("aliquam adferrem utilitatem"), or, in other words, he always had only one goal: to do good ("semper spectaui vt, si possem, prodessem", ibid.). Furthermore, he relates again how he came to write and publish the *Moria*, though this time with more details, and in a rather defensive way. After his success in publicly reading parts of the *Moria* in the house of More, he judged ill in an idle moment in order to please his friends and publish the *Moria*. Erasmus adds: who can be wise all the time? (cf. Allen 1910, 96) Nevertheless, according to Erasmus, all that *Moria* needs is a fair reader. Someone pious and fair ("legat pius et aequus", Allen 1910, 104) or fair and with integrity ("aequus et integer", Allen 1910, 105) will simply do his job of understanding what is written ("quod scriptum est intellegat", ibid.). Accordingly, Erasmus counters the criticism reported to him by Dorp in several places with the argument that criticism of the *Moria* would disappear if the reader were to stick to what has been written ("referantur ut scripta sunt", Allen 1910, 103). Consequently, for him, the offence is in the interpretation, not in his book ("In tua recitatio offendiculum est, non in meo libello.", ibid.).

The dominance of the standard model of authorial intention – with the intentional continuity of author, text, context and readers – seems to be strong. But in Erasmus' letter to Dorp, the edges of the model receive sharper outlines. While the unfair reader was touched upon only briefly in the preface ("vitilitigatores", those in search of trouble), he receives much more attention now. This attention does not show the slightest doubt that the interpretations of those who do not follow the line of Erasmus' preface are distorted and full of malevolence ("maleuolentia", Allen 1910, 103). They are interpreters

> qui primum nullo sunt ingenio praediti, minore iudicio; deinde nihil omnino bonarum litterarum attigerunt, sordida tantum ista perturbataque doctrina infecti potius quam eruditi; denique infensi omnibus qui sciunt quod ipsi nesciant. (qtd. from Allen 1910, 105)

who in the first place have no brains and even less judgment; second, have never been in touch with liberal studies but are infected rather than educated by that mean and muddled schooling of theirs; and lastly, hate everyone who knows what they themselves do not know. (Mynors and Thomson 1976, 129)

The readings of these others are not only inferior. They are illegitimate due to the limitations and weaknesses of character and expertise of those who propose them: no brains, uneducated, narcistic nitwits with aggressive behaviour. However, also Erasmus himself could hardly have been more belligerent, contributing from his side to the growing polarisation. Many similar quotations from the letter could be given stressing the malevolent interpretations of the *Moria* by "those pestilent experts in calumny" ("isti calumniatores pestilentissimi", Allen 1910, 102; Mynors and Thomson 1976, 126) who either do not understand or are so cantankerous by nature that they do not like anything at all ("qui vel non intelligent vel inuideant vel natura sint adeo morose vt nihil omnino probent", Allen 1910, 98 f.). Bad characters, dramatic lack of learning and distorted interpretations hang closely together, or, speaking more theoretically: Erasmus' presentation of his critics is just another manifestation of the undisputed belief that radically opposing interpretations within the standard model occur only when one of the two sides – author or reader – are lying or do not function adequately for some lack of character or schooling – for a lack of *ethos*, so to speak. From the perspective of the author, Erasmus' delegitimising his critics can be explained in that way. From the perspective of his critics, the reverse image must have been similarly compelling: most of them they do not believe that what Erasmus wrote in his preface is what he actually meant. Both perspectives taken together are an illustration of the polarisation along religious lines in the sixteenth century and the pressure this ideological polarisation put on authorial intention.

The counterpart to Erasmus' strategy to denounce his critical readers is to show that the text has been approved by many authorities in the way the author had intended it to be read, or, as we quoted earlier on: in the way it had been written. Erasmus mentions for example the appreciation of the archbishop of Canterbury for the *Moria:* the archbishop is so endowed with every virtue that it does not cross his mind that only one of the human weaknesses exposed by the *Moria* might target him ("Nempe quia vir omni virtutum genere absolutus nihil horum ad se pertinere iudicat.", Allen 1910, 98). But that is not the only example: Erasmus could give many other names of eminent princes, cardinals, bishops, abbots and famous scholars who have read and approved the *Moria* in the way it must be read, he says.

More moral

The polarisation of the readership also had its effect on the way Erasmus presented his authorial intention. As we have seen, he had set down his *Moria* as a "eulogy of folly", primarily for pleasure, but said it included mild criticism, too. Both aspects are still touched upon in the letter to Dorp from four years later, but by now, their hierarchy has changed. While in the initial introduction of his book pleasure, wit and humour had been dominant ("nos voluptatem magis quam morsum quaesisse", *Moria*, 68, ll. 60 – 61), now it seems the other way round:

> Proinde videbar mihi repperisse rationem vt delicatis animis hac arte tanquam obreperem et cum voluptate quoque mederer. Et sepenumero conspexeram festiuum hoc et iocosum admonendi genus multis felicissime cedere. (qtd. from Allen 1910, 94)

> And so I thought I had found a way to insinuate myself in this fashion into minds which are hard to please, and not only cure them but amuse them too. I had often observed that this cheerful and humorous style of putting people right is with many of them most successful. (Mynors and Thomson 1976, 115)

Humour and wit are presented in 1515, four years after first publication, as an instrument to get into the minds of those who should be corrected. Precisely because of this specific power of humour (its wit and liveliness, "lepos et iucunditas sermonis", Allen 1910, 96), it is the perfect means for curing wrongs of mankind ("medicandi communibus hominum malis", Allen 1910, 97). In other words: Erasmus' dominant aim in 1515 is curing, and the humour is comparable to the sweetness in which bitter medicine is enclosed, so that those in need will take it. It seems as if Erasmus in his response is going to steer a more moral course, closer to "utile" than to "dulce", in deviation of his priorities at the outset in 1511.

This goes along with the fact that now the *Moria* as a whole gets a more specific message on the content level, in tune with the rest of Erasmus' work:

> Nec aliud omnino spectauimus in Moria quam quod in caeteris lucubrationibus, tametsi via diuersa. In Enchiridio simpliciter Christianae vitae formam tradidimus. In libello De prinicipis institutione palam admonemus quibus rebus principem oporteat esse instructum. In Panegyrico sub laudis praetextu hoc ipsum tamen agimus oblique quod illic egimus aperta fronte. Nec aliud agitur in Moria sub specie lusus quam actum est in Enchiridio. Admonere voluimus, non mordere; prodesse, non laedere; consulere moribus hominum, non officere. (qtd. from Allen 1910, 93)

> Nor was the end I had in view in my *Folly* different in any way from the purpose of my other works, though the means differed. In the *Enchiridion* I laid down quite simply the pattern of a Christian life. In my book on the education of a prince I openly expound the subjects in

which a prince should be brought up. In my *Panegyricus*, though under cover of praising a prince, I pursue indirectly the same subject that I pursued openly in earlier work. And the *Folly* is concerned in a playful way with the same subject as the *Enchiridion*. My purpose was guidance and not satire; to help, not to hurt; to show men how to become better and not to stand in their way. (Mynors and Thomson 1976, 114 f.)

The connection to his earlier presentation runs clearly via the aspects of playfulness ("sub specie lusus") and indirectness ("sub laudis praetextu ... oblique") of praise, making it possible to say something other than what is stated explicitly. But what is new, is the roof under which these genre possibilities of the paradoxical encomium are sheltered: this roof is the vision of "the pattern of a Christian life" as in the *Enchiridion*, but then via a different route ("via diuersa").

The message on the content level is still a rather general one, and with regard to the *Enchiridion* we might even call it pleonastic from the perspective of genre, in the sense given above: a handbook for the Christian gives "the pattern of a Christian life". For our purpose it is less important whether this intention is plausible or not – the reception history of the *Moria* shows a lively debate precisely about this question (cf. Grüttemeier 1996). What is important from our perspective, however, is the shift Erasmus makes between 1511 and 1515 towards explicating a positive moral message with regard to a genre that traditionally has done without such explicit messages. When relating this observation back to the general context outlined above, it seems plausible to explain this shift to explicit moral views as a result of pressure on authorial intention through a criticism situated in a field with growing numbers of participants and positions, and growing religious polarisation.

Specifically with regard to polarisation, evidence can be found in the writings of Erasmus himself. In 1526, fifteen years after the publication of the *Moria* and five years after Luther's appearance before the Diet of Worms, Erasmus claimed that he had written the *Moria* in quiet times when the whole world was in a deep sleep. He would probably not have written it, if he had known which storms lay ahead (cf. Miller 1979, 27). The same thought is expressed by the one to whom the *Moria* was dedicated. Not only with regard to the *Moria* but also to his own writings, Thomas More wrote in 1532 about translations from Latin into English:

In these dayes in whyche men by theyr owne defaute mysseconstre and take harme of the very scrypture of god, vntyll menne better amende, yf any man wolde now translate *Moria* in to Englyshe, or some works eyther that I haue my selfe wryten ere this, al be yt there be none harme therin / folke yet beynge (as they be) geuen to take harme of that that is good / I wolde not onely my derlynges bokes but myne owne also, helpe to burne them both with my owne hands, rather then folke sholde (though thorow theyr own faute) take any harme

of them, seynge that I se them likely in these dayes so to do. (qtd. from Schuster et al. 1973, 178 f.)

A more drastic image for the massive polarisation at the beginning of the sixteenth century in the European Republic of Letters along religious lines is hardly possible than this fictional and prophylactic burning of the *Moria* and one's own books – a kind of *auto-auto-da-fé*. Still, More holds that deviations from what the author intended with his writings are misreadings by deficient readers ("by theyr owne defaute mysseconstre", "thorow theyr own faute"). Accordingly, there is no doubt about the intentional continuity of author, text, context and what the fair reader will make of the book – a book which remains "good" ("al be yt there be none harme therin", "that that is good"). When the regular road from writing via publication to interpretation is not accessible, this is only due to malevolence and limitations of the readers at a certain moment in history. It is not due to what Erasmus or More himself wanted, nor to what they wrote.

Against this backdrop, the adaptations of the standard model of authorial intention we derived from Erasmus' reaction to his reception can be taken as exemplary. They illustrate a tendency towards sharpening the edges of the standard model by polemising against ill-minded readers, articulating more individual and more content-based intentions, without raising doubts about the endurance of the conceptual basic principles of the model.

More arguments on content level

The sharpening, however, not only took place on the level of polemics against malevolent readers, nor was it limited to constructing a moral roof over the whole text in cases when the general genre legitimation failed. Sharpening the edges of the standard model can also be retraced in the fierce discussions about its parts. As we have seen above, the growing competition between a growing number of scholars triggered larger numbers of original interpretations and emendations of parts of classical texts. This professional behaviour was functional with regard to the positioning of scholars, for example by way of detailed text-based argumentations (think of Poliziano), and with regard to many interpreters still sticking to connecting single words with existing knowledge of a kind, as in the commentary tradition in the style of Servius. Both ways of interpreting are recognisable in our case study, but now much more is at stake than different readings of classics. Now the question of on which side of the right-or-wrong-belief the living author had to be placed was a question that could lead in extreme cases to actually burning books, or maybe even more than that.

A typical example of the traditional way of interpreting the *Praise of Folly* in connection with religious content is by the Carthusian theologian Petrus Sutor, first published in 1526. On the basis of Folly's claim that she invented science ("cognitio disciplinarum ... in summam perniciem excogitauit", cf. *Moria* 110, ll. 717–743), Petrus Sutor made Erasmus a blasphemist in one sentence only: since God invented science, but Erasmus attributes its invention to Moria, Erasmus is blasphemous against God ("Deus scientiarum dominus est, et Erasmus harum inuentionem tribuit Moriae; blasphemus igitur est in Deum.", qtd. from Miller 1979, 27).

The reading by Sutor may be a very condensed example, but its structure is not exceptional, since Erasmus criticised *avant la lettre* this kind of interpretation already in his letter to Dorp of 1515, speaking about those "pestilent experts in calumny" mentioned above. According to Erasmus, they take some words out of their context ("duo verba decerpere"), sometimes change them a little, and leave out those passages that soften and explain what sounds harsh without them (cf. Allen 1910, 102). While this is the wrong way of interpreting according to Erasmus, the right one is programmatically explained in the *Methodus*, the introduction to Erasmus' edition of the New Testament in Greek (1516). Again, the opposition starts off from a picture of a way of reading that only pays attention to isolated details. But that is not what a scholar should do, according to Erasmus:

> Idque quod certius fiat, non sat habeat quattuor aut quinque decerpsisse verbula, circumspiciat, unde natum sit quod dicitur, a quo dicatur, cui dicatur, quo tempore, quo occasione, quibus verbis, quid praecesserit, quid consequatur. Quandoquidem ex hisce rebus expesnis collectisque deprehenditur, quid sibi velit quod dictum est. (qtd. from Winkler 1967, 64)

> Let him not consider it adequate to pull out four or five little words; let him consider the origin of what is said, by whom it is said, to whom it is said, when, on what occasion, in what words, what precedes it, what follows. For it is from a comprehensive examination of these things that one learns the meaning of a given utterance. (qtd. from Grafton and Jardine 1986, 147)

What this approach means in practice is demonstrated by Erasmus himself in his letter to Dorp of 1515. In answering the criticism that one of Folly's claims – that life in Heaven is a form of lunacy – must sound impious in the ears of many Christians ("an hoc piae ferant aures", cf. Allen 1910, 12), Erasmus gives a close reading argumentation that is reminiscent of the example of Poliziano's way of interpreting that was quoted above. But now the interpretation concerns not whom Statius married or not. It concerns Erasmus' own writing, and the existential question of whether Erasmus wrote something impious or not. In order

to show how Erasmus interpreted, the passage answering the criticism of impiety must be quoted in full:

> Sic enim propono. "Sed posteaquam semel *tìn leontin* induimus, age doceamus et illud, fe-licitatem Christianorum, quam tot laboribus expetunt, nihil aliud esse quam insaniae stul-ticiaeque genus quoddam. Absit inuidia verbis. Rem ipsam potius expendite." Audisne? Primum quod Moria de re tam arcana disputat, id mitigo prouerbio, quod iam leonis exuui-um induerit. Nec simpliciter appello stulticiam aut insaniam, sed "stulticiae insaniaeque genus", vt piam stulticiam et felicem intelligas insaniam, iuxta distinctionem quam mox subiicio. Nec hoc contentus, addo "quoddam", vt appareat figuram subesse, non simplicem esse sermonem. Nec his contentus, offensam deprecor, quam verborum sonus possit gignere, et admoneo vt magis obseruent quid dicatur quam quibus dicatur verbis; atque haec quidem in ipsa statim propositione. Iam vero in ipsa rei tractatione quid est omnino quod non pie, quod non circumspecte sit dictum ac reuerentius etiam quam vt conueniat Moriae? (qtd. from Allen 1910, 104 f.)

> What I say is this: 'But now that I have donned the lion's skin, let me tell you another thing. The happiness which Christians seek with so many labours is nothing other than a certain kind of madness and folly. Do not be put off by the words, but consider the reality.' Do you see? To begin with, the fact that Folly holds forth on such a solemn subject is softened by a proverb, where I speak of her having donned the lion's skin. Nor do I speak just of folly or madness, but of 'a kind of folly and madness,' so that you have to understand a pious folly and a blessed madness, in accordance with a distinction which I go on to make. Not content with that, I say 'a certain kind' to make it clear that this is meant figuratively and is not literal. Still not content, I urge people not to take offence at the mere sound of my words, and tell them to watch more what is said than how I say it; and this I do right at the very beginning. Then in the actual treatment of the question, is there anything not said in a pious and thoughtful fashion more reverently in fact than really suits Folly? (My-nors and Thomson 1976, 128)

From our perspective, two things are striking in this interpretation: first, every word is presented as having been written with a purpose. The utmost care that Erasmus takes to explain how this passage must be interpreted is equivalent to the utmost care with which Erasmus claims to have written every word of it, culminating in the rhetorical question: is there anything not said in a pious and thoughtful fashion ("quid est omnino quod non pie")? What has been writ-ten is what must have been written, and not one word is superfluous or can be washed out, is Erasmus' implication – a claim on which Horace could not have agreed more, as we saw in Chapter One. Second, the sum of Erasmus' argumen-tation aims at one point: it is wrong to transform the words of Folly into a refer-ential claim (Christian Heaven is madness and folly) and then take this claim lit-erally as in a discourse ("vt appareat figuram subesse, non simplicem esse sermonem"). Instead, every single word that Folly speaks is made functional by Erasmus in order to serve the playful setting of "Folly praising Folly". His de-

tailed argumentation on the basis of words in their context aims not only at strengthening the genre intention of the book (paradoxical encomium), but also the general moral intention given in an indirect, playful way ("Nec aliud agitur in Moria sub specie lusus quam actum est in Enchiridio."). From this perspective, the detailed arguments of the interpretation can also be said to contribute to sharpening the edges of the standard model of authorial intention: they aim at consolidating an individual presentation of an overarching message that goes further than conventional genre intentions might take the reader.

What Erasmus shares with his critics, though, is the attention paid to every word in every single sentence which must be justified or at least justifiable. Within the Classical *and* the standard model of authorial intention, this attitude is not only legitimate but the only way the responsibility of an author for his text can be conceived of. This goes for both sides, the side of the reader and that of the author. Therefore, Clarence Miller's diagnosis of a contradiction in Erasmus' argumentation against his opponents has an ahistorical dimension in it:

> The major difficulty [...] is that Erasmus tacitly agrees with his opponents' assumption that Folly expresses Erasmus' opinions. Erasmus, briefly but explicitly, denies this assumption, but he implicitly grants it by continually defending Folly's statements because of their precision and restraint. (Miller 1979, 28)

To start with, there is no contradiction in Erasmus' argumentation, as far as I can see. In his footnotes Miller gives the reference to the place in which he reads an explicit denial of the assumption that Folly expresses Erasmus' opinions. This is a passage in which Erasmus answers in 1531 for the second time to an attack by Alberto Pio running since 1529 (cf. Gilmore 1969):

> *Loquitur*, inquit [Pio], *Moria, sed loquitur ore* Erasmi. Cum *Gryllus* docet plus rationis ac virtutem esse in brutis animantibus quam in homine, nonne *Plutarchi* ore loquitur? Quis tamen unquam vocavit illum in jus? Sed quid dicit haeretica *Moria?* Ait disciplinas esse repertas a Daemone Teuth, quod est apud Platonem 91[...]. (qtd. from Clericus 1963, 1136E)

> *Moria speaks*, he [Pio] says, *but Moria speaks with the voice of Erasmus.* When *Gryllus* teaches that there is more intelligence and virtue in wild animals than in man, does he not speak with the voice of *Plutarch?* But who has ever called him to defend himself? Now what says the heretical *Moria?* She says that the daemon Teuth has invented the sciences, which can be found in Plato's writings [...]. (*my translation, RG*)

First of all, Erasmus does not deny the assumption that Folly expresses Erasmus' opinions. All he does is make an analogy with the *Gryllus* by Plutarch, in which Gryllus as an enchanted pig tries to convince Odysseus of the advantages of pig-kind over mankind and speaks with the voice of Plutarch, as Folly does with that

of Erasmus. We already came across the same reference to Gryllus and Plutarch in the dedicatory letter to More where it was used to legitimise the choice of the genre of a playful "eulogy of folly" with examples from antiquity (cf. Moria 68, ll. 31–32). So it seems most likely that all Erasmus is saying in 1531 is: when reading a text, you have to be aware of the genre you are reading, and the genre is that which the author intended to use. In the case of Plutarch and his *Gryllus*, readers have honoured that rule – why not in my case? What Erasmus is denying here – implicitly – is that one could take the words of Folly within this paradoxical encomium as being a tract by Erasmus as a scholar or theologian. But when the reader takes the specific frame of the genre into account, what Folly says indirectly and in a playful, humorous way is obviously what Erasmus himself says, within the genre of the paradoxical encomium – as did Plutarch. Folly unmasks the world and so does Erasmus, but at the same time, due to Erasmus' playful irony, Folly's statements are not statements of Erasmus-the-humanist (cf. Hutcheon 2005).

Accordingly, in his letter to Dorp, when discussing the impious passage and dealing with quotes spoken by Folly, Erasmus always uses Latin verbs in the first person singular: *mitigo*, *apello*, *addo*, *admoneo* etc. (cf. Allen 1910, 194 f.), meaning: I, Erasmus soften, say, add, warn etc. What Folly says is what Erasmus says *within the genre context chosen*. Therefore, Miller's "major difficulty" with Erasmus' many defences turns out to be an ahistorical projection of the modern narratological difference between the author and the narrator back in time – it is not how Erasmus, one of his contemporary defenders or any of his many contemporary critics looked at the debate (cf. Mayer 2003; Whitmarsh 2013). The difference between Erasmus and the other side is not one in terms of narratology or concepts of intention. Primarily, the critics do not accept the genre claim of Erasmus in his preface, because they do not think this was Erasmus' real intention. Whether they thought so because they saw Erasmus *or* the text as one of the "others" (in terms of religion or in terms of the humanist elite), and then concluded from the wrongness/deceit of the one aspect the deceit/wrongness of the other, is hard to tell within a conception of intentional continuity. The same goes for the question whether the critics did not believe the preface and therefore read the text in a literalist way as a tract, or that they did not accept such content as legitimated by this genre and formal choices, and therefore felt not bound by the preface. But the result is in all cases the same: text, author, context and reader do form an intentional continuity. What the text says within its genre and historical context is what the author intended to say – which basically leaves the question of whether his stated intentions were trustworthy, or: whether his intentions were good or bad.

All the participants in the debates that touch upon intention in interpretation between the fourteenth and the seventeenth century share the standard model of authorial intention. This model was, as far as I can see, dominating without any competitor in that period. Sharing this model meant sharing several beliefs, whatever side of a debate on interpretation one was on. This included, first of all, the belief of authors and interpreters that the author was responsible for every detail of what was written. This concept of responsibility in production and reception during the Renaissance included the assumption of writing as an intentional act of an individual human being. During the period 1350 to 1650 the intentional act was in large parts still primarily an act in terms of genre and form, and only very generally in terms of content, as our evidence has shown. At the same time, the growing competition due to growing numbers of authors and positions, as well as the growing polarisation along religious lines, led towards individualisation of authorial intention in the production as well as the reception of texts. Scholars competed with original interpretations in terms of rarely discussed classical authors, bringing new solutions for corrupt passages, explaining obscure ones for the first time, combining aspects of a text in an argument that led to more knowledge about antiquity etc. At the same time, from the fourteenth century onwards, authors increasingly marked their texts with paratexts aiming at achieving individual distinction of books and authors. Especially when sensitive topics related to religion attracted fierce criticism in a polarised context, authorial intention came under pressure. This pressure led to emphasising more explicitly and sharply the edges of the standard model of authorial intention: concerning the supposed deficits of readers, concerning a more explicit and more moral legitimation of genres and texts, and concerning a more detailed argumentation connecting every aspect of the text with the general ethical roof extended over it. In this sense, a tendency towards individualisation and sharper edges of the standard model of authorial intention also manifested itself on the content level during the Renaissance, as has been demonstrated above exemplarily with the reception of Erasmus' *Praise of Folly*.

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Chapter Four
To understand the author better than he understands himself. From the hermeneutics of the Enlightenment to Russian Formalism

The standard model of authorial intention in interpretation, as it has been reconstructed in the preceding chapters, includes at its core a continuum between the intention of the author, the text, the contexts of both and the intention a reader puts forward in the act of interpretation. Normally speaking, these four aspects form a unity in which the intention of the author functions as a guideline in interpretation. In case of problems – when we do not know anything about the author and/or his intention, when an interpreter is convinced an author is wrong or not trustworthy etc. – the professional interpreter will try to solve these problems within the boundaries of that model. In such cases, the model itself shows no signs of being under pressure, at least until the Renaissance. However, this seems to be different when critics explicitly claim that they can understand the author better than he understood himself. These claims are intriguing because they play in a catchy way with something that runs counter to our intuition of how communication works – do we ourselves not know best what we are saying when we say something?

Different ways of better understanding the author than he understood himself

The earliest secular version of laconically comparing the understanding of author and reader, and giving more credit to the latter, probably comes from Immanuel Kant and can be found in his *Critique of Pure Reason* from 1781. The relevant passage goes as follows:

> daß es gar nichts Ungewöhnliches sei, sowohl im gemeinen Gespräche, als in Schriften, durch die Vergleichung der Gedanken, welche ein Verfasser über seinen Gegenstand äußert, ihn sogar besser zu verstehen, als er sich selber verstand, indem er seinen Begriff nicht genugsam bestimmte, und dadurch seiner eigenen Absicht entgegen redete oder auch dachte. (Kant 1911, 200; [A 313 f., B 370])

> I note only that when we compare the thoughts that an author expresses about a subject, in ordinary speech as well as in his writings, it is not at all unusual to find that we understand him even better than he understood himself, since he may not have determined his concept

> sufficiently and hence sometimes spoke, or even thought, contrary to his own intention. (qtd. from Guyer and Wood 1998, 396)

What at first sight might look like a rupture between authorial intention and the meaning attributed to a text in which authorial intention is irrelevant, on closer inspection turns out to be something else. Already just from this quote it is clear that the better-understanding-of-the-author in the sense of Kant (but also of Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814), for example) belongs to the realm of error and rational correction. When one dives into the thoughts and texts of someone, one might find that at certain points the author uses notions and formulations – say Plato and his concept of the "idea" – that do not clearly express what the author or speaker actually wants to say, Kant argues. This is where the corrections of the good thinker come in. He offers insights which the author under interpretation also could or should have had, had he only been thinking clearly and correctly enough – which he obviously had not, due to whatever reasons.

So all Kant is doing here is giving his concise version of what has been called in Chapter One of this book "Homer's nap", referring to Horace' line from his *Ars Poetica* (359): "quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus", even Homer had to take a nap sometimes. Although poets – or, we might add from Kant's perspective: philosophers – should not make mistakes, some mistakes or confusing unclarities may be discovered even in the texts of such giants as Homer (or Plato). If they had been given the time to think through thoroughly and rework their text or uttering, they would have written something else. So, assessing, and possibly correcting these mistakes is what the better understanding from Horace to Kant has in mind. It is no more and no less than helping the author say what he actually intended to say, because Kant – or any other excellent reader – did understand the real intentions of the author. There is no doubt for Horace nor for Kant that the author under discussion, if a conversation over all those centuries were possible, would have listened to his interpreter, then would have wisely nodded and happily corrected his mistake, discovered by a reader who understood him better than he understood himself. It may be clear that this has nothing to do with problematising authorial intention. On the contrary: the standard model of authorial intention itself is used here for an undisputable improvement. Why something went wrong in the speech or writing can have different reasons: maybe the utterance was syntactically or semantically not clear enough, or it seems to contradict what the author said elsewhere, or the author has not been able to follow completely the path where his own thought could have brought him etc. – all this forms a continuum for Kant. There is no sign that Kant had any doubt that the real intention of the author can be assessed and articulated by the interpreter

on the foundation of that intentional continuity, and that authorial intention is the guideline for the interpreter.

In other words: Kant's ideas on authorial intention in interpretation must be located within the standard model as outlined in the previous chapters of this book. This is corroborated by the fact that very similar views can be found in many other contributions to the hermeneutics of the Enlightenment in general. I will try to demonstrate this with regard to only one more example, Martin Chladenius' *Einleitung zur richtigen Auslegung vernünftiger Reden* (Introduction to the correct interpretation of rational speech and writing) from 1742. Chladenius, too, departs from an explicit distinction between understanding the author ("den Verfasser") and the text ("die Rede oder Schrifft", Chladenius 1969, 86 f.). This distinction is necessary for Chladenius because no one is able to oversee everything he does, writes or says in all its details. The effort to understand both aspects can lead to different results, Chladenius holds. But in the end, the task of the interpreter is to make these differences congruent ("übereinkommen"), whether they stem from interpretations on a semantic or syntactical level, or from the conclusions a reader or interpreter takes from these levels. For Chladenius, there is only one trajectory that will make this congruence possible: "In order to get there, one has not been able to give other rules and means ("Regeln und Mittel") [...] than this: that one should consider the intention of the author, and not transgress it" ("daß man auf die Absicht des Verfassers sehen, und dieselbe nicht überschreiten solle", Chladenius 1969, 540). It is obvious that Chladenius takes the intention of the author as the main point of orientation in interpretation, too, and that in regular cases, there is an intentional continuum between authorial intention and the intention that is attributed to the text:

> Weil ein Verfasser keine andere Absicht des Buches haben kan, als die durch das Buch, vermöge seiner Art, kan erhalten werden, so daß man die Haupt-Absicht aus der Art des Buches schlüssen kan, so siehet man, daß man die Haupt-Absicht eines Buches erkennen, folglich auch dieselbe beym Lesen und Auslegen beobachten und erhalten kan, ohngachtet uns der Verfasser nicht bekannt ist, und ohngeachtet er sich, daß dieses seine Haupt-Absicht sey, nirgends erkläret hat. (Chladenius 1969, 579)

> An author can have no other intention with the book than the one that can be derived from the book, due to its specificity, so that the main intention can be concluded from the specificity of the book. Therefore we hold that we can discover the main intention of a book and observe and receive it while reading and interpreting, even if we do not know the author and he has nowhere declared that this was his main intention. (*my translation, RG*)

Even if an author is unknown or if he has said nothing about his intentions, the situation is in principle the same as in cases when we do have information of that kind. The intention to be taken from the text and authorial intention are

in regular cases the same. The dominance of the standard model in interpretation seems to still hold and be undisputed in the eighteenth century.

However, some decades later, something had changed fundamentally. A strong indication for a different paradigm concerning the role of intention in interpretation can be found in the context of the hermeneutics of Friedrich Schleiermacher, who held a chair in theology in Berlin at the Friedrich Wilhelm University (the predecessor of the Humboldt University). From 1819 onwards, after earlier efforts during his time in Halle around 1805 and in Berlin around 1810, Schleiermacher had intensified his efforts for developing a general hermeneutics, as a foundation for a New Testement hermeneutics (Hermans 2015, 91 f.). Though Schleiermacher never published a book on hermeneutics during his lifetime and developed his thoughts in unpublished university lectures, we fortunately do posess written notes of the author and scripts by his students from the 1819 lectures, published by Friedrich Lücke four years after Schleiermacher's death, in 1838, under the title *Hermeneutik und Kritik* (Hermeneutics and Criticism). In the passages that are interesting for the present book, on first sight, Schleiermacher uses the same words and opposition as Kant when he speaks about understanding the author better than he understood himself. The quotation marks that Schleiermacher uses in this passage point into the same direction. However, on closer inspection it is no longer "Homer's nap" or the realm of error and mistakes that Schleiermacher has in mind when he defines the task of the literary critic:

> Die Aufgabe ist auch so auszudrücken, 'die Rede zuerst ebensogut und dann besser zu verstehen als ihr Urheber.' Denn weil wir keine unmittelbare Kenntnis dessen haben, was in ihm ist, so müssen wir vieles zum Bewußtsein zu bringen suchen, was ihm unbewußt bleiben kann, außer sofern er selbst reflektierend sein eigener Leser wird. (Schleiermacher 1995, 94)

> The task is to be formulated as follows: 'To understand the text at first as well and then even better than its author.' Since we have no direct knowledge of what was in the author's mind, we must try to become aware of many things of which he himself may have been unconscious, except insofar as he reflects on his own work and becomes his own reader. (qtd. from Mueller-Vollmer 2006, 83)

What Schleiermacher outlines here in passing can be taken as the professional task of the professional critic. For Schleiermacher, understanding others' utterances and texts is hard work based on rules. Roughly speaking, the critic, in terms of method, has to take two steps. The first places the speaker/writer within the specific state of the language of his times (what Schleiermacher calls "grammatical" interpretation), the second step ("technical", in later writings "psychological" or "divinatory" interpretation) "proceeds as if one had to get to know the

language from the speaker's discourse; it rests on the knowledge of the speaker's individuality" (Hermans 2015, 93). For Manfred Frank, it is primarily on this second level that a critic or a philologist, due to his professional knowledge of hermeneutics and his imaginative effort, is able to understand the author better than he understood himself – lesser so on the level of some 'objective' meaning of the text: objective insights can be reached or expanded, but hardly made "better" (Frank 1995, 55). However, this task is an infinite one ("eine unendliche"), as Schleiermacher adds immediately (Schleiermacher 1995, 94; Mueller-Vollmer 2006, 83) – "better understanding" of the critic as a historical being will always be by approximation (Hermans 2018, 30 f.).

According to the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (1990, 197– 201; cf. Strube 1999, 137– 139), in the quote given above Schleiermacher connects the romantic aesthetics of the genius ("Genieästhetik") with general hermeneutics on the level of poetics. From that perspective, the critic is able to discover and make explicit regularities and rules on the level of the artwork of which the author normally has not been aware. This is comparable for example to what many native speakers experience: they are perfectly able to produce grammatically correct sentences, while most of them will not succeed in formulating the grammatical rules that they implicitly do (or do not) follow. What applies to producing grammatically correct language, applies, to a certain degree at least, to producing poetry, too, according to Schleiermacher and others. As the comparison indicates, Schleiermacher is not talking about linguistic or other shortcomings which an author might want to correct, after having listened to the critic. The critic is now primarily someone who is able to explain explicitly what the author has done intuitively. Only in exceptional cases, when the author becomes his own critical reader, might the author be able to do the same as the critic, Schleiermacher adds. With other words, the critic has gained professional expertise that allows him to discover regularities and articulate interpretations concerning literary texts or works of art that only someone with his special knowledge can have. In that sense, the professional critic can understand the author better than he understood himself.

Manfred Frank gives an interpretation of Schleiermacher's phrase that confirms the basic points of our argument, though he frames it differently. For Frank, the better-understanding-of-the-author is not so much about hermeneutics and genius aesthetics, but about criticism and the historicity of the critic. Just like the work of art and its author, so is the critic always part of history and historical change. The special expertise of the critic lies in a better understanding from a double historical perspective regarding the historical context of the author under discussion. An author can never have been fully aware of his own historical context, and he cannot know in which direction history will

move. This is where the professional historical understanding of the critic comes in, which enables him to understand the author better than he understood himself, according to Frank. For Schleiermacher this professional knowledge can never be absolute and his critical task will never be finished. Therefore the specialisation of the critic is not about fixing an objective interpretation, but about increasing the richness of meaning of the work of art ("Steigerung seiner Sinnfülle") in the course of history (Frank 1995, 55). Also from Frank's reading of Schleiermacher, the critic's perspective differs fundamentally from that of the author under interpretation. It is the critic who has professional – in this case: historical – knowledge at his disposal only he can have. He gets, so to speak, a passport that allows him to travel in regions that normally are not accessible to the author, and to come back from there with insights only professional critics can have. One might say that the critic brings to light something that implicitly was already there, not that he tries to make an author change his text after the critic has understood him better. In regular cases, the text of the author is written exactly as it should be written. Schleiermacher is not aiming at improving the text of the author, as could be said of Horace, Gibbon, Kant and Fichte, but at legitimising a fundamental difference between the perspective of the author and that of the critic in interpretation.

That way, the critic transgresses the boundaries of authorial intention without undermining the authority of the author. Schleiermacher at no point articulates an opposition between the author and the text in intentional terms, let alone asks us to deliberately ignore the intention of the author. The intention that a professional critic uncovers in the text stands so to speak on the shoulders of an author, but due to his historical and/or literary critical expertise, the critic can look further than the author. This makes it possible to articulate relations the author has not explicitly articulated or maybe even has not seen. In the end, this comes down to a structural addition to the authorial intention in interpretation and not to a neglect of it. The professional critic *sensu* Schleiermacher is just wrapping an extra layer of meaning around what the author intended, as his phrasing indicates: the critic must "understand the text at first as well as" the author has understood it himself before he can start to understand the text "even better" – not in the sense of "end of case", but as embarking on a potentially unfinishable critical enterprise.

What has been outlined here, departing from some remarks made by Friedrich Schleiermacher, will turn out to be exemplary for changes in the professional behaviour of academic interpreters within their institutional contexts from the nineteenth century onwards, as we will see.

Some aspects of the institutional context of Schleiermacher's better understanding

A critical reader of the present book who might go along with this reconstruction of a new and fundamentally different concept of authorial intention in interpretation at this point of our argument, after more than 2000 years, nevertheless might find it unsatisfactory to stay at the level of concepts only. When, since antiquity, concepts of authorial intention have been at the centre of the professional dealing with literature and have been undisputed so far, what leads critics to change that practice? Or, to ask the same question in a more theoretically informed fashion, from Bourdieu's perspective: to what extent can view's like Schleiermacher's be analysed as strategic behaviour – be it deliberate or not – that is functional within the literary and academic world of Germany around 1800? Although it is difficult to answer that question while a systematic reconstruction of the German literary field at that time is not yet available, at least some institutional arguments can be given to argue that this view was crucial for the professionalisation of philology in the nineteenth century.

First of all, regarding literature, one can state that the number of writers in Germany and elsewhere in Europe increased substantially around 1800. Of course, the figures must be viewed with some reservation, since "writer" is a non-institutionalised profession without a fixed training, exams and, at that time, without professional organisations. But the tendency Siegfried J. Schmidt (all following figures and quotes are from Schmidt 1989, 291–293) has extracted from different sources gives at least an indication for where we might look for an answer to our question. Around 1766, the number of writers in Germany is estimated to be between 2,000 and 3,000, around 1800 the figure has risen to more than 10,000. Contemporary sources talk about an "army" of writers, discussing at length the reasons for the present boom in writing in Germany ("Ursachen der jetzigen Vielschreiberei in Deutschland"). However impressionistic these indications may seem, the general tendency is confirmed by figures on the book market. Not only does the number of books produced in Germany double between 1775 and 1800 from an average of 2,000 a year to 4,000. Within that growth the number of literary titles increases from 6% in 1740 to 22% in 1800. Just looking at the share of the novel at the Easter Book Fair in Leipzig, it grows from 20 titles in 1740 (2,7%) to 300 titles in 1800 (22%). Such a growth however means that from the perspective of the critic the group of writers – contemporary writers! – becomes more and more heterogeneous. That the critic "knows the author" (to refer to the formulation of Gregory the Great from above) – as canonised authority, personally, or at least as a member of a more or less homogeneous social group – becomes more and more unlikely given such numbers. The development

of Friedrich Nicolai's journals *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek* (1765–1792) and *Neue Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek* (1793–1806) points in the same direction. During the more than forty years of its existence, 433 critics reviewed about 80,000 books, of which about 20,000 were literary works. The declared aim to review *all* books published in Germany was reached from the beginning until 1769 – only five years after the launch of the journal. Some years later the journal reviewed only half of what was published (cf. Schmidt 1989, 372). The quantitative growth of the group of authors and literary books had turned into a new quality, to say the least.

The mentioning of Nicolai's journal leads to my second point. There is not only a growth of authors and books, but also a similar growth of critical journals. This is often called "explosive" regarding the number of titles, the number of printed volumes, but also regarding the duration of surviving on the market. This process is accompanied by a much greater differentiation of types of journals: not only in Germany, but also in France or England (Johannes 1995, 1997). The rocketing number of books to be reviewed and journals to publish these reviews in, in combination with the differentiation of journals and specialisation of critics, can be seen as one of the most important contextual factors for the birth of literary criticism as an institution around 1800. In that process, the behaviour of critics followed the general logics of the eighteenth century: professionalisation, autonomisation and finally institutionalisation (cf. Schmidt 1989, 360–380 et passim).

Given this background, one could hold that a concept such as Schleiermacher's "better understanding" from around 1819 fulfilled two functions within literary criticism: on the one hand, it weakened the orientation towards the author as a guideline in interpretation, because authorial intention became a transitory stage on the way towards a goal always on the horizon: to understand the author better than he understood himself. In other words, the authority of the author was incorporated into the critic's practices and became a kind of auxiliary element. On the other hand, the function of Schleiermacher's concept was to give the critic more independence and space with regard to the author, making his own professional work easier with regard to the growing number of increasingly heterogeneous writers, and with regard to his fellow critics, from whom he could distinguish himself with his claim of "better understanding". Still, the continuity with the standard model makes Schleiermacher's concept more an evolution than a revolution, since it still takes the initial part of its legitimacy from the authority of the writer and the reconstruction of the author's intention. On the basis of this foundation, in a second but decisive step, the critic can add his own interpretation, and so leave authorial intention behind. It is this second step, with which the critic gains the space to prove his specific knowledge and profession-

alisation – he underlines his relative autonomy, to speak with Bourdieu. This way, he can distinguish himself from authors, non-professional readers and other critics.

The plausibility of this view may further be corroborated with a brief look at the afterlife of this formula over the course of the nineteenth century, for example in the work of August Boeckh, Wilhelm Dilthey and Hajim Steinthal (cf. Gadamer 1990, 197–201.). Steinthal, for example, a professor in Berlin, too, claimed in his introduction to psychology and linguistics from 1881: "The philologist understands the speaker and poet better than he understood himself and better than his contemporaries understood him. Because he makes explicitly conscious, what in the minds of the speaker/poet was actually present, but in an unconscious way." (qtd. from Gadamer 1990, 197; *my translation, RG*) Because the philologist has access to the "psychological laws", he can reconstruct the causality steering the writer's activities, Steinthal holds.

This kind of conceptual passport for scholars' extra activities can also be found outside the universities, for example in socialist literary criticism of the second half of the nineteenth century. It can be recognised for instance in the way Friedrich Engels deals with his admiration for Honoré de Balzac. This was problematic in so far as Engels saw Balzac as someone with sympathies for the aristocratic system. Engels' interpretation of Balzac's *La Comédie Humaine* departs from the idea that these are very realistic novels – in that regard Engels is in accordance with the intention of the author. But the *socialist* critic Engels then is able to show that the novels as a whole turn against aristocracy – and they do so despite the intention of the author. Such a reading confirms Balzac's realistic intentions (understanding the text as well as its author ...) but at the same time transgresses their political limitations (... and then better; cf. Marx and Engels 1968, 158 ff.). In a similar way, a socialist critic like Walter Mehring reinterprets the bourgeois canon from a socialist perspective. And according to one of the editors of the German socialist paper *Vorwärts*, Heinrich Ströbel, the authors of what he calls "honest realism" such as Ibsen, Zola, Hauptmann and Tolstoy are standing closer to the working class than to the bourgeoisie, even if these authors are not socialists (cf. Bürgel 1987, xxii–xxvii). This pattern of interpretation established in nineteenth century socialism functioned as a blueprint for the decennia of socialist literary criticism to come, as for example Georg Lukács' interpretation of Heinrich von Kleist (1777–1811) in the 1940s shows. For Lukács, with regard to "class psychology", Kleist belonged to the reactionary Prussian elite and his artistic intentions were those of the predecessors of decadent bourgeois literature. Still, in his masterpieces *Michael Kohlhaas* or *Der zerbrochene Krug* (*The Broken Jug*) "reality itself overcame his intentions

and led to a 'victory of Realism'" (qtd. from Sembdner 1997, 434; *my translation, RG*).

In all these cases, the socialist critic could, due to his expertise at the level of socialist laws of history, transgress the authorial realistic intention and provide a new interpretation of the texts. This way, he could attribute to the texts a message that was established behind the backs of the authors so to speak, because of his own professional expertise as a socialist critic. Because the authors did not have that expertise, this understanding of their texts was out of reach for them – except in cases where authors would try to gain that socialist knowledge afterwards ("except insofar as he reflects on his own work and becomes his own reader"). The same pattern may be found in the psychoanalytic better understanding of literary texts around 1900 when professional readers with psychoanalytic expertise can find traces of the unconscious and what is hidden in the literary text, comparable to the psychoanalytic interpretations of dreams (cf. Schönau 1991, 98 ff.; Strube 1999, 143–145). Even without giving more examples: I hope the claim that Schleiermacher's concept can be related to the foundation of the modern concept of the critic has gained some plausibility.

But there are also arguments for the claim that, at universities, Schleiermacher's concept contributed to the birth of philology, especially when we look at the institutionalisation of the discipline in close contact and in contrast with legal studies. From our perspective, it is striking that the better-understanding formula *sensu* Schleiermacher can be found at exactly the same time in a legal context in the writings of the famous German legal scholar Friedrich Carl von Savigny. In the context of a continuing discussion about the influence of Schleiermacher on von Savigny (cf. Rückert 2001, 310–313), Joachim Rückert carefully scrutinises parallels in their writings and finds very evident ones concerning the "better understanding" phrase. Not only does he show that this formula can be found in several places in the written works of Schleiermacher, dating back as early as 1810. But also von Savigny uses this formula in the same sense as Schleiermacher in several places in his works. The earliest match is in 1808 when von Savigny states: "Without exaggeration one can say about our new law books that the only one knowing them adequately is the one who knows them better than their authors." ("Man kann ohne Übertreibung von unsern neuen Gesetzbüchern sagen, daß nur der sie recht kennt, der sie besser kennt als ihre Verfasser.", qtd. from Rückert 2001, 316) For von Savigny, this better understanding is the consequence of his conviction that the professional legal scholar shows his expertise through his knowledge and reflection of the law's specific historicity. Only from a thorough historical perspective is a "better" understanding of the law possible. And von Savigny, too, distinguishes principally between two different perspectives that have nothing to do with error and mis-

takes, as in the older tradition of better understanding: these two perspectives are that of the makers of the law – the legislative power – and that of legal scholarship. The perspective of the latter requires specific historical expertise in order to fulfil a task that opens up insights only the trained judicial scholar can have.

According to Rückert, it is impossible to say with regard to Schleiermacher and von Savigny who influenced whom on this point. Rückert concludes: "We should speak of one congenial theoretical camp." (Rückert 2001, 324; *my translation, RG*) While I would agree on the question of parallels, I would like to add however that Rückert's analysis restricts itself to the level of conceptions and ideas, as much research on the birth of disciplines does (cf. Voßkamp 1994; Pietsch 2013, 56; Renner 2013, 245). Such a conceptual perspective neglects the function of Schleiermacher's and von Savigny's better-understanding formula on the level of professional behaviour. On that level, the formula opens up a route towards new and specific scholarly expertise. When one takes this function into account, the differentiation of the disciplines of law and philology as academic disciplines in their own right during the first half of the nineteenth century shares its institutional and behavioural foundation to a large degree with the concept that can be traced in Schleiermacher's and von Savigny's better-understanding formula. This foundation makes the differentiation concept more plausible since it allows for incorporating the institutional behaviour of empirical scholars into the analysis of concepts.

Such a foundation facilitates a twofold explanation of the professional behaviour of university scholars historically. First, as a possibility for the legitimation of specific and reliable knowledge in the emancipation and specialisation process of the two faculties involved, Philosophy and Law, including their competition with other faculties such as Theology or Medicine. Second, the better-understanding formula opens up new and broader space for scholars' positionings. This space was previously limited – to put it bluntly for the sake of contrast – mostly to either correcting the tradition or to following it by simply adding knowledge. The additional possibilities to speak with professional knowledge about the object of one's study turn out to be functional in the light of a dramatically increasing number of professional positions – it is between 1800 and the Second World War that the number of teaching positions at universities grew by a percentage unparalleled in European history until then (Rüegg 2004, 116 f.). More specifically for our focus on literary interpretation, the Philosophical faculty at the European universities transformed itself from an obligatory stepping stone for the three higher faculties Theology, Law and Medicine into a faculty in its own right (cf. Meves 1994b, 151). This was the arena for a race for unprecedented high numbers of paid university positions. As an illustration, one can think of the growth of denominations for German philology starting in

1801 with Johann Christoph Schlüter becoming the first "Full Professor of the German Style" in Münster and leading up to the first university institute for German Philology in Rostock in 1858 (cf. Meves 1994b).

At least some of the contemporary actors were explicitly aware of this differentiation process in which, from the eighteenth century onwards, economy, science, law or literature followed to a growing extent the logics of each domain itself, starting off processes of professionalisation and autonomisation within these societal areas. In the early stages of these developments, von Savigny observed in 1814 this dynamic as an eye-witness, a dynamic that was modelled theoretically by influential sociologists (cf. Luhmann 1995; Schmidt 1989; Bourdieu 2008) nearly two centuries later:

> Bey steigender Cultur nämlich sondern sich alle Thätigkeiten des Volkes immer mehr, und was sonst gemeinschaftlich betrieben wurde, fällt jetzt einzelnen Ständen anheim. Als ein solcher abgesonderter Stand erscheinen nunmehr auch die Juristen. (von Savigny 1814, 12)

> Cultural growth has the effect that all activities of a people become specialised, and what has been done collectively in earlier times, now falls into the responsibility of separate estates. Legal scholars now seem to have become such a separate corporation, too. (*my translation, RG*)

I hope I have made my point: the better-understanding-of-the-author *sensu* Schleiermacher and von Savigny can be seen as, at the same time, a catalyst and a conceptual crystallisation of a larger development towards the differentiation of the disciplines philology and law in the nineteenth century.

Summarising, and neglecting all the great differences between the positions I have mentioned, the most important common point is that all these positions imply a hierarchy of interpretation which puts the scholarly view above that of the author. It is based on a fundamental differentiation between the two perspectives of author and critic. "Better" understanding of the author is here no longer a witty paradox aiming in the end at correcting the author, as could be said from the Kantian use of the phrase. It is more a kind of strategic launch of an emancipation programme for the academic scholar who uses the author of texts (or laws) only as a stepping stone in order to reveal a more relevant interpretation of the text. This relevance was determined with regard to the development of the disciplines involved, and in that sense it was a "better" understanding. What Schleiermacher and von Savigny advocated with their use of the "better-understanding formula" therefore was also a view on their disciplines as a cumulative and progressive scholarly undertaking aiming for professional knowledge and for professional practice. The focus was on the superiority of the scholar in interpretation, regardless of whether this concerned the products of poets or of

medieval laws, and regardless of the assumption that this scholarly work was never to be finished (cf. Frank 1999, 52–57; Rückert 2013, 191–194).

For the reasons given above, I would hold that "1838" – the publication of *Hermeneutik und Kritik* – can be regarded as a conceptual milestone in the present book since it indicates the first new conceptual type of authorial intention in interpretation since Classical Greece. "1838" differs principally from the Classical and the standard model *and* it is functional in a process that led to the institutionalisation of modern philological literary interpretations as an academic discipline, in addition to classical studies. Of course I am aware of the arbitrariness of such a date as "1838" which, as we have seen, is part of a larger process that apparently has started at least thirty years earlier. But the advantages for presenting a quick historical orientation and a short metonymic referring to a complex and slow process, weigh up against the disadvantage, I think.

Finally, to avoid misunderstandings, I would like to stress that none of the variations of the 1838-concept of intention mentioned above regard authorial intention as irretrievable or as irrelevant for interpretation. The intention of the author remains important as a guideline and as the first step of understanding the text under scrutiny. In none of the variations are there indications that the intentional continuity between author, text, context and reader is questioned. The 1838 conceptual change, then, concerns mainly the criterion of better understanding: the professional expertise of the critic. The critic does not attack the authority of the author principally – definitely not as a writer, but also not as an interpreter of his own work. All he does is weaken the interpretive authority of the author structurally to the extent that the author cannot stand in the way when the critic gives his differing professional interpretations within the institution literary criticism – or, *mutatis mutandis*, in other interpretative disciplines such as the law.

Authorial intention and Russian Formalism

Considering the background reconstructed so far, the question could be asked whether the next benchmark for fundamental conceptual changes to intention in interpretation after "1838" will be some hundred years later, i.e. Wimsatt and Beardsley's "intentional fallacy" from 1946. Historically, there is at least one group of scholars between those dates worth a closer look since it is regarded in more than one respect as the cradle of modern literary theory: Russian Formalism from the 1920s. Which role did authorial intention play in Formalism and how does it differ from the existing types?

The picture that René Wellek draws in his preface of Victor Erlich's seminal book *Russian Formalism* can serve as a point of departure: "Russian Formalism keeps the work of art itself in the centre of attention: it sharply emphasises the difference between literature and life, it rejects the usual biographical, psychological, and sociological explanations of literature" (qtd. from Erlich 1980, 9). This seems to come close to concepts like intentional fallacy or Eco's *intentio operis:* someone who rejects a biographical reading and who focuses on the meaning of a work of art instead – here: the text – probably will not be too interested in authorial intention. What is striking on closer inspection though, is that in most literature on Formalism until today, the role of the author and/or authorial intention is generally formulated in "not – but" phrases: "The locus of the peculiarly literary was to be sought not in the author's [...] psyche but in the work itself" (Erlich 1980, 172f.; cf. 26, 192; cf. Hansen-Löve 1978, 225f.). Forty years later, in an overview, one of the leading experts on Formalism in Germany, Rainer Grübel, similarly writes that the aim of the group is

> [...] not to deviate literature from extra-literary facts or rules – for example intellectual or social history, the biography or the psychology of the author – but to determine is specificity, its 'literariness' given in the work itself. (Grübel 1996, 388; *my translation, RG*)

Following these exemplary quotes, there can be little doubt where the focus of Formalism theoretically lies: in the work itself and its literariness. Also the central role of *ostranenie* (foregrounding) – making the habitual strange – in relation to this literariness has been reconstructed at length and with great precision by Aage Hansen-Löve in his study *Der Russische Formalismus* from 1978. But the role authorial intention plays with regard to literariness and foregrounding is not that simple to find in the existing literature on Formalism.

A look at the indices of the most important monographs on Formalism makes our question even more intriguing: keywords such as "authorial intention" or "intention"/"purpose" are not part of the books by Erlich (1980), Hansen-Löve (1978) or Striedter (1989). Hansen-Löve's index however does give a reference under "intentionality", but only to a page discussing the orientation of the reader towards the literary text (*ustanovska*, "Einstellung") in the context of Husserl's concept of intentionality (Hansen-Löve 1978, 183; cf. Striedter 1989, 60ff). The role of the intention of the author in the interpretation of texts is not touched upon, neither on this page nor elsewhere in relation to *ustanovska*. How blind is this spot and if so, whose blindness is it?

A telling detail in this regard can be taken from Erlich's monograph. Erlich, who lived in the US from 1942 onwards and became professor in Washington and Yale in 1949, tried in his book to illuminate the differences and parallels between

Russian Formalism and American New Criticism. In the index of persons, one finds the name of Wimsatt with whom Erlich enters into discussion at several points in his book (cf. Erlich 1980, 221, 227, 273). Still, a reference to the 1946 intentional fallacy article – published in a revised version one year before Erlich's book – is not to be found on these pages. One cannot help but gain the impression that the concept of authorial intention in the picture of Russian Formalism is underdetermined in contemporary scholarship.

The same impression may go for Formalism itself. The negative (not … but) phrases referring to the author and authorial intention can be found in many early utterances by members of the group themselves. Roman Jakobson writes in *New Russian Poetry* (1921) that to "incriminate the poet with ideas and feelings" expressed in his works would be "just as absurd as the behaviour of the medieval public which beat up the actor who played Judas" (qtd. from Erlich 1980, 77). By the same token, Erlich (1980, 198) summarises that for Viktor Shklovskij, to suppose that ideas and emotions were embedded in literature was but "a sphere of reckless speculation". Also the use of the early formalist notions such as "motivation" (*motivirovka*, *motivacija*) or "mask" hardly gives a clue to which role exactly is given to the author in interpretation. Shklovskij's provocative and polemic doctrine from 1925 is exemplary in this regard: "It is unnecessary to pay attention to the biography of the poet, he writes and only afterwards looks for motivations" (qtd. from Hansen-Löve 1978, 187, note 350, *my translation, RG*). Generally, one could hold that in early Formalism, the relevance attributed to extra-literary motivation (*motivacija*) tends towards zero and, in consequence, the attention given to inner-literary motivation, the "motivation of the device" (*motivirovka priëma*) tends towards the maximum. But this terminological differentiation is not used systematically by Jakobson and Shklovskij in the 1920s (cf. Hansen-Löve 1978, 197) and even vanished over the years to come (cf. Hansen-Löve 1978, 157).

The same goes for the notion of "mask". Formalists held that "in poetry the face of the author is a mask", as Eikhenbaum remarks with regard to Anna Achmatova (qtd. from Erlich 1980, 202). This distinction was the result of the formal devices at work in literature. Il'ja Gruzdëv makes this explicit in what can be seen as the most elaborate work on mask in early Formalism, *Lico i maska* from 1922:

> Form is a unified and proportional construction. This unity and proportion of the construction form a mask, that suit of armour through which not a single thought of the author can transgress without being broken by the form. (qtd. from Hansen-Löve 1978, 276; *my translation, RG*)

It is close to stating the obvious that using metaphors usually does not facilitate a systematic and unambiguous formal discourse – which of course goes, too, for the compelling suit of armour metaphor with its connotations of battle and war. But even then, it is striking that what is said metaphorically about the author confines itself again to expressing what he *cannot* do: communicate with the reader without being broken by the formal, literary dimension of the work of art. When later in the development of Formalism "mask" is contextualised more and more in its social and communicative function, the role of the author and his intention still remain unclear. Aage Hansen-Löve summarises:

> This 'mask' must not be confused with the person or position of the author as a historical, biographical or ideological entity. It represents so to speak the sum of all 'foregrounding' devices that lead to a deformation and uncovering of such a mirroring relationship and its supposed causality. (Hansen-Löve 1978, 276; *my translation, RG*)

No doubt, this is a most adequate definition of mask – but it throws no light on what role, then, is left for the intention of the author. Finally, even when taking the reflections of Formalism on the role of the reader into account, the answer to our question remains open: in early Formalism, "no answer is given to the question of when the orientation (*ustanovka*) of the author and when that of the reader is dominating" (Hansen-Löve 1978, 224; *my translation, RG*). This can be illustrated for example with a quote from Shklovskij's "Theory of the Anecdote" from 1922, stating simply that "Something (a work of art) can be intended tragically and can be perceived as comic – and the other way round" (qtd. from Hansen-Löve 1978, 224; *my translation, RG*).

Summarising, is seems that Russian Formalists were not interested in explicating their ideas on the actual role of authorial intention in interpretation, and that the existing research on Formalism has remained very close to the self-presentation of the group on this point.

Authorial intention and Shklovskij

At the same time, interestingly enough, the Shklovskij quote above from the "Theory of the Anecdote" is telling from our perspective if one focuses on what it implies at its margins: it seems to contain indications of a rather traditional concept of authorial intention. For Shklovskij, authorial intention does seem to exist outside the work of art ("can be intended tragically"), and obviously it can be reconstructed by someone else. Let us follow that trail.

Shklovskij's *Theory of Prose* (1925) deals with interpretation especially in its Cervantes chapter, "How Don Quixote was made". The starting point for the reflections that interest us here is what seems to be an inconsistency in Don Quixote as a human within the fictional world of the novel. This character is presented sometimes as a mindless fool but at other times surprises readers and his fellow characters with words of wisdom and cleverness on literary and philosophical topics. Shklovskij argues that these sound and wise orations were originally not planned by the author, since Cervantes had composed his main character when starting out "to be a person of rather limited intelligence" (Shklovskij 1990, 72). But when the novel grew longer and did "evidently surpass Cervantes' original intentions" (Shklovskij 1990, 73), the author needed his hero as a unifying thread and let him say wise things, clever quotes etc., too. For the present book it is not relevant whether this interpretation is plausible – Victor Erlich for example disagrees strongly with it (cf. Erlich 1980, 196 f.). Here we are only interested in which concept of authorial intention it is based on. Shklovskij himself becomes most explicit in the summary of his chapter:

> Let me, with the reader's indulgence, draw the following conclusions (although it is really for the reader to draw conclusions for himself):
>
> 1. The Don Quixote type made famous by Heine and gushed over by Turgenev was not the author's original plan. This type appeared as a result of the novel's structure, just as a change in the mode of execution often created new forms in poetry.
> 2. Towards the middle of the novel Cervantes realized that in loading Don Quixote with his own wisdom, he was creating a duality in him. At that point, he began to take advantage of this duality for his own artistic ends. (Shklovskij 1990, 80)

Again, in this quote nothing suggests that Shklovskij had any doubts concerning the possibility to reconstruct the intention of author. What the "original plan" of the author was, what he "realized", what his "own artistic ends" were – all this can be discerned without any problems, it seems. Even the diachronic order of different intentions can be located exactly: the reference to Cervantes' original and later refuted intention conceptualise the author as a consciously planning and reflecting, historically located individual. For Shklovskij, authorial intention definitely is available, it is retrievable, and what is more: there are no indications that he regards its reconstruction as not desirable. On the contrary: apparently, Shklovskij needs or at least uses authorial intention as a welcome argument in his analysis of *Don Quixote* – reconstructed from the text. For him, authorial intention seems to be connected to the intention derived from the text as two communicating vessels that are connected to each other. This comes close to the concept of the intentional continuum we came across in all the pre-Wim-

satt/Beardsley concepts of authorial intention: the Classical, the standard and "1838". What is dominant however in this case, seems to be a model in the wake of Schleiermacher.

The best argument to support that claim can be taken from what is presented above by Shklovskij as the failure of Cervantes' original intention. For Shklovskij, authorial intention is finally dominated by the rules of literariness itself, by the mechanisms, structures and procedures that make literature. The peculiarity of literature determines what literature can and must do – and this process behind the back of the author dominates authorial intention, too. It is because of the laws of the literary that Cervantes' original intention had to fail, resulting in a new intention, dictated to him by the formal mechanisms at work in literature. Formalism in general and Shklovskij in person are, because of their specific expertise, able to look through these mechanisms and call them by their name, one could add to the quote from above.

When holding the concepts of the Formalists up to our typology so far, the proximity between Shklovskij's interpretation and "understanding the author better" in the wake of Schleiermacher and others is striking. For Schleiermacher, the task of the genius is to create a work of art. The task of the critic, however, is to understand that work of art in a methodological process that is based on rules and regularities, as is the work of art itself. These rules and regularities on the level of poetics and/or history need not have been in the mind of the author. Also from the perspective of Formalism and its autonomist poetics of foregrounding, something similar is the case. In these cases, the explanation is that the interpreter has expert knowledge about the formal mechanisms of literature which the author does not. But that is far from the idea of "neither available nor desirable", as in the concept of intentional fallacy. The intention that Shklovskij – or Schleiermacher – retrieve from the text takes authorial intention as a stepping stone to reach into higher and more adequate regions of interpretation. In those regions, they can articulate aspects that the author himself may not have seen at all. In effect, they are putting something on top of authorial intention. The original intention of the author may have dissolved into something that points into a completely different direction – but in this process, it has played a triggering role. So it seems that the formalist conception of intention in interpretation is part of a tradition whose earliest examples can be traced in Germany to around 1800.

In other texts by Shklovskij, one can find more evidence for this claim. In his study *Materials and Style in Lev Tolstoj's "War and Peace"* from 1928, there is for example no doubt that one can reconstruct Tolstoy's initial purpose with his novel: to write a kind of apology for Russia and the Russian nobility in the early nineteenth century (cf. Erlich 1980, 122f.). But again, this intention is

only the starting point of the interpretation along the lines of a literary-formal process that in the end leads to a different meaning of the novel. On his way to that conclusion, Shklovskij remains close to the author. For example, one of the reasons for the transformation of the original intention into something else are the ideas of Tolstoy himself about regularities and foregrounding/"making strange" (*ostranenie*):

> For Tolstoy, life was not based on rules (*vnezakonna*). Transposed into art, this worldview led to an orientation of suspicion towards life and to the urge to retell it differently, to make it strange. The main device is here [i.e., *in* War and Peace, *RG*] the reproduction of a game by a human being standing outside the game. (qtd. from Hansen-Löve 1978, 285; *my translation, RG*)

This "main device", in connection with Tolstoy's incorporation of historical and as-if-historical material into the novel, had the effect on many contemporary readers that they read the novel as a social protest questioning traditional values (cf. Erlich 1980, 123). Shklovskij summarises this literary mechanism as follows:

> The genesis of a literary device is not identical with its function. It even can happen that a device [...] transgresses its contours or maybe even includes in its realisation an opposing tendency. Concerning Tolstoy, in the end he had made exactly that society strange that he had wanted to rehabilitate. (qtd. from Hansen-Löve 1978, 422; *my translation, RG*)

More generally speaking: the laws of literature that the literary expert knows about are stronger than Tolstoy's initial intention – at least than the political part of them. Based on this expert knowledge, Shklovskij can understand Tolstoy better than Tolstoy understood himself; though one has to add that "understand Tolstoy" is here metonymic for "understand the work written by Tolstoy". But also for Shklovskij, it is far from irrelevant to understand the author and what he wanted: his expert interpretation incorporates the purpose of the author.

This concept of authorial intention remains rather stable during Shklovskij's intellectual lifespan. In his biography (!) on Tolstoy from 1963, it can be found more or less unchanged:

> Only in the artistic purpose of the author lies the deciphering of his work. It is not the architecture of a bee, but the piece of writing of a human being, a work directed towards a goal, of which its laws sometimes drift into the subconscious, sometimes drift back again into consciousness. As a result the work exists as built on purpose, but not as interpreted in every detail, it can be deciphered later in connection with other works striving for knowledge of how the world is. (Shklovskij 1981, 213; *my translation, RG*)

There is no doubt for Shklovskij that intentions do play a role in the production of art and that the interpretation include those intentions as a stepping stone – though he talks of artistic intentions ("im künstlerischen Anliegen des Autors") only. On this foundation, the superior position of the expert in terms of interpretation is built. Due to his more encompassing and deeper knowledge of literature and due to his historical distance ("später"), he can decipher ("entschlüsseln") the work in a scholarly way. This scholarly interpretation not only goes into every detail ("bis ins kleinste"), it also connects the interpretation and the artworks to fundamental knowledge ("Erkenntnis der Welt"). But what is most important to this professional expertise: it is able to uncover laws ("Gesetze") of literature that are always at work, regardless of what authors are aware of, sometimes, or not at all.

It will be plausible by now that Shklovskij presents himself as a professional expert who has other and better insights into literary works at his disposal than the literary author. But even Shklovskij legitimises his expertise more often than not by references to the esteemed authors under interpretation and their view on the matter under discussion. Tolstoy is quoted for example when he explains the introduction of family bonds between two characters in *War and Peace* as a formally motivated artistic device (cf. Shklovskij 1990, 41). Shklovskij also uses Tolstoy as an ally when both turn against explicit messages in connection with art. In his *Theory of Prose*, Shklovskij therefore quotes from a letter by Tolstoy to the Russian philosopher and critic N.N. Strakhov:

> 'If I wanted to express in words all that which I sought to express in a novel, I'd have no choice but to write the very same novel I had written in the first place. And if the critics now understand me and are able to declare in their feuilletons what it was that I had really meant to say, then I congratulate them and assure them, if I may be so bold, that they know a lot more about it than I do. [...] Now, however, when nine-tenth of what is published consists of criticism, we need people who would show us the absurdity of searching for [individual] thoughts in a work of art and who could guide the reader permanently in that endless labyrinth of structures which is the essence of art. And in accordance with those laws which serve as a foundation for those webs.' (qtd. from Shklovskij 1990, 46)

To avoid misunderstandings: the quote does not question authorial intention, it turns against explicit messages and focuses on "the essence of art". This view is what Tolstoy and Shklovskij share, and with this poetic preference they were in good company. Similar phrases can be found at least since romanticism via some Marxist writers and critics and the symbolists up to the historical avant-garde and further on (cf. Grüttemeier 2003). As an illustration, I quote the already mentioned formalist colleague Gruzdëv who writes: "unmasked sincerity [...] we call tendency" (qtd. from Hansen-Löve 1978, 276). And tendency is to be avoided in

art: such a subjection of art's own laws under ideological or mimetic force was strongly opposed by Formalism – in alliance with writers such as Tolstoy.

Tynjanov on authorial intention

Similar ideas as we have found in Shklovskij's writings are widespread among other members of the Formalist group. Take for example Jurij Tynjanov's seminal essay "On Literary Evolution" from 1927:

> We use the term 'orientation'. It denotes approximately the 'creative intention of the author.' Yet it happens that 'the intention may be good, but the fulfilment bad.' Furthermore, the author's intention can only be a catalyst. In using a specific material, the author may yield to it, thus departing from his first intention. (Tynjanov 1978, 73)

These sentences will sound familiar at this point, since Tynjanov confirms here the principle lines of Shklovskij's – and Schleiermacher's – concepts reconstructed above. Most important in that regard is Tynjanov's idea that authorial intention in the end always will be overruled and transformed by the regularities of the literary material and literary devices. But at the same time, the quote shows no doubt whatsoever that authorial intention can be reconstructed rather unambiguously: "the intention may be good". The metaphor of the "catalyst" is, as every metaphor, open for quite a range of interpretations. However, within that range, probably two aspects will be found in all realisations. On the one hand, with the focus on the outcome, the possibility of an analytical separation between authorial intention and the product, with the professional focus on the latter: it is the result that counts in the process of transformation of something into something new. But, on the other hand, it is implied that this very process would not have taken place without the catalyst in it: the product one aims for would not be there without it. In our context: the work of art needs authorial intention to come into being, and though authorial intention cannot control the work of art itself, a literary expert of the Formalist school can identify this substance and its role in the process of catalysis or fermentation. Accordingly, the examples that Tynjanov gives in this context show clear traces of authorial intention:

> *Evgenij Onegin* was first meant to be a 'satiric narrative poem' in which the author would be 'brimming over with bitterness.' However, while working on the fourth chapter, Pushkin had already said, 'Where is my satire? There's not a trace of it in *Evgenij Onegin.*' (Tynjanov 1978, 73 f.)

There is no doubt that Pushkin does have clear intentions that he tries to follow in his work and that he articulates outside it; the literary scholar reconstructs this intention based on evidence internal and external to the work. Because Formalism knows about the regularities of the literary material, it can understand and explain what happens with authorial intention in the process of writing literature – and sometimes, when the author reflects on his own writing, even *he* can explain what is happening. Tynjanov is arguing here against ideas of creative freedom and against a teleological idea of authorial intention that tries to stay as close as possible to what the author says to have put into the work. Within the typology of the present book, we could say: Tynjanov and Shklovskij turn against the standard model of authorial intention. But this does not mean that for Tynjanov, authorial intention – as something to be distinguished from the literary work as it is right in front of him or us – is irrelevant. Its reconstruction is the first step of the professional work of the scholar, before he, as a professional interpreter, will be able to systematically go one step further. And this step is decisive, since it is based on knowledge on how the laws of literature work, a knowledge that authors only have in exceptional cases, but the literary expert has by profession: "The literary function, that is, the interrelationship of work with the literary order, completes the whole thing." (Tynjanov 1978, 74)

The concept of authorial intention in Russian Formalism has turned out to be part of a tradition whose earliest examples can be found around 1800. At the core of that tradition as manifested in *Hermeneutik und Kritik* of Friedrich Schleiermacher, published for the first time in 1838, is the idea that the professional critic has the task to first understand the author as well as he has understood himself – and then to transgress the boundaries of that understanding. This transgression should take place on the basis of his expertise in literary regularities and laws – *not* as a correction of mistakes by the author. On that crucial point, the "1838"-concept differs from what we have seen in the Classical and the standard model of authorial intention. But at the same time, there is quite some overlap between the new type of intention in interpretation and the old ones. What they share is the idea that the intention of the author can be reconstructed and that this reconstruction is relevant for the interpretation of a text, since they all rely on the concept of an intentional continuity between author, text, context and reader. For Schleiermacher and those interpreting in the same tradition however, reconstructing authorial intention leads only to a preliminary result. The professional interpreter as an expert has the legitimation to trespass that line and to act professionally on the far side of whatever the author may have thought, liked, disliked or intended.

As a result, the "1838"-concept guarantees more space for professional interpretations and positions for Schleiermacher, Shklovskij or others, in comparison

with those critics who are more or less bound by the limitations given by author-ial intention in the Classical and the standard model. In that sense, one can see in, among others, Schleiermacher or Shklovskij leading figures for the institutional emancipation and professionalisation of the modern critic and scholar. At the same time, however, they still legitimate that extra space with a foundation that literary authors remained crucial for – concerning the author's role in the making of the work of art as the first step of professional interpretation regarding the author's artistic or other intentions. Therefore, the intentional concept of the "1838"-tradition can typologically be distinguished from, on one side, the Classical/ standard model and on the other from what has been touched upon roughly as the 1946-concept of intentional fallacy in the introduction to the present book. In the following chapter, this latter difference will be highlighted more systematically.

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Chapter Five
Intentional fallacy and its slipstream – on New Critics, intentionalists and poststructuralists

More than fifty years after its birth, W.K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley's notion "intentional fallacy" still triggers articles and books with such titles as "The Intentional Fallacy: Defending Beardsley" (Dickie and Wilson 1995), "The Intentional Fallacy: Defending Myself" (Carroll 1997), "A Fallacy in the Intentional Fallacy" (Downey 2007), *The Varieties of Authorial Intention: Literary Theory Beyond Intentional Fallacy* (Farrell 2017) or "The Fallacy of 'Fallacy' and Its Implications for Contemporary Literary Theory" (Altieri 2017). Peter Lamarque (2009, 115) summarises: "The Wimsatt and Beardsley article stirred up an immense amount of debate which, perhaps distortingly, came to dominate philosophy of literature and which still rumbles on." Obviously, the concept is not only having a strong and lasting impact on debates on interpretation – it also has great potential to polarise and its evaluation shows many contradictory voices. Some speak of one of the "central documents" in the development of New Criticism, being "one of the clearest theoretical statements concerning the creation of a criticism in which the meaning of the work itself becomes the focus of critical attention, rather than investigations into the birth of the work in the personal experience of the author", as Anna Carew-Miller (1995, 399) holds in *The New Criticism and Contemporary Literary Theory*. Others however criticise the concept's lack of clarity, holding that the line of argumentation in the article cannot be reconstructed without difficulties (cf. Danneberg and Müller 1983, 106) or that its basic thoughts have been articulated by Robert Penn Warren and Cleanth Brooks much more clearly (cf. Jancovich 2000, 212).

A possible explanation for this heterogeneous picture may be found in the complex and long coming-of-age story of the notion and the concept. The first contours can be found already in the early 1940s in an article by Wimsatt in which he writes about a "very serious fallacy, that of making the intention of the author equal to the intent or total design of the poem itself" (Wimsatt 1942/43, 142). The first co-publication with Beardsley on this matter was the entry "Intentionality" for an encyclopaedia (Beardsley and Wimsatt 1943), leading to the coining of the notion in the seminal article with the very title "The Intentional Fallacy" in 1946 (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1946). This article was revised in 1954 in Wimsatt's *The Verbal Icon* and then reprinted many times, while also being the object of a careful retrospection by Wimsatt in 1968: "Genesis: A Fallacy Revisited" (Wimsatt 1968). All this amounts to a timespan of more than 25

years of academic attention for intentional fallacy by its spiritual fathers. Yet, on the other side again, Bernard O'Donoghue calls the article "least representative" for the work of Wimsatt (cf. O'Donoghue 2002, 143). Surprising in this regard, too, is that in *Literary Theory and Structure* (Brady et al. 1973) – the volume published in honour of Wimsatt's 65th birthday, with a very broad title, indeed – not a single contribution is devoted to intentional fallacy. It even cannot be found in its index under the – for the rest – very differentiated lemma "Wimsatt".

All these complexities and contradictions seem to call for a systematic reconstruction of the concept, its launch and its reception. As my point of reference I will take the article from 1946, mainly because the seminal notion "intentional fallacy" originates from there, but also for pragmatic reasons: the conceptual differences at specific historical moments can be shown easiest when taking the article in *Sewanee Review* as the frame.

Intentional fallacy as a radical break

In the preceding chapters, Wimsatt and Beardsley were quoted several times with their idea from 1946 that authorial intention is "neither available nor desirable". In its complete version, the sentence runs as follows: "The design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard for judging the success of a work of literary art" (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1946, 468). Some twenty years later, Wimsatt specified that, right from the start, the concept was meant to be not only about the evaluation, but also about the interpretation of a text. Therefore, according to him, the authors better should have written in 1946: "The design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard for judging either the meaning or the value of a work of literary art" (Wimsatt 1968, 222).

What Wimsatt and Beardsley meant by "success" was obviously "either the meaning or the value". This self-correction confirms only what one might have taken already from the argument of the whole article. Also the discussions following the publication of the article show no doubt that intentional fallacy addresses problems of interpretation – for most this was even *the* central focus of the concept. Having said that, what was meant then in 1946 by the sentence that in the interpretation of literary texts, authorial intention was "neither available nor desirable"? And how does this concept relate to the others discussed in the present book so far? I would like to answer these questions on three different levels, to be discussed subsequently: that of the literary work of art, that of the literary author and that of the literary critic.

To start with the level of the work itself: the concept intentional fallacy is closely related to a specific conception of what the literary work *is*, circling around MacLeish's "A poem should not mean but be" (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1946, 469). In consequence, Wimsatt and Beardsley's view on literature implies a turning away from ethical or other messages, away from the expression of feelings or personal views. Positively speaking, it focuses on the work of art as an artefact that is to a large degree autonomous with regard to the world surrounding it: "A poem can be only through its meaning – since its medium is words – yet it is, simply is, in the sense that we have no excuse for inquiring what part is intended or meant" (ibid.). This is seen by Wimsatt and Beardsley as what is specific for literature – as opposed to non-artistic utterings.

By the same token, the non-availability of authorial intention is for them not an empirical problem (for example in the sense of missing documents in which the author addresses his intention explicitly), but what they call a "theoretical-philosophical" problem. Whatever the author may have said outside the work of art about his intention will never come close to the riches of the autonomous work of art itself: "No better evidence, in the nature of things, can be adduced than the poem itself" – that is how Wimsatt explains in 1968 what was meant in 1946 by authorial intention being "not available" (Wimsatt 1968, 222). Without going into a debate at this point, one should add here at least that the phrasing may trigger misunderstanding. What Wimsatt and Beardsley present as a "theoretical-philosophical" non-availability in the end turns out to be the circular consequence of an autonomous conception of literature, focusing per definition on the work itself and not on the author – let alone on his teachings. When the axiom is that one should look at the work and the work only, then this implies that the author and his ideas are not at the focus of the critical enterprise. "Not available" plays with the air of critical description and fact, hinting at a problem or at being an argument concerning critical interpretation – but in the end it boils down to a normative view about what the work of art, of what literature *is*. In other words: it is about a specific view on poetics, an autonomist poetics to be more precise.

There is more evidence for the close connection between intentional fallacy and a specific poetics. On the circumstantial level, one might remember that for M.H. Abrams, MacLeish's phrase "A poem must not mean but be" is the prototypical expression of what he sees as an autonomist – in his terminology: "objective" – poetics (Abrams 1953, 27–28). In the article by Wimsatt and Beardsley itself, their affinity with and esteem for a poet such as T.S. Eliot, usually characterised as a representative of this autonomous poetics (cf. Menand 2000, 21–41), points in the same direction. They refer for example at length to Eliot's massive use of allusions in his poetry (often marked as such in notes) and state: "where-

as notes tend to seem to justify themselves as external indexes to the author's intention, yet they ought to be judged like any other part of a composition" (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1946, 484; cf. 482–487). In other words: the critic should deal with any part of a literary text published by a poet as part of the poem – including what some might read as paratexts giving information about an author steering the reading of his poem.

It is interesting to see what Wimsatt and Beardsley do when a poet is not strengthening the autonomy of the poem enough, for example when Eliot seems to regard his own authorial intention as important, according to his utterances about his own poetry (cf. Eliot 1963, 13–22). Then they criticise exactly this behaviour: "If Eliot and other contemporary poets have any characteristic fault, it may be in planning too much" (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1946, 485). Their ideas on the nature of the literary work or rather the poetics that Wimsatt and Beardsley defend, is one in which the author should play no role in interpretation of the poem at all – at least to a lesser degree than Eliot himself seems to think.

Evidently, intentional fallacy is related closely to an autonomist poetics. This poetics serves to legitimise the concept and its use in interpretation. The appropriate professional handling of literature is, at least to a large degree, connected to specific ideas on the nature, function and properties of literature. In comparison, the same can be said of course for the standard model of authorial intention or for Schleiermacher's better understanding. Both are intertwined with the dominant poetics of their times: variations of teaching-and-delight from antiquity to around 1800 or a form of genius aesthetics in the case of Schleiermacher. When the New Critics now practise their concept of intention in interpretation on the foundation of an autonomist poetics, then we must add, too, that they were not the first ones to do so – the interpretative practices of Russian Formalism, discussed in Chapter Four, can be regarded as a predecessor. Following that historical perspective a little longer, also in the US already long before the New Critics, one can discern conceptions of professional interpretation of literary texts that seem to be founded on an autonomist or "objective" poetics. Martin Wright Sampson, appointed in 1895 as head of the English department at the University of Indiana, described the ideal of academic teaching with letting the students "systematically approach the work as a work of art, find out the laws of its existence as such" (qtd. from Graff 2007, 123). But, as in the other cases touched upon above – T.S. Eliot, Russian Formalism – such a dedication towards a poetics of the literary work as autonomous does not entail a radical turning away from the author in interpretation as is expressed in "neither available nor desirable". In other words, conceptions of literature in which autonomy plays a dominant role seem to be a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for Wimsatt and Beardsley's concept of intentional fallacy. What must be added?

The specific concept of the author in interpretation – our second level of discussing the topic – seems crucial in this regard. A good starting point is Wimsatt and Beardsley's polemic against "Professor Stoll" – Elmer Edgar Stoll – in "The Intentional Fallacy". Stoll had compared the literary critic with a judge who had to give a verdict about a will, a contract or the constitution. In such cases, what the judge and the critic would and should do is pay attention to "the author's meaning or intention", because as the legal texts do not belong to the judge, so the literary text does not belong to the critic. Wimsatt and Beardsley agree whose possession the poem is *not* (i.e., the critic's), but they strongly disagree with paying attention to authorial intention. For them, the poem neither belongs to the critic *nor* to the author: "it is detached from the author at birth and goes about the world beyond his power to intend about it or control it" (cf. Wimsatt and Beardsley 1946, 470). From this perspective, it is obvious that the author has no function at all in interpretation – in opposition to the standard model reconstructed above.

Concerning the model connected with Schleiermacher, however, one might see some parallels, at least at first sight: for those in the tradition of understanding-the-author-better-than-he-understood-himself and for Wimsatt/Beardsley, an author is not able to *control* the meaning of his text. But within Schleiermacher's model, as within Stoll's, authors still were able to intend about their texts. For Wimsatt and Beardsley, that seems not to be the case, or at least: they claim that it is irrelevant. Since what happens when a text is published is that the rights of property change to the disadvantage of the author: "The poem belongs to the public". There are two reasons for this: one, the poem is made of language ("the peculiar possession of the public") and two, it is made by humans ("an object of public knowledge") (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1946, 470). All that is left for the author is playing a role in the *production* of the linguistic artefact. In interpretation, he does not play any role for Wimsatt and Beardsley, because their programme is "not wishing to make the poet (outside the poem) an authority" (Beardsley and Wimsatt 1946, 471). In other words, "intentional fallacy" constitutes a new type within the range of concepts of authorial intention in interpretation discussed so far. It is a view that indeed differs radically from what we saw with regard to Schleiermacher or Russian Formalism, let alone compared to ideas of Greek and Roman antiquity or the standard model.

What exactly then is the role of the literary critic – our third level of exploration – within this concept? To start with, one must keep in mind that for Wimsatt and Beardsley, the expropriation of the author as shareholder in the interpretation of his poems is *not* aiming at the unlimited freedom of individual interpretations of individual readers – that would be another fallacy, the "affective fallacy" (cf. Wimsatt 1954). When Wimsatt and Beardsley say "public", as

quoted above, they mean an informed and professional public. Obviously, the argument that the poem "belongs to the public" primarily aimed at getting rid of every orientation towards the author in interpretation – not at defending the view that any reading of a poem by the public is a legitimate one. What the expropriation was about was in the end to give the floor to the professional reader as Wimsatt and Beardsley see him. They situate this professional reader on the same level as other scientists: "What is said about the poem is subject to the same scrutiny as any statement in linguistics or in the general science of psychology or morals" (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1946, 470).

Accordingly, Wimsatt and Beardsley devote much attention to systematising arguments of method, most explicitly with regard to the distinction between "internal and external evidence for the meaning of the poem" (cf. Wimsatt and Beardsley 1946, 477 f.). For them, there is (1) internal, public evidence on the basis of semantics and syntax or, more generally, "through all that makes a language and culture"; (2) external evidence of a private or idiosyncratic kind: "it consists of revelations (in journals, for example, or letters or reported conversations) about how or why the poet wrote the poem"; and finally (3) a kind of in-between evidence telling the reader "about the character of the author or about private or semi-private meanings attached to words or topics by an author or by a coterie of which he is a member". The same threefold distinction had been used by Wimsatt and Beardsley already in their encyclopaedia article from 1943. At this point I am not interested in the vague difference between the types (2) and (3) – a vagueness Wimsatt and Beardsley themselves admit. Also the question whether type (2) is rightfully characterised as primarily "private" in character, let alone "idiosyncratic" (cf. Graff 2007, 188 – 192), is not crucial for the line of argument of the present book. What is crucial, though, is the conclusion that Wimsatt and Beardsley draw from their typology of kinds of evidence:

> A critic who is concerned with evidence of type (1) and moderately with that of type (3) will in the long run produce a different sort of comment from that of the critic who is concerned with type (2) and with (3) where it shades into (2). (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1946, 478)

What is called here "a different sort of comment" – in 1943 one could read "a vastly different sort of criticism" (Beardsley and Wimsatt 1943, 327) – is of course not a neutral choice. The article from 1946 is a passionate plea for the criticism of the first kind, that is: the critic should use evidence (1) and "moderately" (3). Especially the last lines of the article leave no doubt about their overall aim to bring about changes in criticism. While pursuing the question whether a certain verse of T.S. Eliot's "Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" is an allusion to a verse by John Donne, the authors mention that the critic might ask Eliot himself while he

is alive (i.e. to gain evidence of type (2), one might add). After raising this possibility, "The Intentional Fallacy" ends with the following sentences:

> Our point is that such an answer to such an inquiry would have nothing to do with the poem 'Prufrock'; it would not be a critical inquiry. Critical inquiries, unlike bets, are not settled this way. Critical inquiries are not settled by consulting the oracle. (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1946, 488)

Only the first type of criticism mentioned above is professional literary criticism: the one that focuses on text internal, public evidence, and moderately adds evidence concerning the circles in which the poet participated. The critic who uses "private", external evidence (type (2)) is not a professional literary critic at all. Therefore, "The Intentional Fallacy" must be seen as a manifesto for a certain type of literary criticism – in line with New Criticism – while basically excluding its opponents from the profession. Again, a high degree of circularity is visible. The claim that professional literary criticism does not deal with "private" evidence is used to legitimise the concept of intentional fallacy – and the other way round: taking the vow of intentional fallacy means not using private evidence. This boils down to the prescriptive norm for how a professional literary critic should fulfil his professional task: by not dealing at all with authorial intention in interpretation.

After having taken a closer look at the level of poetics, the author and the critic, I hope I have made it plausible that the programmatic ban on authorial intention is something new in the history of the concept. "1946" can be given a similar status as "1838": a new concept of intention in interpretation establishes a new tradition of professional interpretation of texts. In "The Intentional Fallacy", the conceptual milestone must be located in the radical dismissal of authorial intention in the professional interpretation of literary texts. Already in 1962, the East German scholar Robert Weimann – critically – claimed that Wimsatt and Beardsley, theoretically speaking, had destroyed the author in literary criticism (Weimann 1974, 85) – a declaration of the "death of the author" already five years before Roland Barthes, be it with less applause on the side of Weimann. Also Hans Bertens' introduction to literary theory presents intentional fallacy as a ban on author-related activities by the literary critic ("The actual *text* should be our guideline, not what the author has perhaps wanted to say"), but he seems to favour that ban: "The text has become a freestanding object and the rest is up to us" (Bertens 2013, 23). He adds, obviously with one eye on the types of evidence presented by Wimsatt and Beardsley: "information about authorial intention or the direct occasion for a work of literature may be damaging rather than helpful", because it could keep the reader on the level of distracting partic-

ularities (cf. Bertens 2013, 24). These are only two voices that confirm the view of intentional fallacy as being a radical break with the traditional role of authorial intention in interpretation, to which many others could be added (for more examples see Danneberg and Müller 1983). But there are also voices pointing in another direction, as we have touched upon in the introduction to this chapter.

Intentional fallacy and the traces of tradition

In his characterisation of New Criticism, Mark Jancovich departs from the view of some opponents who present New Criticism as a "form of bourgeois individualism and/or scientific positivism" (Jancovich 1993, 5). From the point of view of these opponents, the articles by Wimsatt and Beardsley on intentional fallacy claim that the individual text has "no relation to its conditions of production or consumption" (ibid.) – for possible examples of these opponents the reader might think of Weimann (quoted above), or of Paul de Man (1971, 24–27). "Unfortunately", Jancovich continues, these views are wrong: "For the New Critics, the critic should concentrate on the formal processes of texts, formal processes within which both the intentions of the author and the responses of the reader were framed" (Jancovich 1993, 5). It is from these premises that Jancovich situates the articles "The Intentional Fallacy" and "The Affective Fallacy" by Wimsatt and Beardsley as follows:

> It should be clear that they were not intended to disconnect the poem from its conditions of production or consumption, but to focus criticism upon the specificity of literary activity; to identify the textual processes in relation to which literary production and consumption were defined. (Jancovich 1993, 77)

Just to be clear: that is a completely different interpretation than the one given so far of intentional fallacy. To "frame" the intentions of the author within the "formal" textual processes is hardly compatible with the intentions of the author being "neither available nor desirable" in interpretation. The same goes for Jancovich's claim that Wimsatt and Beardsley were not aiming at disconnecting the author from professional critical interpretation, which does not rhyme with "Critical inquiries are not settled by consulting the oracle", i.e. the author. In order to understand what these contradictions and the view by Jancovich are about, a short detour must be taken that will bring us back in due time to the intentional fallacy article of 1946.

Jancovich locates "Wimsatt and Beardsley's position […] close to that of Brooks and Warren in *Understanding Poetry*" (Jancovich 1993, 5). In his contribu-

tion to the *Cambridge History of Literary Criticism* on the New Critics, Jancovich even goes one step further when he first refers to Wimsatt and Beardsley's "The Intentional Fallacy" and "The Affective Fallacy", and then holds that these concepts were "more clearly articulated" by Brooks and Warren (Jancovich 2000, 212) – as already quoted in the introduction to the present chapter. How did Brooks and Warren articulate their concept of authorial intention in interpretation? The best clues for an answer can be taken from Cleanth Brooks' 1951 essay "My credo – The Formalist Critics" in *The Kenyon Review*. While Wimsatt and Beardsley had excluded the use of "external" sources (for example private documents) from the activities of the professional critic, Brooks was much less strict in that regard:

> There is no reason, of course, why we should not turn away into biography and psychology. Such explorations are very much worth making. But they should not be confused with an account of the work. (Brooks 1995, 47)

It is obvious that this is a different way of looking at authorial intention than that attributed to Wimsatt and Beardsley above. To start with, the range of legitimate evidence used by the professional critic is much broader in this view than in the one taken from the article "The Intentional Fallacy". Without any doubt, Brooks' priority is also on working with the text itself. But still, for Brooks, turning towards the biography and psychology of the author are legitimate activities of a professional scholar. The role that Brooks gives to authorial intention in interpretation is made explicit in the following remark. The professional critic must take off from the idea

> that the relevant part of the author's intention is what he actually got into his work; that is, he assumes that the author's intention as realized is the 'intention' that counts, not necessarily what he was conscious of trying to do, or what he now remembers he was then trying to do. (Brooks 1995, 47 f.)

Compared with Wimsatt and Beardsley's view, Brooks differs substantially from the picture drawn above. Brooks distinguishes within the intention of the author a "relevant part" and claims that this is part of the literary work itself – ideas that are definitely not pointing in the direction of an expropriation of the author. Conversely, it reminds us at first glance of what has been called above the idea of an intentional continuity between author and text. But something else is dominant in Brooks' concept : the idea that the professional critic cannot be bound by explicit external intentional utterances of the author. In Brooks' reflections on this point, the crucial opposition is the one between plan and artistic realisation – with the latter as the primary object of the critic. So Brooks is rather close to a

model in the wake of Schleiermacher's professional progress: first understand the intention of the author, and then transgress it, if you can.

But this means also that Brooks still does regard the author as a relevant entity in interpretation. How far this goes can be taken from his presentation of "The Intentional Fallacy" in retrospect:

> As with the intentional fallacy, I think Bill Wimsatt's essays [i.e. *'The Intentional Fallacy' and 'The Affective Fallacy'*, RG] aim to guard us from moving too far away from the text. They are not saying that authors don't have intentions and that we cannot try to study them [...]. (qtd. from Spurlin 1995, 373)

Brooks is right that Wimsatt and Beardsley nowhere say that authors have no intentions – but what they do say is that these intentions are irrelevant ("neither available nor desirable") and a no-go area ("it would not be a critical inquiry") for the literary critic in interpretation. When Brooks presents the aim of the intentional fallacy article as "only" a reminder for professional critics not to turn too far away from the literary text, then "The Intentional Fallacy" could not be characterised as a milestone in our typology. It would become a lot more traditional – and that is exactly how Jancovich (1993, 2000) sees it, relying, as has become clear in the meantime, to a large extent on Brooks himself. But how do we get out of this contradiction? Is the Jancovich reading a plausible, clearer interpretation of intentional fallacy? Or is it a misreading? I think neither nor. When one takes the context of the debate in 1946 into account, what seem to be contradictory readings of the same concept can be explained as the effect of strategic behaviour among literary critics around 1946.

The strategic dimension of "The Intentional Fallacy"

When looking back from this point to the article "The Intentional Fallacy", one cannot deny that it offers some plausible arguments for Brooks' and Jancovich's reading. They might have pointed for example at the three types of evidence (see above: (1) internal, i.e. part of the text and public; (2) external, i.e. author-related information outside the artefact, "private"; (3) "intermediate kind of evidence about the character of the author or about private or semi-private meanings attached to words or topics by the author") – which, by the way, they do not do explicitly. Wimsatt and Beardsley admit that these types cannot always be separated from each other with absolute clarity. According to them, this applies "especially" for the types (2) and (3) (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1946, 478). Taking into account, too, that the professional literary critic is allowed by Wimsatt and

Beardsley to make use of the half internal, half external evidence of type (3) – even though only "moderately", whatever that may mean (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1946, 478) – then a strict separation between text and author, as prescribed in other passages of the article, must fail. Accordingly, the line of argument at this point of their article is not easy to follow:

> The use of biographical evidence need not involve intentionalism, because while it may be evidence of what the author intended, it may also be evidence of the meaning of his words and the dramatic character of his utterance. (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1946, 478)

In other words: when two different literary critics do the same thing (taking "biographical evidence" into account in interpretation), it may *not* be doing the same thing. What receives the verdict "intentional fallacy" in one case, may in other cases be qualified as an effort to understand the text under scrutiny – that is what "need not" seems to say. Again, a systematic distinction cannot be made.

What is more, questions also arise when one neglects the reference to intentionalism and focuses only on what, following this quote, the task of the critic is. When one departs from the idea that authorial intention and intention attributed to the text may be the same ("it may also be evidence of"), but not necessarily so, then it would be plausible that especially in passages that are difficult to interpret, biographical evidence of the intentional kind should be looked for. Were it only to decide precisely what is "the meaning of his words and the dramatic character of his utterance": whether it is in accordance or in difference with "evidence of what the author intended". However, this possibility is not what Wimsatt and Beardsley allow. At the least, such an approach would contradict their professional ban on consulting the author (the "oracle"), and it would also oppose their intent of "not wishing to make the poet (outside the poem) an authority". Meanwhile, arguments for why this should not be a professional critical approach are not given by Wimsatt and Beardsley.

To be brief: at least in parts, the article "The Intentional Fallacy" seems to play both sides. On the one hand it demands a text-centred interpretation in which the author can play a role – a reading that for example Brooks offers. On the other hand, many passages of the article deny that the author should play any role in the *interpretation* of literary texts. So must we conclude that Wimsatt and Beardsley had their naps, too – though it's hard to tell in which passages?

The idea of all too human errors, in one direction or another, is not very likely, though, since there are no traces of a contemporary discussion of errors or of self-corrections among the main actors. What is more, when Wimsatt looks back

in 1968 on the launch of the concept in 1946, quite the opposite of an awareness of mistakes, internal discrepancies within the concept or only of a heterogeneous reception is articulated: "Mr Beardsley and I succeeded in formulating a clear, reasonable, and viable statement" (Wimsatt 1968, 195). What one does come across, though, are efforts by the New Critics in the wake of 1946 in which they apparently try to homogenise their positions.

This can be illustrated for example with Wimsatt's revisiting his concept in 1968. His plea for a text-oriented criticism – as opposed to a historical-biographical one – has not changed:

> Artistic activity has produced a valued result. Some critics will wish to talk about just that result. Other critics, however, will not. These will be the critics who entertain an antithetic drive toward viewing the art work as mainly a token of its source, a manifestation of something behind it, that is, the consciousness or personality of the artist (or perhaps of the society in which he lived, or of himself as representative of that society). (Wimsatt 1968, 194)

Also his autonomist conception of literature has not changed, as he explains with regard to Thomas Gray's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard:* "the *Elegy* is not *about* the historic person Gray. The self-contemplative speaker remains anonymous. The poem itself, if it were anonymous, would be intact" (Wimsatt 1968, 204). But the role explicitly given to authorial intention in interpretation *has* changed, compared to 1946:

> [...] the author's intention is sometimes said to have at least an 'advisory' force. This seems hardly a claim that ought to be debated. No doubt the author is likely to be a good guide. Yet it cannot be that on principle he is an infallible guide. As a commentator on his own works he enjoys no prescriptive, or creative, rights. If he says there is red in his poem, we will look carefully in the expectation of finding it. (Wimsatt 1968, 211)

Wimsatt is showing here quite some shifts: that authorial intention can "at least" provide advice for interpretation, that the author "is likely to be a good guide" and that this role is "hardly a claim that ought to be debated" – all this is very close to the position we have reconstructed above as Brooks'. But in the essay on intentional fallacy from 1946, none of these claims can be found. On the contrary: much of what Wimsatt and Beardsley said in 1946 contradicts the quote above. When Wimsatt restricts himself in 1968 to say that an author is not "infallible" and has no right to give "prescriptive" interpretations, then he is just saying what we have found at the beginning of the nineteenth century in the circles around Schleiermacher or in those around Russian Formalism. But saying that the author cannot control the interpretations of his texts is not a radical new position in 1946, let alone in 1968.

Wimsatt's weakening of the 1946 ban on legitimating one's professional interpretation with explicit statements made by the author is another case in point. As the quote above shows, the critic is now authorised to take into account "private" evidence: when the poet says, there is red in this poem, then the critic is not only entitled to use this claim in his interpretation, it would even be legitimate to expect this is indeed the case ("in the expectation of finding it"). To put it differently: according to Wimsatt in 1968, the critic should first try to understand the literary work as well as the author understood it.

Wimsatt's 1968 removal of the sharp edges of his concept of intentional fallacy is not an isolated phenomenon. It can be found already much earlier in a significant difference between the essay from 1946 and the revised version in *The Verbal Icon* from 1954. Maybe the most prominent passage that was deleted in 1954 was the one in which Wimsatt and Beardsley declared "not wishing to make the poet (outside the poem) an authority" (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1946, 471; cf. Wimsatt and Beardsley 1954, 5). In other words: the revision allowed one of the most radical claims from 1946 to disappear in silence, and by this deletion brought intentional fallacy closer to less radical concepts of authorial intention in interpretation. In this context, E.D. Hirsch's claim that the "careful distinctions and qualifications" of Wimsatt and Beardsley "have now vanished in the popular version which consists in the false and facile dogma that what an author intended is irrelevant to the meaning of his text" (Hirsch 1967, 11 f.) is therefore beside the point. The publishing of a phrase like "not wishing to make the poet (outside the poem) an authority" in 1946 and its deletion in silence eight years later make the frontlines between a "false and facile" and a competent reading of Wimsatt and Beardsley less straightforward. In any case they become more blurred than Hirsch apparently wants them to be, having co-dedicated his book to Wimsatt – who also was his co-fellow for several months of research in London in 1960 (cf. Hirsch 1967, xii). It is telling in this regard that Hirsch takes as point of reference for his argument the 1954 version of the Wimsatt and Beardsley essay: the 1946 original is mentioned, but only followed by a laconic and misleading "Reprinted in" *The Verbal Icon* in 1954 (cf. Hirsch 1967, 11, n. 11).

The same orchestration of positions, be it on purpose or not, can be found on the other side, as a closer look at the different editions of Brooks and Warren's anthology *Understanding Poetry* shows. The frequently reprinted book was already quoted above by Jancovich, according to whom it explains much better what intentional fallacy was about than the essay by Wimsatt and Beardsley with the very same title. When reading Brooks and Warren's "Letter to the teacher" and the "Introduction" to the first edition, there is no doubt that this anthology is grounded on an autonomist poetics. In the first edition from 1938

(here quoted according to the 1943 print) Brooks and Warren start for example with a typical autonomist tautology that "if poetry is worth teaching at all, it is worth teaching as poetry" (Brooks and Warren 1943, iv). Consequently, the job of the literary critic is to analyse the literary text as a work of art made of language material. Concerning this aspect, there is little difference with what Wimsatt and Beardsley claim in 1946 or Brooks in 1951.

But within this text-centred approach, there is room for more than the text alone: "the biographical and historical background may do much to clarify interpretation, but these things should be considered as means and not as ends" (ibid.). The author may be a stepping stone for a professional interpretation, but the critic's goal must be something else: analysing the structural elements of the poem in their organic relation, so that "the total intention" of the poem may become clear (ibid.). When we step out for a moment from the argument in the first edition from 1938: so far these thoughts are completely compatible with what Brooks claimed in 1951 and Wimsatt in 1968. But the point that is most relevant for our analysis of the strategic actions of New Criticism comes immediately after this quote. There, Brooks and Warren explain that the "Organic Nature of Poetry" is conceptualised as a whole, and that whole is – the intention of the author:

> The question then about any element in a poem is not whether it is in itself pleasing, or agreeable, or valuable, or 'poetical,' but whether it works with the other elements to create the effect intended by the poet. (Brooks and Warren 1943, 18 f.)

Such a view on authorial intention shares its main features with what was reconstructed above as the standard model, oriented in the end towards "the effect intended by the poet". This view is not compatible with the concept of intentional fallacy launched by Wimsatt and Beardsley in 1946, neither in its radical nor in its moderate version. Consequently, it will come as no surprise that it was exactly this passage that was erased by Brooks and Warren from their second edition of 1950 – without any comment on this specific point (Jancovich, by the way, uses the 1960 edition for his argument, with no further explanation). At the same time, the preceding and the following passage on the organic character of the artwork remain basically the same. Such a redecoration of one's argument makes it very likely that it was part of a strategic action trying to harmonise relevant utterances by New Critics on intention.

In order to put it more generally: since the publication of "The Intentional Fallacy", two concepts of intention in interpretation can be found within the group of New Criticism. On the one hand there is a concept that has evident parallels with Schleiermacher's model of understanding-the-author-better-than-he-

understood-himself, showing in its early stage traces of the traditional standard model, too (Brooks and Warren). On the other hand there is the concept of intentional fallacy that to a certain extent uses ideas that are familiar from the circles around Schleiermacher, but primarily claims radically different conceptual choices, especially in its principal turning away from the author as a relevant authority in the interpretation of literary texts. However, this conceptual tension does not become a subject of discussion within the circles of the New Critics. Instead, all actors keep up the idea that their own basic ideas on this topic remain unchanged, while at the same time they erase all-too-evident discrepancies with their allies and occasionally take over some of the phrases of the other side.

The sensitivity of the New Critics concerning the strategic dimension of their actions can be illustrated exemplarily with an anecdote that Cleanth Brooks tells in passing in an interview in October 1993 – Brooks died one year later, aged 87. In that interview, Brooks states among other things: "Critical debates are not necessarily resolved by consulting the author" (qtd. from Spurlin 1995, 380). In isolation, one could take this sentence as a descriptive, mild ("not necessarily") version of the order: "Critical inquiries are not settled by consulting the oracle", the last sentence of the "The Intentional Fallacy". But what immediately follows reminds us of the fact that there is a quite substantial difference between the ideas of Brooks and those launched in 1946 by Wimsatt and Beardsley:

> Years ago, in 1937, I wrote an account of Eliot's *Waste Land*. I wrote a letter to Eliot asking him to read and to comment on it if he had the time. He wrote back and said that he thought my account was very good and that it was a good way to handle the poem. I decided not to print that letter because I did not want to bolster my interpretation by having the approval of the author. I also, quite honestly, didn't want to appear to be a young man riding on the coat-tails of this great poet. Many people still disagree with my reading of *The Waste Land*, and, for what it's worth, I've got the approval of the author. (qtd. from Spurlin 1995, 380)

This passage reveals two things that are important for the point I want to make. First, it confirms that Brooks as a critic attributes to the author in matters of professional interpretation more authority than Wimsatt and Beardsley allowed for in 1946. What the professional critic Brooks had done in 1937 was exactly what Wimsatt and Beardsley had banned as non-professional in "The Intentional Fallacy": to ask the author about interpretations "would not be a critical inquiry". Second, the quote shows that this normative discrepancy around 1946 was not made part of a discussion that aimed at bringing a conceptual debate closer to a consensus. Instead, the different views were kept inside the family so to speak – for strategic reasons. The only explanation that Brooks offers for his silence on Eliot's authorial approval is that he, as a young critic, did not want to

make the impression to be a fellow traveller on the ticket of a successful poet. Seen from the perspective of the present book: the impression that Brooks wanted to make was one of a high degree of scholarly autonomy. This implied that professional interpretations should stand on their own feet according to the rules of the discipline and that they did not need the author for their interpretation, at least not in the public-professional sphere. Still, Brooks' late confession does not change the fact that around 1940 and in private, he *did* regard Eliot's approval as a relevant legitimation – and still at present, since he mentions the letter now as an argument against all those who "still disagree" with his interpretation of *The Waste Land*, "for what it's worth".

It has turned out that the self-presentation of key figures of the New Critics was based to a large extent on incidentally erasing, modifying or not telling their views on authorial intention. The effect were quite some discrepancies and different accents with regard to the group's concepts of intention in interpretation. The heterogeneous reception of intentional fallacy obviously must be explained to a large extent from this strategic dimension of the launch of the concept and the activities of the New Critics. At the same time, the picture reconstructed here shows clear efforts to smoothen the sharp conceptual edges. New Critics evidently worked hard to avoid disputes within New Criticism.

Another central figure of the New Critics, John Crowe Ransom, made explicit at the time the strategic self-consciousness of the activities analysed here. In a letter to his former student Allen Tate in 1937, he tries to convince him to become a co-editor of the new *Kenyon Review*. According to Ransom, the professorial scholarly establishment is

> in an awful dither trying to reform themselves and there's a big stroke possible for a small group that knows what it wants in giving them ideas and definitions and showing the way. (qtd. from Graff 2007, 157)

The pressure on established scholarship to change things, at the time, had different sources, among which "influential educators [...] aggressively questioning the value of liberal education" as a leisure class idea out of time in a democracy, as well as a rapidly expanding social science and the decline of the relative size of literature departments: "Each of these interrelated developments helped to undermine the institutional position of philological scholarship, eventually opening a space in the profession that allowed criticism to enter" (Wilson 2002, 77). That space is where the strategically launched and orchestrated "big stroke" of the New Critics aimed – successfully, as we know by now. But which role did the radical version of the concept of intentional fallacy play in that context? How can one explain why it was launched in 1946 as a radical

break in terms of authorial intention in interpretation, when at least some New Critics tried to dim that radicality in the decennia to come afterwards?

Concepts on authorial intention in interpretation around 1946 in the US

An important factor for explaining the positions on intention taken by New Critics and their strategic behaviour is how widely the text-centred approach was shared in the US already around 1940. The differences in textual orientation in interpretation at the time of "The Intentional Fallacy" were not as great as the New Critics would like us to think, I will argue. To start with, many adherents of the standard model in the US in the first half of the twentieth century did not show the slightest doubt that the road to what the author intended leads through an area of very careful interpretation of the text itself. An early example can be found in the ideas of the already quoted Martin Wright Sampson of the University of Indiana. In 1895 he held that the literature curriculum at university should guarantee that students were taught "face to face with the work itself", as opposed to "fill the student full of biography and literary history". Important claims of New Criticism such as turning towards the text and turning away from the biography of the author were institutionalised already at the end of the nineteenth century (cf. Graff 2007, 123). The range of this consensus around 1946 can be demonstrated when taking a closer look at the criticism of Wimsatt and Beardsley directed against E.E. Stoll in "The Intentional Fallacy". At the same time, this will illustrate how narrow the space was for alternative positionings of the New Critics concerning intention in interpretation.

As mentioned above, Wimsatt and Beardsley quote Stoll at the beginning of their essay with the question "Is not a critic [...] a judge, who does not explore his own consciousness, but determines the author's meaning or intention, as if the poem were a will, a contract, or the constitution? The poem is not the critic's own." Arguing against this view, they write:

> He has diagnosed very accurately two forms of irresponsibility, one which he prefers. Our view is yet different. The poem is not the critic's own and not the author's (it is detached from the author at birth and goes about the world beyond his power to intend about it or control it). The poem belongs to the public. (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1946, 470)

Stoll's orientation towards the author that Wimsatt and Beardsley criticise as "irresponsibility" turns out from our perspective to be a variation of the standard model of interpretation. In the quoted essay ("The Tempest") from *PMLA* from

1932 – of which only the quote above has made it into "The Intentional Fallacy" – Stoll argues *against* the claim that Shakespeare should have written *The Tempest* deliberately as his last play. Stoll summarises: "As for the play proper, apart from the objection that the interpretation does not fit the text, there is the other that it is alien from the spirit of Elizabethan popular drama, and of Shakespeare" (Stoll 1932, 704) – an exemplary illustration of the intentional unity of text, context and author, from our perspective. This concept of intentional unity is made even more explicit in the passage where Stoll argues against the many allegorical and symbolic interpretations of Prospero and Caliban: "And most of that we could have been spared if the critics had observed their primary, self-evident duty of regarding the author's meaning, of reading the text" (Stoll 1932, 720). There is no doubt that the final aim of professional interpretation is the intention of the author. But it is as obvious that the only way to get there is a careful interpretation of the text under scrutiny. Especially this latter point is highlighted in many other parts of Stoll's essay on *The Tempest*, for example in his claim that arguments for interpretations have to be found in the text itself: they should be "derived from the text" and not "imparted to it" (Stoll 1932, 699). Accordingly, Stoll criticises "the critic's not reading but reading in" (Stoll 1932, 723). With regard to textual orientation in interpretation, there is hardly any difference to be found between Stoll and the New Critics.

The same goes for what Stoll calls "the insidious biographical fallacy" – that is, the idea that Prospero would stand for Shakespeare himself: "Most of us read biography rather than poetry, and if poetry, to find the poet" (Stoll 1932, 726). To avoid misunderstandings: this line is a criticism on those who read that way, and it is a criticism authored by Stoll. Stoll is not heading for biography, but for the literary text, and he is opposing those who do not understand how much more the professional reader can bring to light "in keeping not only with the man as we know him but with the poetry which is highest" (ibid.).

Yet, there can be no doubt that Stoll's credo of textual scrutiny is situated within a model of intention that is close to the standard model, of which the final point of orientation is the intention of the author. Keeping that in mind, the quotes above show at the same time how limited Wimsatt's and Beardsley's room for manœuvring and for distinction within the established concepts of authorial intention was. Seen from that point of view, only a radical turning away from any role or authority for authorial intention in the interpretation of literary texts is a viable route towards claiming clear differences with the professional establishment – of which E.E. Stoll was part. The place that René Wellek for example gives to Stoll (together with Joseph Warren Beach or Morris W. Croll) in his *History of Modern Criticism* is that of "conventional literary historians" – though they started daring to move in the 1920s "beyond strictly positivist academic

scholarship" (Wellek 1986, 68–70). But concerning textual orientation or highlighting the difference between character and author, there are no significant differences between the ideas of the New Critics and someone like Stoll.

It is against this background that Wimsatt and Beardsley's radicalisation of Stoll's warning for "biographical fallacy" must be placed: banning the author altogether from interpretation. Only when the author is not allowed to play any role in the interpretation of his texts, can the interpretative activities of Stoll and others become the target of *fundamental* criticism. If Wimsatt and Beardsley had instead situated themselves within the conceptual tradition of the "1838"-better-understanding – the only other possible route for distinction in terms of concepts of authorial intention in 1946 – this would have made a sharp distinction towards the established professional critics difficult. Someone who proposes reconstructing authorial intention as a necessary initial guideline in interpretation (followed by, under specific circumstances, an interpretation that understands the author better than he understood himself) should have regarded critical works like those of Stoll at least as a welcome first step. Consequently, setting aside Stoll's view as an "irresponsibility" would have been impossible from a conceptual basis close to Schleiermacher's "better understanding". Looked at from this perspective, one can concede that there is quite some strategic plausibility in Wimsatt and Beardsley's choice for the 1946-concept of intentional fallacy. But to what extent can this choice be analysed as institutionally functional?

The institutional context of literary scholarship in the US around 1946

The fight for positions within American academic literary criticism around the middle of the twentieth century has been analysed thoroughly among others by Gerald Graff in *Professing Literature. An Institutional History* from 1987 and in parts of the volume *Disciplining English. Alternative Histories, Critical Perspectives* (Shumway and Dionne 2002). Two factors are especially relevant. First, there is the increase in institutional autonomy of university departments since the founding of the first research university Johns Hopkins in 1876. This relative autonomy meant among others the right to make nominations for new appointments or promotions, propose new curricula etc. The sum of these institutional rights made departments enter into a competitive relationship with each other (cf. Shumway and Dionne 2002, 2–7). The rules of this fight for prestige and influence were shaped at the end of the nineteenth century in a way that still is at the heart of academia today.

Second, it must be highlighted that the number of literary departments at universities increased, as did the number of students and staff from around 1940 onward. The background was the rise in the overall numbers of students in higher education. From those who were formally entitled to visit a college, in 1900 only 4% actually did. In 1940 the rate had more than tripled (14%), only to rise further after a "quantum leap" to 40% in 1964 (Graff 2007, 155). Furthermore, in addition to the growth in numbers, the General Education Movement gave a new role and importance to the humanities, including literary studies, with its aims of compensating disciplinary specialisation and focusing on the canonised cultural heritage that should offer something of value to students and to society (Graff 2007, 162–179). The result was not only a growing number of appointments in the academic literary departments, but also a growing number of courses on modern literature in English (Graff 2007, 196f.). To cut a long story short: at many English departments in the US around 1940 there were heavy fights going on for many new university jobs and for a new curriculum to match the numbers and demands of a vastly growing number of students (Williams 2002, 117–119).

This is, with very raw brushstrokes, the relevant context for the institutional consolidation and the strategic behaviour of the New Critics around 1940, when among others Ransom, Tate and Wimsatt attained their university appointments. Graff (2007, 153) states in this respect that "many of the first critics to achieve a foothold in the university did so on the strength of their poetry rather than their criticism". With the effect that the newly appointed academics, once inside the institution, felt the pressure to develop scholarly activities alongside and in competition to those of the established staff which already "had established a certain conception of methodological rigor as a condition of professional respectability" (Graff 2007, 145). This competition was still on the mind of René Wellek in 1978: "I still remember vividly the acrimony of the conflict between criticism and literary history at the University of Iowa, where I was a member of the English Department from 1939 to 1946" (Wellek 1995, 59). In this context, the radical elimination of authorial intention in interpretation as "neither available nor desirable" is a formula with which the "critics" shared professional norms of "methodological rigor" with the establishment, combined them with a new model of intention in interpretation, and turned this formula against the established "scholars" (Williams 2002, 122; Graff 2007, 145–227). This competition took place in an arena that was filled "by a widespread desire at the time to bring the humanities within the epistemic authority of the sciences" (Altieri 2017, 191) – a desire that Wimsatt and Beardsley tried to match with their claim for "the same scrutiny as any statement in linguistics or in the general science of psychology or morals" (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1946, 470).

Intentional fallacy was functional in the academic setting in another way, too. As we have seen, the kind of radical textual orientation of the New Critics diminished the relevance of the author and his historical context – to say the least. The precondition for a professional academic way of dealing with literary texts therefore was no longer a long-term investment in accumulating historical-philological or biographical knowledge. Instead, the New Critics' approach promised that students – *and* newly appointed teachers – without much propae-deutic effort could become professional readers rather quickly, if they committed themselves to the methodological rigour of New Criticism. The concept of intentional fallacy with its methodological legitimation of leaving behind biographical and/or historical knowledge played a key role in that regard. Gerald Graff remembers:

> It is also true that techniques of "close reading" were peculiarly suitable to the needs of an expanding American university in which literary works had to be taught to masses of undergraduates who knew little about their historical contexts, and often by instructors who knew only a bit more about those contexts. Speaking [...] of my own experience as a teaching assistant in the early 1960s, I noted that in these circumstances recourse to "the text itself" had been my salvation. (Graff 1995, 126; cf. Graff 2007, 179)

More theoretically speaking: the promise of a professional dealing with literature that could be systematically taught and learned served expectations of professionalisation directed towards technical control of teaching at universities, which can explain the success of text-centred close reading in many literary curricula in the second half of the twentieth century (cf. de Vriend 1996):

> Institutionally, the move to 'criticism' and the methods of close reading offered a transferrable technique for the newly expanded, post-World War II university, a technique that was far more amenable and adaptable pedagogically than the older, more cumbersome memory and fact-based model of historical scholarship and philology. (Williams 2002, 121)

A final institutional function of intentional fallacy relates to the professional publications of the New Critics: there is more space for new and original interpretations of canonical texts when one is not restricted by the normative orientation towards authorial intention and historical context, as in established scholarship. Highlighting the unique autonomy of the literary text itself also has the effect of opening up many more roads to interpretation that can be professionally regarded as legitimate (cf. Livingston 2008, 194). Along these roads, professional autonomy and institutional autonomy went hand in hand: "The autonomy that the New Critics ascribed to literature had been reproduced in the institutional autonomy of the English department" (Graff 1995, 126).

Summarising, one can claim that the "vastly different kind of criticism" Wimsatt and Beardsley aimed at was functional within the institutional context of substantial staff recruitment in the United States around 1946 in three regards: as facilitating a sharp distinction between traditional and historically-oriented, established competitors in the fight for academic positions in expanding universities; as a way of shaping a curriculum in times of mass universities that was up to date regarding autonomist conceptions of literature and ideas of controllable teachability; and finally as opening up a professional trajectory towards more, and more individual, legitimate interpretations of relevant texts. It does so by presenting itself as a break with established concepts of dealing with authorial intention in interpretation – primarily taking the standard model as its sparring partner.

Again, comparable to the launch of the better-understanding model at the beginning of the nineteenth century, intentional fallacy had its rise in an institutional context where the demand for professional critics was significantly growing and individual positionings of critics could be rewarded with unprecedented numbers of professional positions in academic institutions. Furthermore, the concept "intentional fallacy" was not only functional in the fight for positions, but also as a kind of trigger for increasing distinction between professional interpreters in terms of presenting original interpretations of texts. As such, it can be seen as the foundation of the wealth of professional interpretations of literary texts as we know them today, in academia, in schools and among readers that are not institutionally bound.

Intentio operis versus intentionalists

The enormous impact of intentional fallacy is indicated, too, by the large number of scholars that use it in interpretation or in theoretical models, with more or less extensive adaptations. An influential example is Umberto Eco's concept of *intentio operis* which basically shares with the concept of intentional fallacy the turning away from authorial intention. *Intentio operis* is a type of interpretation that starts from the premise that one has to look in the text for what it says, regardless of the possible intentions of its author or authors. More specifically, the professional interpreter looks at what the text says with regard to its own textual coherence and with regard to the systems of production of meaning on which it is based, its "original underlying signification system" (Eco 1994, 51). Eco develops this type of interpretation in distinction from two other types: *intentio auctoris* and *intentio lectoris*. *Intentio auctoris* implies to look in the text for what its author wanted to say, *intentio lectoris* to look in the text for what the

reader wants to find by virtue of his own systems of expectations, wishes, preferences etc. (cf. Eco 1994, 50–52). This classification, however, is not a neutral typology. It is *intentio operis* that Eco as a semiotician regards as the adequate concept of interpretation for professional readers:

> A text is a device conceived in order to produce its Model Reader. I repeat that this reader is not the one who makes the 'only right' conjecture. A text can foresee a Model Reader entitled to try infinite conjectures. The empirical reader is only an actor who makes conjectures about the kind of Model Reader postulated by the text. Since the intention of the text is basically to produce a Model Reader able to make conjectures about it, the initiative of the Model Reader consists in figuring out a Model Author that is not the empirical one and that, at the end, coincides with the intention of the text. (Eco 1994, 58f.)

For Eco, intention is an effect that is produced by reading a text professionally. This textual strategy is applied without any reference to the author of flesh and blood and his intentions. Such a view probably would have found the acknowledgment of Wimsatt and Beardsley – if not terminologically, then at least conceptually.

Eco's model is exemplary for the claim that many theoretical models of interpretation from the last decennia of the twentieth century turn away from the "concrete" or "empirical" author. As further examples one could think of Wayne Booth's "implied author" (Booth 1961) or Wolf Schmid's "abstract author" (*abstrakter Autor*; Schmid 1973). Despite the ongoing debates about these models and their shortcomings (cf. Nünning 1993; Kindt and Müller 2006), one aspect is beyond dispute in professional interpretation: that both concepts, implied and abstract author, try to do without the author as a historically situated individual. Both concepts are used to talk about literary works on a level that is different from that of the concrete author, since what professional critics should do, is interpret the text. Seen from this perspective, the allies of intentional fallacy can for example be found in large parts of the German *werkimmanente Methode*, the reader-response-criticism along the lines of Wolfgang Iser, structuralist approaches such as those of Michael Titzmann or empirical literary scholars such as S.J. Schmidt. There is one thing all these methods of interpretation and many others since the second half of the twentieth century do not do: focus on historically embedded authorial intention, be it as an overall goal or only as a primary step. Authorial intention is not or hardly relevant in interpretations in the wake of the approaches named above.

At the same time, the huge impact of intentional fallacy can also be gleaned from the number of its opponents. One of the fiercest is E.D. Hirsch Jr who articulated his views most elaborately in *Validity in Interpretation* from 1967 and *The Aims of Interpretation* from 1976. Comparable to Wimsatt, Beardsley, Eco and

many others, Hirsch departs from the idea that in principle the professional reader can choose whether his interpretation should be directed towards authorial intention or not. But the choice that Hirsch makes is one against "the theory of semantic autonomy": "The reader should try to reconstruct authorial meaning, and he can in principle succeed in his attempt" (Hirsch 1976, 8). At the core of his theoretical effort to unravel the "faultiness of arguments" of his adversaries is his conviction that the saying of a text "has no determinate existence but must be the saying of the author or a reader" (Hirsch 1967, 13). For Hirsch, meaning is always "an affair of consciousness and not of physical signs or things". This makes it an affair of "persons", i.e. an affair of an author and a reader (1967, 23): "A text can represent only the *parole* of a speaker or author, which is another way of saying that meaning requires a meaner" (1967, 234). And the intention of this meaner is the only valid foundation of interpretations (in the sense of "objective probability judgments"), because for Hirsch, there is only one interpretive problem that "can be answered with objectivity: 'What, in all probability, did the author mean to convey?'" (Hirsch 1967, 207). The foundation for this theoretical argument, in the end, is an ethical one according to Hirsch:

> an interpreter, like any other person, falls under the basic moral imperative of speech, which is to respect an author's intention. That is why, in ethical terms, original meaning is the 'best meaning'. (Hirsch 1976, 92)

For his argument, Hirsch not only uses Wimsatt and Beardsley as sparring partners, but also more recent theorists such as Jacques Derrida whose approach, not surprisingly after the quotes above, he also rejects – I will come to Derrida soon. But first I will turn to an important ally for Hirsch: Friedrich Schleiermacher (cf. Hirsch 1967, 199–209 et passim). Hirsch is especially interested in those parts of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics in which he pleads for the reconstruction of authorial intention:

> His preference for original meaning over anachronistic meaning is ultimately an ethical choice. I would confidently generalize from this example to assert that the normative dimension of interpretation is always in the last analysis an ethical dimension. (Hirsch 1976, 77)

Hirsch's position within our typology can be most easily characterised in a negative way: it is clearly opposed to intentional fallacy. Positively speaking, the characterisation is more complicated. Hirsch uses Schleiermacher primarily as an advocate for the standard model: a hermeneutically and historically convincing reconstruction of authorial intention. For Hirsch's position in the 1960s –

after Wimsatt and Beardsley's intentional fallacy and directed against it – this highlighting of authorial intention has been his primary concern, less so Schleiermacher's ideas on transgression of authorial intention. Consequently, nowhere in his books does Hirsch mention Schleiermacher's formula "to understand the text at first as well and then even better than its author" (qtd. from Mueller-Vollmer 2006, 83) – a formula that only could have been integrated into Hirsch's attack on intentional fallacy and other theories of "semantic autonomy" with difficulty. Only shades of such a conception can be discovered, usually in footnotes. I am thinking here of what Hirsch calls "the human author's willed meaning": if a professional critic remains within the boundaries of this "willed meaning", then his interpretation may go beyond what the author "consciously intends", and he stills acts ethically responsibly "so long as it remains within his willed type" (Hirsch 1967, 126).

Whom Hirsch does quote, though, is Kant with the same expression on understanding Plato better that he understood himself (cf. Hirsch 1967, 19 – 22). This leads Hirsch to the conclusion: "It is not possible to mean what one does not mean, though it is very possible to mean what one is not conscious of meaning" (Hirsch 1967, 22). A conclusion that seems to leave the critic primarily on the level of correcting inconsistencies or maybe even errors, while supposing that the author would approve in retrospect. The quote is another indication that Hirsch, typologically speaking, is close to the standard model of authorial intention. But, as mentioned before, in one respect Hirsch differs fundamentally from the standard model *and* from Schleiermacher's model: he recognises the possibility as fact that professional readers are *not* aiming for authorial intention – and then argues against making this choice, due to reasons of validity of interpretation and due to ethics. For the standard model and for Schleiermacher, there was no such choice.

This conscious choice from a number of competing options can be found by most participants in the modern debate. Hirsch's specific choice for authorial intention is not exceptional, at least not in the American context where the most recent branches of the concept run under the labels of hypothetical intentionalism and actual intentionalism. This is not the place to go into a very detailed discussion of different subdivisions such as extreme actual intentionalism, modest actual intentionalism, postulated author hypothetical intentionalism or actual author hypothetical intentionalism (cf. Irvin 2006; Irwin 2015), since this book aims at reconstructing major conceptual turning points, as was stated in the introduction. It may suffice to say here that adherents to actual and hypothetical intentionalism want to reconstruct the intentions of the author as an individual who is bound in history, in so far as these intentions are realised in the text. But there is at least one significant difference between both approaches: actual in-

tentionalism considers it reasonable to make use of sources such as private documents, diaries or retrospective remarks of the author that were not available for the informed contemporary readers (cf. Davies 2006, 229; Kindt and Köppe 2010, 221). This would sound compelling to E.D. Hirsch, for example, who together with scholars like Gary Iseminger (1996) can be situated under this label. For hypothetical intentionalism from William Tolhurst to Jerrold Levinson, however, the kind of evidence just mentioned would be a no go: they do not aim at "utterer's meaning" but at "utterance meaning". Accordingly, the author's intention is "such intention as optimally *hypothesized*, given all the resources available to us in the work's internal structure and the relevant surrounding context of creation, in all its legitimately invoked specificity" (Levinson 1992, 224).

At first glance, this quote comes very close to what has been described above as the standard model of authorial intention. But from the whole of Levinson's argument, it is clear that he also argues for cases in which the professional reader can go beyond that standard model, i.e. cases in which the scholar reconstructs interpretations "*justified* with respect to a given historically positioned work, although not *accessible* to its author":

> Such perspectives might be considered justified, and thus the aspects of the work they revealed part of its literary content, if they can be shown to be rooted, abstractly or embryonically, in the concerns of the historically constructable author. (Levinson 1992, 231)

In the end, hypothetical intentionalism is typologically closest to the Schleiermacher model of better understanding of the author, with an emphasis on the professional possibility to go beyond actual authorial intention. Reconstructing the intention of the biographical author would then be at most a first step – while the hierarchy in the concepts of Hirsch or Iseminger is definitely different, with the intention of the actual author taking centre stage.

What both kinds of intentionalism – despite all their differences – have in common is that (1) the reconstruction of authorial intention is the primary goal of interpretation. At the same time, (2) both do not regard conscious authorial intention as a fixed boundary that must not be transgressed in interpretation, while in this regard the space that hypothetical intentionalism claims for its professional interpretive activities is broader (more the "1838"-type; see Chapter Four) than the one actual intentionalism claims (more the Kant type, see Chapter Four). Finally, (3) both strands are conscious of and in debate with competing contemporary concepts of intention that deny the relevance of authorial intention.

The last two points can be used to describe the difference with regard to the seminal views of Stephen Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels on authorial inten-

tion. Their article "Against Theory" from 1982, reprinted several times, influenced large parts of the American discussion on intention at the end of the twentieth century, holding that "the meaning of a text is simply identical to the author's intended meaning" (Knapp and Michaels 1992, 51) – contributing to Stanley Fish's move away from anti-intentionalism to a view very similar to the one defended by Knapp and Michaels (cf. Fish 1989, 116–119). But in their view, and in opposition to Hirsch and others, this is not a choice between either going for authorial intention *or* for the intention as reconstructed from the text, as already their title ("Against theory") indicates. They hold that the idea of a possible choice itself is the source of many misguided discussions:

> The mistake made by theorists has been to imagine the possibility or desirability of moving from one term (the author's intended meaning) to a second term (the text's meaning), when actually the two terms are the same. One can neither succeed nor fail in deriving one term from the other, since to have one is already to have them both ... (Knapp and Michaels 1992, 51)

In other words, Knapp and Michaels articulate a modern version of what our typology has described as the standard model of authorial intention. What was the only concept of intention in interpretation available until the end of the eighteenth century obviously does not disappear when its undisputed dominance ends. What happens instead is that the possibilities for taking a position with regard to the role of intention in interpretation structurally only seem to show one tendency: addition. What has once been established by scholarly discourse, remains in principle on the table. This holds for the standard model, but also for the "1838"-model, for the radical version of intentional fallacy from 1946, and for the variations on these models. The range of possible choices grows, as does, from the second half of the twentieth century onwards, the scholarly consciousness of this very space of choices – even if the legitimacy of this space is explicitly denied by some, as Knapp and Michaels do at the end of their argument in which they have previously engaged with the hermeneutics of Gadamer and Ricoeur and with Wimsatt and Beardsley's intentional fallacy.

Poststructuralism and intentionality

As we have seen, the impact of the concept of intentional fallacy from 1946 can hardly be overestimated. Therefore it comes as no surprise that its traces can be found in one of the most important developments in literary theory of the last decades: poststructuralism. These traces will be used as a starting point to discuss in rough lines the poststructural concept of intention in interpretation.

In *Blindness and Insight* (1971), the Flemish literary theorist from Yale and leading figure of American deconstructivism, Paul de Man, pays quite some attention to New Criticism. When taking stock of New Criticism and of its shortcomings, de Man especially looks at intentional fallacy because this concept, "better than any other, delimits the horizon within which this criticism has operated" (de Man 1971, 24). De Man's conclusion is that the failure of New Criticism – which has not produced "works of major magnitude" according to him – "is due to its lack of awareness of the intentional structure of literary form" (de Man 1971, 27). In order to understand the argument, a little detour is necessary.

What is *not* the problem of New Criticism is its autonomist poetic preference ("most legitimate in itself") nor its opposition towards authorial intention in interpretation, which also for de Man would be an "intrusion of crude deterministic systems, historical or psychological" in interpretation (de Man 1971, 24). De Man is convinced that "the relationship of the particular state of mind of the person engaged in the act of structurization to the structured object is altogether contingent" (de Man 1971, 25). Nothing meaningful can be said about the relationship between what the producer of the work of art wanted, on the one hand, and the artwork itself on the other. What is the problem, then? The mistake of New Criticism, according to de Man, is that Wimsatt and Beardsley, after having liberated the poem from authorial intention, have made the poem itself a thing, a "natural object":

> This is to ignore that the concept of intentionality is neither physical nor psychological in its nature, but structural, involving the activity of a subject regardless of its empirical concerns, except as far as they relate to the intentionality of the structure. (de Man 1971, 25)

Wimsatt and Beardsley got stuck half way in their liberation effort, because they made the poem into a kind of author substitute, one could reformulate this point. In doing so, they neglect the kind of structural intentionality that is key to the confrontation of language with the reader, regardless of the (im-)possible intentions of either the empirical author *or* the text in front of us.

What is mentioned here by de Man in direct polemics with the concept of intentional fallacy, is articulated more elaborately elsewhere by, among others, Julia Kristeva, Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida – comparable at least in terms of their vision on intentionality. The common ground can be identified with regard to two aspects: the views on the subject of utterance and on the context. Without any claim to do justice to the complexity of these topics in the thoughts of those mentioned, I will restrict myself to the relevance for the argument developed here.

A radically different view on subjectivity from that which we have encountered so far plays a central role in Julia Kristeva's often quoted, translated and reprinted essay "Bachtine, le mot, le dialogue et le roman" from 1967, originally published in the journal *Critique* and translated into English as "Word, dialogue, novel" (Kristeva 1980). In that article, departing from Bakhtin's concept of dialogism, she develops her concept of intertextuality in which the author is removed from the centre of the processes that generate meaning. Authors are regarded as nodes in the web of texts, with as a result for each author that "he himself is no more than a text rereading itself as it rewrites itself" (Kristeva 1980, 87). When, from this perspective, all texts are "constructed as a mosaic of quotations" (Kristeva 1980, 66), a dynamic relationship *between texts* is put centre stage, replacing a dynamic relationship *between subjects*. In other words: intertextuality replaces intersubjectivity, and intentionality dissolves in a discourse that becomes "double" in the sense of an intrusion of history into the text and of the text into history. The consequence of this ambiguity resulting from Kristeva's broad notion of intertextuality is an infinite number of relations and combinations of meanings. This explosion of historically and textually marked meanings cannot be controlled. Therefore, the author and his intention migrate to the margins of this process, as does the text itself and its intentional dimension in so far it is conceived as a possible limitation of that process or as a kind of substitute for the author.

The same marginalisation of the author can be found in Roland Barthes' short essay "The Death of the Author" from the same year. In his article Barthes also attacks an outdated concept of authorship which neither from a systematic nor from a historical perspective was adequate, since the focus in the construction of meaning should be on the reader. When the author is dead, then he is first of all dead as subject of the production of meaning – not to mention his insignificance for the process of interpretation (cf. Barthes 1967). At least on this point there is a parallel, despite all differences, with the marginalisation of the author in Foucault's lecture "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?" from 1969 (Foucault 1980). What Foucault calls in his discourse analysis the "author function", is also based on the "disappearance" and the "recent absence" of the author – resulting in a "plurality of egos" in which the author and his intention are just fragments in the discursive processes Foucault analyses:

> The author's name is not a function of a man's civil status, nor is it fictional; it is situated in the breach, among the discontinuities which give rise to new groups of discourse and their singular mode of existence. (Foucault 1980, 123)

This death of the author at the end of the 1960s has been spreading massively in literary criticism and philosophical debates. When at the beginning of the twenty-first century Jason Holt claims that the ideas of Barthes and Foucault, roughly outlined above, are still "largely defensible" (Holt 2002, 76), then he is more the exception though in comparison to the other contributions in the volume with the telling title *The Death and Resurrection of the Author?* (Irwin 2002). Book titles such as *Death and Return of the Author* (Burke 2004), *Rückkehr des Autors* (Jannidis et al. 1999) or *The Empty Cage: Inquiry into the Mysterious Disappearance of the Author* (Benedetti 2005) indicate that Barthes' catchy phrasing in any case has put its mark on many discussions well into the new millennium, comparable to the impact of the concept of intentional fallacy.

Even without going into detail, it should be clear by now that from the perspective of the present book, around 1967 we have arrived at a new type of intentionality and at another break within the history of the concept of intention in interpretation. While intentional fallacy initially was about a radical turning away from the author as an authority in the interpretation of texts, the "death of the author" *sensu* Barthes and others addresses an even more radical dismissal of the author: not only with regard to the interpretation of his texts, but also with regard to their production. The Samuel Beckett quote at the opening and at the end of Foucault's argument in 1969 claims exemplarily: "What matter who's speaking?" (Foucault 1980, 115, 138). That indifference with regard to the author as producer of texts is not what we have found in New Criticism. At the same time, fundamental questions regarding the role of the subject in the process of production of meaning were not what New Criticism was about. But this is definitely the case in poststructuralism. Mieke Bal for example holds from the perspective of psychoanalysis:

> Intentionality is at odds with psychoanalysis, which theorizes the conflicts and countercurrents within the subject that makes intention ambiguous. [...] More generally, the discovery of the unconscious complicated the very notion of intention. (Bal 1992, 367)

Questions about the subject and subjectivity in language and in other actions are key to poststructuralism. Because he no longer believes in the human subject as a relevant source for language utterances, the poststructuralist scholar shifts his attention towards the analysis of language processes, towards their production of hierarchies and to what they exclude. The author disappears not only as a relevant point of reference for the interpretation of the text but also as its producer – which is, from our perspective, what the metaphor of the death of the author is about.

Concerning the second aspect of the poststructuralist concept of intentionality in interpretation – context – I even can be briefer. Derrida's presentation of language utterings as being structurally exposed to infinite new contextualisations is fundamental for poststructural thinking. This concept of an unsaturable context is maybe less appealing for being picked up in discursive adaptations than the death of the author is, but it points in the same direction. Its most seminal explication can be found in Jacques Derrida's manifesto lecture "Signature Event Context" from 1971, that was reprinted and reworked several times. The relevant point of Derrida's philosophy for the present book is his concept of *différance*, "the irreducible absence of intention or attendance to the performative utterance" (Derrida 1993, 18 f.). This implies, among other things, that writing is not "the means of transference of meaning, the exchange of intentions and meanings [*vouloir dire*]" but "dissemination": a permanent splitting up of meanings that neither text nor author can limit or control since it is "absolutely illimitable" (Derrida 1993, 20 f.). This "structural non-saturation" of the sign and the text is based on "a force that breaks with its context [*force de rupture*]" of production and reception within language (Derrida 1993, 9). Because every written sign, text or part of a text is permanently placed into new contexts and itself came about in this very same process, meaning cannot be put on hold. Instead, a permanent release of new possible meanings is achieved.

As mentioned before, this rudimentary presentation of a very dense text has only one goal: to make plausible that for poststructuralism, intention is no longer relevant – neither for the production of texts nor for their interpretation. For poststructuralists, writing is not an "exchange of intentions". Nevertheless, in the analysis of dissemination, the concept of intention will not completely melt away into thin air: "it will have its place, but from that place it will no longer be able to govern the entire scene and system of utterance [*l'énonciation*]" (Derrida 1993, 18). Where exactly that place will be, however, is not as clear as its rejection and marginalisation in poststructuralism. What should be clear by now, though, is that poststructuralists defend a concept of intentionality and authorial intention that fundamentally differs from the types of concepts reconstructed so far. Its "place" in the margins of the production of meaning primarily must be characterised as the theoretical foundation for an exponential growth of new and divergent readings. François Cusset coined in this regard the metaphor of a "theoretical libido" in order to legitimate today's poststructuralism as part of

> the ancestral prostitution of texts, their flirtatious glances moving along the sidewalks of history, seductions all the more promising in that they escape the control of their pathetic pimps, their official heirs, or their scholastic exegetes. (Cusset 2008, 338)

This is not the place to discuss the historicity of the vehicles of the metaphor, phrased in 2003, nor to discuss that this "*erotics* of thought, wayward and unpredictable" (Cusset 2008, 337 f.) is as well a description of the object of Cusset's study as the programme of the intellectual historian Cusset himself. What is relevant for the argument developed here, though, is the tenor of the metaphor. This tenor – "the issue" in terms of Cusset – is poststructuralism's (and Cusset's) aiming at

> a lawless zone between the original appraisers of meaning and future owners, a zone formed completely of interstices, within which, far from the guardians of the Work, texts themselves will be put to work. (Cusset 2008, 338)

In other words: interpretation based on the poststructuralist conception of intention takes the evasion from control and limitation as its point of departure and as its overarching goal at the same time.

Some aspects of the institutional context of poststructuralism

This new type of legitimating interpretations grounded on the poststructuralist idea of intentionality was institutionally functional in a way similar to what was argued above in this chapter with regard to New Criticism. Speaking in terms of competition within an academic context, the poststructural concept of intentionality in interpretation could be used to present oneself as an academic with an up-to-date methodological rigour unprecedented until then (1); it could be systematically taught and learned at universities to every student willing to embark on it, without special preconditions in terms of knowledge or otherwise (2); it offered a professional trajectory opening up new space for original professional interpretation and positioning (3). These parallels come as no surprise, since the foundation for the institutional competitive surrounding at the end of the 1960s had been laid way before, as we saw above.

However, there is one crucial difference. While New Criticism was an answer to "the pedagogical need spurred by the massive infusion of new students into the post-World War II university", poststructuralist theory rather "responded to the research needs" (Williams 2002, 121). According to Jeffrey Williams, in times "of fattened research dollars, Theory provided literature departments with a high-tech research agenda" (ibid). But that can be only part of the explanation, since for example narratology could have offered something similar around the same time, at least in terms of highly specialised terminological dif-

ferentiation and formalisation. What the sophisticated theoretical approach of poststructuralism offered on top was the promise of a break with the whole of the philosophical tradition since Plato and Aristotle (Derrida 1978). This included of course a radical break with all competing concepts in terms of intention and interpretation. What poststructuralism stood for was a new stage in offering theory from specialists in the humanities for specialists in the humanities.

On top of this, the theoretical design allowed in an unprecedented way for an unlimited and unlimitable (at least not by any reference to the author, his historical context or any other extra-theoretical authority) expansion of diverging interpretive statements within the discipline. What sophisticated terms and concepts such as "différance", "dissemination" or "force de rupture" have in common is the very principle of "structural non-saturation". This is constitutive not only for language and linguistic objects, but also for the work of the poststructural interpreter himself. While interpretations in the wake of Schleiermacher or New Criticism would hold also that there can be no fixation of meaning and that the interpreter will always be facing a vanishing point on the horizon moving away as he approaches, poststructuralism disembarks from this very idea of a journey towards some point by declaring language and meaning as "absolutely illimitable" – as are poststructural interpretations, giving way to a potential explosion of theory-based divergent readings of texts and other cultural products. The next level of the dispersion of legitimate interpretations is reached.

Finally, the theoretical focus *and* the rise of poststructuralism must be seen against the backdrop of the *de*creasing enrolments in the humanities studies and liberal arts colleges in the US in the 1970s. Courses in literature "were being chosen less and less, except when they 'technicalized' their program" – and, one may add, technicalised it with a completely new theoretical and international mindset – for which many of them turned to French Theory (cf. Cusset 2008, 46 f.). By the same token, the poststructurally informed humanities in the "university of excellence" offered a framework that attracted students to feminist studies, to "research on ethnic or sexual minorities", to "critique of ideology" and "the new discourses of opposition" – a very functional tool in a system of vast competition for students and research funding: "For it was necessary to develop the products that would sell best" (Cusset 2008, 45). Poststructuralism with its paradigmatic questioning of hidden power relations in language and society was actually a perfect methodological ally for "discourses of opposition" of any kind. In a time of intensified competition for the best students it did not aim at the masses, but especially at those critical towards authorities and tradition, contributing in turn again to the image of theoretical avant-garde and cutting edge specialism.

Summarising our argument so far, this study has reconstructed for the last 200 years a dynamics that gradually shifts authorial intention from the centre to the margins of the process of interpretation. What started at the beginning of the nineteenth century with a limited possibility for professional literary critics to go beyond authorial intention in some cases (on the basis of authorial intention as a necessary first step), turned around 1946, in the radical version of intentional fallacy, into a principled dismissal of the author as an authority in the interpretation of texts (while keeping alive the author as an authority for the production of his texts). Around 1967, even the relevance of the author for the production of utterings – including literary texts – is denied, let alone his relevance for interpretation. The author vanishes into the margins of infinite processes of language production and of the splitting up of meanings. To phrase the same observation differently: the professional behaviour of critics within our typology shows two norms in its development which are intertwined in an inversely proportional relationship, with poststructuralism at its extreme poles. On the one hand, there is a structural growth in the range of legitimate possibilities to present new professional interpretations of texts, while on the other hand there is a structural decline in the force of authorial intention to limit the number of legitimate interpretations, up to a point where the author is declared dead, in reception as well as in the production of literary texts.

This dynamics seems to have been fuelled over the last 200 years primarily by university scholars. Focussing more specifically the two types discussed in this chapter, there seems to be an acceleration of the introduction of new types. While the standard model had to wait some 2,300 years before being conceptually challenged at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the next coup was staged already about 140 years later, and between 1946 and 1967 lies only one generation. This acceleration can be taken to indicate an increasingly intense fight between growing numbers of competitors for positions at universities, legitimised in the humanities among other things with new concepts of intention and interpretation. The radical dismissal of conceptual predecessors in terms of intention that the last two types – New Criticism and poststructuralism – betrayed, points in the same direction of increasing pressure for strategic position taking within the academic part of the literary field, which has come to distribute a substantial amount of symbolic and economic capital.

Let me finish this chapter with a last speculative remark concerning the inversely proportional relationship mentioned above, which drives at the same time towards maximising the freedom for the professional interpreter, and towards minimising the role of the author in interpretation. Maybe a sidestep first: as we have seen, poststructuralism marks the far end of our typology in terms of a minimum of limiting force for the author. Imagining now, this book

would have been written some years before 1967, say in 1962, and it would have arrived at establishing a typology with three types of intention in interpretation until that year, exactly as reconstructed above. Would it then have been possible to predict in broad strokes which conceptual void left by the typology probably would have been filled with the next conceptual innovation concerning intention and interpretation: marginalising the author as the producer of texts? Assuming the inversely proportional dynamics reconstructed here, that was the last resort of the author with regard to his role in professional interpretation within the possible positions available. In other words, in the mid-1960s the space for possible positions left no other options for a rhetoric of radically breaking with the past in the domain of intention and interpretation than transferring the author to the margins of the process of producing meaning. But, as always, that is easy to say for those who know what actually happened. More interesting than this retrospective speculation therefore should be a prospective one.

If the typology reconstructed here and its underlying dynamics is appropriate, then poststructuralism marks the far end of a development reconstructed in the chapters of this book, as we have seen. On this foundation, I would claim that there is no space left for launching a radically new conceptual type of intention in interpretation in the years to come. If that is so, this would mean that the debate reconstructed here has reached a point where only conceptual relaunches and combinations are to be expected. The relative calming of the debate in the last decennia in literary studies, in connection with now already almost three generations of scholars since 1967 without such a radically new type, might be taken as pointing in the same direction. It seems as if the debate on intention and interpretation has lost its productivity for taking positions that do away with all or most of the predecessors. The interesting dimension of this speculation, if any, then, is that it can be proven wrong by literary studies in the years to come.

Whatever the result, the reconstruction of intention and interpretation from a historical perspective has reached a point now where the discipline literary studies itself has come into sight. But before exploring this line of thought further, and in order to be able to sharpen it, I will contrast the results so far from an interdisciplinary angle with what was already touched upon above in several places: intention in jurisprudence and legal interpretation.

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Chapter Six
Authorial intention in jurisprudence and legal theory

The introduction to this book quoted the memorable one-liner by Stanley Fish that intention is "a vexed topic that usually brings out the worst in everyone" (Fish 1989, 116). In retrospect, from this point of our argument, one couldn't agree more given the polemic and strategic tendencies reconstructed in the debate from the 1940s onwards. But the context in which Fish's assessment was made was not interpretation in literary criticism – it was interpretation in *law*. Fish had coined his phrase in October 1983 in the middle of a chain-discussion between himself and law professor Ronald Dworkin, which was itself part of a much wider discussion in the 1980s on intention in legal theory and jurisprudence. Representative voices of this debate were collected in Sanford Levinson and Steven Mailloux's twice reprinted *Interpreting Law and Literature*. In their introduction, the editors called the debate with considerable diplomatic talent "passionate" (Levinson and Mailloux 1991, xii). In fact, the book unveiled a rather messy situation in which professing intentionalists (Edwin Meese III), anti-intentionalists (William J. Brennan), non-originalists (Paul Brest), deconstructivists (Clare Dalton) and anti-intentionalist intentionalists (Ronald Dworkin, according to Jessica Lane) were raising their voices. A peak in this debate were the Tanner Lectures given by Supreme Court Judge Antonin Scalia in 1995 and the volume documenting them, including five substantial comments, authored by, among others, Harvard law professor Laurence Tribe and Ronald Dworkin (cf. Scalia 1997). Without any consensus in sight, the discussion has since then somehow faded away – though the trenches still seem to be present in the twenty-first century (cf. McLoughlin and Gardner 2007).

At first view, the parallels with the fierce debate on intention in literary criticism in the second half of the twentieth century are striking, especially its temporary intensity, its polemics and its gradual fading out without ever coming near any common ground. To what extent then can the typology reconstructed above be used for descriptive purposes outside literary criticism? And to what extent can the course of the debate on intention in legal matters be explained with the institutional approach pursued here? The following comparison will give at least some indications for answers. It will look at the most important types of intention in interpretation at stake in jurisprudence and legal interpretation, with a focus on the USA where the debate mentioned above was fiercest. In a second step, it will present possible explanations for that "passion" in the

debate on intention in legal matters in the 1980s and 1990s, ending with comparative remarks on disciplinary peculiarities of literary and legal criticism.

Promising predictability: Intention in jurisprudence and legal interpretation

Before starting conceptual comparisons, some preliminary reflections on the differences between both fields might be useful. Interpretation in a legal context has a very long history, basically reaching from the invention of writing via antiquity and the disciplinary differentiation of the early universities in Europe from the thirteenth century onwards to our days (Rüegg 1993–2010). Within and outside faculties of law, the notion and the concept of "intent" was often and explicitly used in interpretation. To take an arbitrary example: Chief Justice Robert Brook, reflecting on legal documents in general, held in 1555 that a "party ought to direct his meaning according to the law, and not the law according to his meaning, for if a man should bend the law to the intent of the party, rather than the intent of the party to the law, this would be the way to introduce barbarousness and ignorance, and to destroy all learning and diligence." What Brooks is aiming at could be seen as an imperative of judicial professionalism in the first place. This professionalism, he claims, allows individuals to profit from law's promise of greater certainty only if those individuals make use of judicial "learning". Chief Justice Brook continues: "For if a man was assured that whatever words he made use of his meaning only should be considered, he would be very careless about the choice of his words, and it would be the source of infinite confusion and incertainty to explain what was his meaning." Translating Brook into present discourse: one should take the help of jurists and try to articulate one's intentions within the language and the judicial framework these professionals offer. When Brook summarises his thought with "the law rules the intent, and not the intent the law", this formula is therefore in no way an "anti-intentionalist imperative", as Michael Hancher tends to think (Hancher 1991, 104; Brook qtd. from this page). There are no indications that Brook might have doubts about the possibility of reconstructing intentions or that he regards it epistemologically or otherwise fundamentally problematic "to explain what was [a man's] meaning". Brook's point is that one can avoid "infinite confusion and incertainty" only by applying the rules and the language of the law. For him, the law seems to be a kind of lens that focuses the intent of the client – as part of the act of the articulation – in contrast to someone drafting a text and hoping for the law afterwards to bring legal focus into it. So the first

caveat should be that the use of "intent" in law needs careful reconstruction in its specific disciplinary historical context.

Brook's quote reveals another important aspect regarding the societal functioning of law. The mirror image of Brook's wish to avoid "confusion and incertainty" seems to be something like a programme which contributes to greater stability and certainty in societal actions and conflicts – not exactly how one would describe the dynamics of literary criticism. In a recent contrastive argument on this matter, Kate McLoughlin and Carl Gardner convincingly held that "disambiguation is central to the judicial project (while the literary critical project is as likely to celebrate ambiguity)." Accordingly, the law has developed more or less predictable rules and approaches to interpretation, in order to resolve disputes, and to enable lawyers to advise on them before somebody goes to court (cf. McLoughlin and Gardner 2007, 94). Imagine – following Walter Benn Michaels – a judge starting his decision on a contract with praising the art of the contract makers, their subtle refusal to simplify the experience by specifying fryers or stewing chicken, their recognition of the ultimately problematic character of the chicken as such; then "we would know that something has gone radically wrong" (Michaels 1991, 224) – with regards to disambiguation, predictability, stability and certainty, we might add.

Another problem for a systematic historical overview of concepts of intention in law is the diversity of judicial genres with regard to authorship and intent. While wills usually articulate the intention of one person, contracts have to cope with what at least two persons or parties intend to do or not to do. Statutes and constitutions further complicate the matter, with mostly many individuals and individual intentions involved in the making, who at the same time represent the purpose of groups, legislative institutions, the state or the "people" etc. – not to mention the fact that all these texts are usually (co-)written by jurists. Are generalisations about "intention in law" even possible with so many different shades of intention at stake? The conclusion should be, at least, that literary scholars cannot be careful enough when dealing with the word or the concept of "intention" in jurisprudence. Let me therefore stress once more the tentative character of the following remarks and start with discussing some judicial genres separately.

Wills, contracts, statutory and constitutional laws

A contemporary standard view on intention in wills can be found in *The Law of Succession:* "The function of the court is to interpret the words which the testator has used and not to make the will itself. The court can only interpret the testa-

tor's intention as expressed in the will itself" (Margrave-Jones 1991, 131). Two things are relevant from our perspective. First, that a hierarchy between the testator and the court is constructed with the testator on top, and second, that the testator's intention is to be found in the text. Compared to what in Chapter Two of this book was called the standard view on authorial intention, the view expressed here seems to come close to the unity of what the author-testator intends, what the text says, what the context suggests, and what the reader-judge makes of it, with the authorial intention of the testator as the pole star guiding navigation (cf. Jarman 1986, 2066). This view can be discovered already in Swinburne's more political metaphor from 1590: "the will or meaning of the testator is the Queene or Empresse of the testament." When he explains that the courts have the task of "[p]ondering not the words, but the meaning of the testator," he does not depart from the unity of the standard view by separating the intention of the author from it. Swinburne has no doubt that "no man be presumed to thinke otherwise then hee speaketh." When he adds, "yet cannot euery man vtter al that he thinketh," it becomes clear that Swinburne is not thinking of an opposition to the testator's intention and what he says, but more of a possible discrepancy between what is explicitly stated in the text and what else could be intended. A point that Brook, too, had already made when he wrote that "it is presumed that the testator has not time to settle every thing according to the rules of law, and wills are commonly made on a sudden, and in the testator's last moments." Brook and Swinburne only give wills an exceptional status concerning the required degree of judicial formalisation and explicitness, not concerning the relation between intention and text, as a contemporary interpreter might think (Hancher 1991, 104; all quotes from Swinburne there).

Many quotes pointing into the same direction could be collected from the existing studies and commentaries between then and now, such as, for example, a remark by the Lord Chancellor in the House of Lords in 1943 which sees the task of the court as to follow what "the testator intended": "The question is not, of course, what the testator meant to do when he made his will, but what the written words he uses mean in the particular case – what are the 'expressed intentions' of the testator" (qtd. from McLoughlin and Gardner 2007, 95). The conceptual unity of intention, text and context is clear from this passage. This unity is also at the core of the much quoted "armchair rule". According to Judge James in 1880, trying to understand the intention of the author from the text of his will, the court might want to check all the facts that were known to the testator when he made his will: "You may place yourself, so to speak, in [the testator's] armchair, and consider the circumstances by which he was surrounded, when he made his will to assist you in arriving at his intention" (qtd. from Margrave-Jones 1991, 143). The standard model of authorial intention in criticism, reaching from

Augustine to adherents of contemporary forms of intentionalism, seems to have a lot in common with the judicial view on intention concerning wills. To what extent does that hold for contracts?

One would expect a completely different story when one reads H. Jefferson Powell's summary that "the common law approach to the interpretation of contracts was blatantly unconcerned with the subjective purposes of the parties." Though, one has to stress the word "subjective" in this quote, and then connect it, according to Powell, to an ambiguity in the Latin "intentio", which could "refer either to individual, subjective purpose or to what an external observer would regard as the purpose of the individual's actions" (Powell 1985, 899, 895). The latter option was what we saw as the dominant judicial understanding of intent concerning wills – and for most professional jurists, this is the relevant dimension concerning contracts, too. In the words of Lord Nicholls of Birkenhead, dealing with contracts as a legal specialist is about "identifying presumed intention, not actual intention" (Nicholls 2005, 582). In retrospect, it was *actual* intention ("individual, subjective purpose") that H. Jefferson Powell set aside as "blatantly" irrelevant for the interpretation of contracts. From this perspective, the picture regarding contracts does not differ significantly from what we have seen about wills. Already in the first English treatise on contracts by John Powell from 1790, for instance, contracts were conceived as "concurrence of intentions". What he was talking about was intention in the sense of *presumed* intentions of the parties that can be derived from the text and context. Accordingly, John Powell advised to look for these intentions rather in "men's general motives, conduct and actions" than in statements made by the parties themselves (Binder and Weisberg 2000, 44).

A famous articulation of this unity of text, context and contract parties situated within in a continuum, with the expressed intent as the point where all these aspects meet, comes from Judge Learned Hand in 1911: "A contract has, strictly speaking, nothing to do with the personal or individual intent of the parties. A contract is an obligation attached by the mere force of law to certain acts of the parties, usually words, which ordinarily accompany and represent an known intent." Reusing the comparison mentioned earlier with regard to the standard model: one might see the presumed intent of the parties as the pole star that guides the interpretation of the courts. And that concept remains unchanged, as Judge Learned Hand continues: "If, however, it were proved by twenty bishops that either party, when he used the words, intended something else than the usual meanings which the law imposes upon them, he would still be held, unless there were some mutual mistake, or something else of the sort." The point here is not that the intention of the parties is dismissed as unavailable and undesirable *sensu* Wimsatt and Beardsley (Michaels 1991, 216; all

quotes from Judge Learned Hand there) – the point is that the intention expressed in the contract is what counts. That is what guarantees the parties – and many others – a significant degree of reliability and certainty. It is basically "individual, subjective" intent that is more or less banned from the judicial procedures dealing with contracts, not intent that can be presumed – let alone intention in general. Parties can make mistakes or they may more or less consciously try to mislead the other party. But this does not change the normal judicial way of dealing with contracts, which seems to be based on the standard model described above. Accordingly, many similar nineteenth- and twentieth-century references could be given for the intentional unity of author, text and context. A good example is Lord Nicholls of Birkenhead who has recently put into concise words this view on contracts: "what would a reasonable person *in the position of the parties* understand was the meaning the words were intended to convey?" (Nicholls 2005, 579 – *the emphasis is Nicholls', RG*; cf. McLoughlin and Gardner 2007, 96 f.).

As far as wills and contracts are concerned, the way the law deals with intention seems to be rather homogeneous over the last centuries. Does this impression change when the interpretation of texts with multiple and collective authorship such as statutes and constitutions is scrutinised? In the discussion around statutes, the golden rule of: "as expressed in the statute" is often mentioned, for example by Max Radin when discussing cases from 1844 and 1897: "intent governs the meaning of a statute, by saying that it must be the intent 'as expressed in the statute'" (Radin 1930, 872). According to the rich evidence quoted by Kate McLoughlin and Carl Gardner, this "golden rule" approach has remained the standard up to the most recent handbooks on statutory interpretation. Their central quote in this regard is from Lord Radcliffe holding that "the paramount rule remains that every statute is to be expounded according to its manifest and expressed intention" (McLoughlin and Gardner 2007, 98). The dominance of the standard model of intention is obviously not limited to wills or contracts, so the first impression.

A similar line of conceptual homogeneity can be traced concerning constitutional laws. According to Aileen Kavanagh, the final aim of dealing with constitutional laws "must always be to give effect to the intention of Parliament *as expressed in the words used*" (Kavanagh 2005, 101; cf. Kavanagh 2006). This conception of looking at intention can be traced back to the formative years of constitutional interpretation, as H. Jefferson Powell (Powell 1985, 915, 942 f.) has convincingly shown. According to Powell, the "original intent" around 1800 was one that left no doubt that "whatever may have been the intention of the framers of a constitution, or of a law, that intention is to be sought for in the instrument itself, according to the usual and established rules of construc-

tion“ – quoting here a 1791 statement of the Secretary of the Treasury, A. Hamilton. This is also the way that, for example, Chief Justice John Marshall saw it during his tenure at the Supreme Court in the first four decades of the nineteenth century: seeking evidence as to "the intention of the legislature" (qtd. from Powell 1985, 942), dominantly on the basis of a close analysis of the words and structure of the statutes and the Constitution.

Summarising so far, there is quite some evidence that the intentional unity of author, text and context with presumed authorial intention as the primary point of orientation has been dominant in jurisprudence and legal theory. However, at this stage a twist seems to have been woven into the argument presented here, given the fierce and passionate debates in a legal context referred to above. How does the stability of authorial intention in jurisprudence and legal theory relate to the passionate dissension in legal debates that Stanley Fish is addressing? Since this dimension has shown up primarily concerning constitutional laws, that is where we should look closer.

Gradual shifts

Powell's just quoted article can function as a stepping stone for more insights into the apparent discrepancy between the overall stability of the standard model of authorial intention in law on the one hand and the fierce debate on Framers' intention on the other. From the birth of the American Constitution into the 1820s, Powell shows the undisputed dominance of what the present book has called the intentional unity in which a professional reader finds presumed authorial intention in the text itself, read in its context. After a convincing argument in favour of this point (on 60 pages of his 64-page long article), Powell ends his article with a four-page "Aftermath." According to the "Aftermath", at the beginning of the nineteenth century this understanding of intent significantly started to change, with first "cracks" in the "facade" of the model described above and changes in the years to come: by "the outbreak of the Civil War, intentionalism in the modern sense reigned supreme in the rhetoric of constitutional interpretation". What Powell refers to with "intentionalism in the modern sense" is that "earlier scruples against the use of 'extrinsic evidence' in constitutional interpretation gradually lost their force." With "extrinsic evidence" he pointed at the "growing availability of original materials revealing the actions and opinions of the individual actors who played roles in the Constitution's framing and adoption", like proceedings and relevant opinions (cf. Powell 1985, 947). However, a different view on "extrinsic evidence" is not yet a different concept of intention.

When the meaning of the text of the Constitution is not clear or subject to controversial discussion (a problem that is likely to increase over time, due to changes in language, contexts and values), it is perfectly compatible with the standard model to look for extra evidence elsewhere. See for example a judgment from 1845 (*Alridge v. Williams*) by Justice Roger Brooke Taney, who had replaced John Marshall in the Supreme Court. Taney left no doubt about his adherence to the established model of intentional unity: "The law as it passed is the will of the majority of both houses, and the only mode in which that will is spoken is the act itself; and we must gather their intention from the language there used." But there are cases in which extrinsic evidence may be added: in case of "any ambiguity" the intention of the act can be gathered by comparing it "with the laws upon the same subject, and looking, if necessary to the public history of the times in which it was passed" (qtd. from Binder and Weisberg 2000, 41; as all following quotes by Taney).

On the other side of the line that Taney draws with regards to extrinsic evidence, are documents of the legislative process: "the judgement of the court cannot, in any degree be influenced by the construction placed upon it by individual members of Congress in the debate which took place on its passage, or by the motives or reasons assigned by them for supporting or opposing amendments that were offered". Taney argues that the judge has to look for the presumed intention of the legislative institution as a whole, and he has clear ideas where to seek preferentially for this intent. In other words: Taney's starting point is the model of intentional unity ("gather their intention from the language there used"), which in case of interpretation problems ("when any ambiguity exists") can be extended towards using extrinsic evidence ("laws upon the same subject", "public history", but *not* using "the debate which took place on its passage"). However, why legislative debates should not be part of the "public history of the times" in which an act was drafted, is not self-evident. In case of problems still prevailing after a look at public history and similar laws, why not use *all* relevant evidence publicly available? Whatever one's answer may be to that question, one thing seems clear: Taney is using *some* extrinsic evidence, while excluding some other forms. What he is *not* doing is suggesting alternative conceptions of intention.

It would take almost another fifty years until an 1892 Supreme Court decision further extended Taney's range of extrinsic evidence. In the case *Rector of Holy Trinity Church v. United States*, basically, the Court had to decide whether the Holy Trinity Church hiring a foreign minister fell under what Congress had incriminated at the time in the relevant statute prohibiting the import of foreign "labor or service." The Court tried to reconstruct the "intention" of the makers of the statute by not only looking at the act itself, but also at "contemporaneous

events" and "the situation as it existed" (i.e. Taney's "public history of the time"). The extrinsic evidence to be admitted was now enlarged, including also what "was pressed upon the intentions of the legislative body." This reference to petitions to Congress and committee reports informed the Supreme Court's view that "labor or service" at the time of the legislation process had been intended to cover low-paid menial work, and not that of a minister – and the Supreme Court ruled accordingly in 1892. After that judgment, resorting to legislative historical materials became frequent (Scalia 1997, 19, 30 – 37; Binder and Weisberg 2000, 65; all quotes of the case from there). However, more important for the argument developed here is that the Supreme Court apparently established a gradual extension of "extrinsic evidence", step by step. This extension was definitely not uncontested, as Scalia's recent polemic against using legislative history as an interpretive device shows: "What a waste. We did not use to do it, and we should do it no more" (Scalia 1997, 37). Whatever one's position on this scale of allowance for extrinsic evidence in interpreting constitutional law: there are no indications for a new concept of intention in interpretation at stake. All we found until here were gradual shifts concerning the relevance of (kinds of) contextual components within the model of intentional unity in legal interpretation.

Accordingly, the *Handbook on the Construction and Interpretation of the Laws* from 1911 did not raise the slightest doubt that the regular way of jurisprudentially dealing with laws and the Constitution was still looking for presumed intention. There are no traces of significant changes in the *Handbook* compared to what Powell had reconstructed for the period around 1800: "It is a cardinal rule in the interpretation of constitutions that the instruments must be so construed as to give effect to the intention of the people, who adopted it. This intention is to be sought in the Constitution itself, and the apparent meaning of the words employed is to be taken as expressing it, except in cases where that assumption would lead to absurdity, ambiguity, or contradiction" (Black 1911, 20).

The exception at the end of the quote leaves space to refer to certain parts of the context of the law, of which some examples have been discussed here. While there can be no doubt about changing practices in whether or not to make use of – certain kinds of – "extrinsic evidence" over time, these gradual changes in the toolkit of interpretation arguments must not be mistaken for different paradigms concerning intention. However, many of the anti-intentionalist participants in the law debate – of whom Powell is only a typical example – *did* mistake the one for the other. Powell practically stopped his detailed historical reconstruction of the concepts of intention in law in the 1820s and then made mildly sweeping statements for the years after. If he would have extended it closer to our present, what would he have found?

Some indications for answers may be taken from the seminal debate around Antonin Scalia's Tanner Lectures from 1995. How do they relate to the typology reconstructed here? As far as Scalia is concerned, his conclusion on the *Holy Trinity* trial mentioned above seems to suggest a fundamentally different concept of intention. The standard model was clearly the foundation of the Supreme Court's decision in 1892. As the Court put it in addressing the question whether the law under scrutiny prohibited the work of a minister, too (that is, whether a minister was "within the statute" or not):

> It is a familiar rule, that a thing may be within the letter of the statute and yet not within the statute, because not within its spirit, nor within the intention of its makers. (qtd. from Scalia 1997, 19)

In terms of intentional unity, the Supreme Court departed from the text of the law, and in its interpretation for the present case also took into account the context of the law ("its spirit") and presumed authorial intention ("the intention of its makers") to come to a decision. By refusing a literalist interpretation of the law, the Supreme Court in its interpretive balancing sailed under the "intention of its makers" as its decisive point of orientation. In arguing that something was unlawful if one looked only at the letter of the law, but in an overall balance it was not, the Supreme Court worked with the tacit assumption that the "makers" of the Law would have phrased the relevant statutory passages differently, would they have known the case *Holy Trinity v. United States* at the time of drawing up the law. All this is perfectly compatible with the standard model of interpretation as reconstructed above.

Scalia, however, disagrees with the Supreme Court claiming that the coming of the Englishman to be Holy Trinity's pastor and rector was *not* unlawful by the federal statute under scrutiny. For Scalia, it definitely was: "Well of course I think that the act was within the letter of the statute, and was therefore within the statute: end of case" (Scalia 1997, 20). Elsewhere, Scalia phrases his "textualism" or "originalism" in a more general way:

> What I look for in the Constitution is precisely what I look for in a statute: the original meaning of the text, not what the original draftsmen intended. (Scalia 1997, 38)

While Scalia's outcome is diametrically opposed to the Supreme Court's, their models of authorial intention in interpretation, though, only differ gradually. To start with, what Scalia excludes by "what the original draftsmen intended", is *subjective* legislative intent (Amy Gutman qtd. from Scalia 1997, ix). Presumed intent as realised in the text, is for Scalia perfectly compatible with his textualism, since he himself argues elsewhere with purposes of the law that cannot be

found in its letter. A typical example is Scalia's dissent in the Supreme Court's ruling on a clause of the Sixth Amendment providing that the accused had the right in "all" criminal prosecutions "to be confronted with the witnesses against him". In the case of sexual abuse of a young child, the court had permitted an exception in order not to confront the young child with its abuser, and the Supreme Court by majority consented. Not so Scalia:

> There is no doubt what one of the major purposes of that provision was: to induce precisely that pressure upon the witnesses which the little girl found it difficult to endure. (Scalia 1997, 44)

Obviously, Scalia argues here with the presumed intent ("one of the major purposes") of the constitutional law. In comparison with the ruling of the Supreme Court in 1892 (the law's "spirit", "the intention of the makers"), the conceptual difference must be seen as a gradual one. Also other phrases by Scalia point in the same direction of an intentional unity of text, context, author, and reader, for example when Scalia states that the interpretation of a law "depends upon its context which includes the occasion for, and hence the evident purpose of, its utterance" (Scalia 1997, 144). Relatively speaking, Scalia puts most emphasis on the text of law, much lesser so on the legislative authorities as factors worthy of their own analysis – however, without denying them relevant "purposes" in drafting the laws. Held against the typology reconstructed here, Scalia seems to be closest to what has been found in Classical Roman sources by Tacitus, Horatius and others, dealing primarily with correct phrasing in a given situation and saying what needs to be said. The words on the roll are where the Roman focus is sharpest, not where authorial or even individual views might be assumed – though it goes without saying that within the Classical Roman model, the ones writing are individuals that do have views and that these views are to be found in the text (cf. Chapter One). Also Scalia propagates this more formal and technical understanding of authorial intention in interpretation on the level of words, grammar, composition, and genre.

A final argument that Scalia's view on authorial intent only gradually differs from the standard model can be taken from his presentation of a quote by Chief Justice Taney from 1845. Taney has already been quoted above as exemplary evidence for the dominance of the standard model in the interpretation of constitutional law. When Scalia uses the very same quote and praises Taney for his "uncompromising view", he adds emphasis on parts of it:

> The law as it passed is the will of the majority of both houses, *and the only mode in which that will is spoken is in the act itself*; and we must gather their intention from the language there used, comparing it, when any ambiguity exists, with the laws upon the same subject,

and looking, if necessary, to the public history of the times in which it was passed. (qtd. from Scalia 1997, 30)

What Scalia promotes first of all by *his* italics is the spotlight on "the act itself", as will be expected from a textualist or originalist. However, what he confirms implicitly by what surrounds his italics is his agreement with the intentional continuum of the standard model. Reading the text of the law is about gathering the "intention" of its makers; turning to different kinds of context ("laws upon the same subject", "public history of the times") can be helpful in this enterprise, especially in case of possible ambiguities. A model, by the way, that also Laurence H. Tribe confesses to in his commentary on Scalia's essay (cf. Scalia 1997, 65, 71 f.).

The striking difference between Scalia's emphasis and the standard model, *and*, at the same time, between the Classical Roman model and Scalia's, is that his positioning in terms of authorial intention in interpretation comes as a kind of strategic rollback *after*, and as a remedy *against* recent conceptual developments concerning intention and interpretation. Scalia's main concern lies in what he sees as a crucial shift in legal interpretation, manifesting itself in judges routinely transgressing the limitations imposed by textual and contextual evidence, judges who claim too much room for their own interpretation of the laws:

> There has been a change in kind, I think, not just in degree, when the willful judge no longer has to go about his business in the dark – when it is publicly proclaimed, and taught in the law schools, that judges *ought* to make the statutes and the Constitution say what they think best. (Scalia 1997, 132)

This is Scalia's main strategic concern, and the reason for *his* emphasis in his version of the standard model: moving towards the text and the historical context, moving away from the interpreter and from the "authors" as individuals. A typical exponent whom Scalia argues against here is Ronald Dworkin and his view on the interpretation of the Constitution.

It comes as no surprise that Dworkin's focus is indeed on moral contemporary judgement, in his terms: a "moral and principled reading of the Constitution" (qtd. from Scalia 1997, 123). When focusing on this understanding of "reading", it is obvious that Dworkin rejects in interpretation the subjective intent "of what the various legislators as individuals expected or hoped the consequences of those laws would be" (qtd. from Scalia 1997, 118). On this rejection of "expectation intention" he agrees with Scalia, and with all the other participants of the Tanner Lectures debate (cf. Scalia 1997, ix). What Dworkin looks for instead is "semantic intention", that is "what a legislature intended to say in the laws it

enacted". This question is what "judges applying those laws must answer" (qtd. from Scalia 1997, 118). However, Dworkin is heading for a special kind of semantic intention in the clauses of the Constitution, namely "abstract moral principles":

> If we read them [i.e. *the clauses of the Constitution, RG*] to say what their authors intended them to say rather than to deliver the consequences they expected them to have – then judges must treat these clauses as enacting abstract moral principles and must therefore exercise moral judgment in deciding what they *really* require. (qtd. from Scalia 1997, 126)

Looked at with the typology of the present book, it is clear that Dworkin is close to the standard model, too, when he defines the interpreter's task as to let laws/texts "say what their authors intended them to say". The difference with Scalia's emphasis is also obvious: Dworkin leaves more room for a broader range of interpretations due to two shifts. First, by allowing only "abstract moral principles" as fighters for "semantic intent" into the arena of competing interpretations; second, by giving contemporary judges a robust mandate for deciding about the winners. With the latter role for the judges, Dworkin comes close to Schleiermacher and von Savigny's "better understanding". As Dworkin put it more explicitly in his *Law's Empire* (in which neither Schleiermacher nor von Savigny are mentioned, by the way):

> Interpretation of works of art and social practices, I shall argue, is indeed essentially concerned with purpose not cause. But the purposes in play are not (fundamentally) those of some author but of the interpreter. Roughly, constructive interpretation is a matter of imposing purpose on an object or practice in order to make of it the best possible example of the form or genre to which it is taken to belong. (Dworkin 1986, 52)

Still, Dworkin seems eager to stay side by side with the makers of the Constitution when looking for "the natural semantic meaning of a text" and asking: "why shouldn't the 'framers' have thought" what Dworkin (qtd. from Scalia 1997, 124) thinks that the Constitution is? Accordingly, I would say, Dworkin must be situated somewhere in between the standard and the "better-understanding" model, with a greater proximity to the latter, due to his emphasis on and relative freedom for contemporary judicial readers and readings. For the argument of the present book it is less relevant where exactly on this scale Dworkin is acting, since all options lead to the same effect: a broader range of legitimate professional interpretations. Given Dworkin's conviction that key constitutional provisions are set out as abstract principles, "then the application of these abstract principles to particular cases, which takes fresh judgement, must be continually reviewed" (qtd. from Scalia 1997, 122). As we saw above, it is exactly this structural

extension of the range of interpretations ("fresh judgement", "continually re-
viewed") that Scalia is opposed to, aiming at a stronger limitation of that range:

> I concede, of course, that textualism is no ironclad protection against the judge who wishes
> to impose his will, but it is *some* protection. The criterion of 'legislative intent,' by contrast,
> positively invites the judge to impose his will [...]. Other nontextual methodologies are sim-
> ilarly wish-fulfilling. (Scalia 1997, 132)

From the perspective of the present book, one can concede two things at this
point. First, the range of concepts of intention in interpretation that can be re-
constructed from law debates are narrower than in literary criticism. With the
concept of "presumed" authorial intention, we find a rather stable dominance
of what above has been called the standard model and its intentional continuum
of text, context, author and professional reader. The conceptual variations in
practices concerning constitutional laws seem to be limited to traces of better un-
derstanding in the sense of Schleiermacher/von Savigny (see Chapter Four) on
the one hand, and on the other – basically in reaction to that – returns to the
Classical model as a gradual shift within the standard model, concentrating
on text and historical context including historical major purposes, aiming at lim-
itation of interpretations. Second, even the tentative reconstruction given here al-
ready shows similar misunderstandings and ahistorical projections as we found
before in literary criticism. These projections tend to take differences and ten-
sions – for example between presumed and actual intent, between text and in-
tention, between text and context, between historical author/text/context and
the reader's context – as indications of paradigmatic shifts in intentional ap-
proaches read into material that on closer inspection turns out to be about some-
thing else. If one takes a look at the contributions to the debate over the last fifty
years from the side of the Law and Literature movement, more examples can be
given.

Projections, mistakes and naps

Exemplary evidence for the fierce debate from the 1970s onwards is collected
in the seminal volume *Interpreting Law and Literature*. The editors Sanford Lev-
inson and Steven Mailloux claim to have found not only a counterpart for inten-
tional fallacy respectively anti-intentionalism in legal debates, but even a pred-
ecessor. They hold that "the most famous anti-intentionalist argument in
statutory interpretation" was put forward by Max Radin already in 1930 –
while "the same" was done in criticism sixteen years later by Monroe Beardsley

and W.K. Wimsatt (Levinson and Mailloux 1991, 37). But were these really "the same" anti-intentionalism critiques? There are some reasons for doubting this. A certain scepticism might already arise from their presentation of the argument. Levinson and Mailloux turn around the historical order of dates of publication (1946 before 1930) and start out by devoting three pages to "The Intentional Fallacy", followed by half a page on Radin, arguing that his "anti-intentionalist critique develops along lines very similar to the arguments we have just examined."

More important for doubting their claim are "the arguments" just mentioned. The first is that, quoting Radin from 1930, intention is "undiscoverable in any real sense". Radin explains: "A legislature certainly has no intention whatever in connection with words which some two or three men drafted, which a considerable number rejected, and in regard to which many of the approving majority might have had, and often demonstrably did have, different ideas and beliefs" (Radin 1930, 870). Taking a step back, one can see that Radin's argument is based on the difference between what Lord Nicholls of Birkenhead would have called "presumed intention" and "actual intention" in legal discussions (Nicholls 2005, 582). Radin claims only that *actual* intention is "undiscoverable in any real sense" – he is not speaking of presumed intention, we must add. When Levinson and Mailloux immediately agree with Radin that "the legislative intention behind any statute always turns out to be either radically indeterminate or ultimately undiscoverable" (Levinson and Mailloux 1991, 40), their acceptance is not based on a careful pondering of Radin's arguments but on a projection of their own preference onto history. This projection seems to be informed by the importance they attach to the concept of intentional fallacy (see above).

The second argument against intentionalism that Levinson and Mailloux take from Radin without commenting on it starts from the above-quoted "golden rule" that the intent must be taken as expressed in the statute. Radin continues: "In that case, it would obviously be better to use the expression alone, without reference to the intent at all, since if the intent is not in the expression, it is nowhere. If the doctrine means anything, it means that, once the expression is before the court, the intent becomes irrelevant" (Radin 1930, 872). But again, it is difficult to see where the programmatic attack on intentionalism exactly lies. The dictum "if the intent is not in the expression, it is nowhere" has the air of logic, but is actually axiomatic and unclear. Radin seems to admit that intention is normally in the expression, but if that is the case, why should one ignore something that is admittedly there? What does "nowhere" mean, for example, in cases of error or unclarity? In such cases, intention may not be found in the expression, but definitely somewhere. It is hard to see why a court pondering all arguments should not be allowed to use similar laws or contextual claims on the matter

made by a legislative body, if it helps in augmenting plausibility for reconstructing the presumed intent of the lawmaker *and* of the statute under discussion. The claim that intent must not be considered once the expression is before the court, in the end boils down to confusing subjective and presumed intent, be it by mistake or for the sake of the polemic rhetorical effect.

The doubts about really dealing here with the "most famous anti-intentionalist argument in statutory interpretation" increase when one takes the whole article by Radin into account – what Levinson and Mailloux do not do in their introduction. What Radin's "Statutory Interpretation" basically presents is a general refutation of all "methods" of statutory interpretation, of which intention is one (Radin 1930, 869 – 872). Other more or less problematic methods are, according to Radin, legislative history (pages 872 f.), formalist technical devices (873 – 875), purposes (875 – 879) and plain meaning (879 – 881). He concludes that "the presence of so many confused, contradictory, and meaningless 'theories' and 'methods' create a turbid atmosphere about courts." What Radin holds up against this turmoil is "the sound sense of many judges" (Radin 1930, 882). In other words: Radin is trying to get past the "smoke screen" of every academic methodology in order to give judges more room for judgment based on their "sound sense" and their "social emotions." However, he is definitely not trying to establish a new concept of intention for the professional interpretive behaviour of experts (which is basically what Wimsatt and Beardsley wanted). This interpretation of Radin's article can be corroborated by a statement he made himself, which characterised his polemical criticisms of 1930 twelve years later as "undoubtedly somewhat too sweeping" (Radin 1942, 410 f.).

It seems that Radin's and Wimsatt and Beardsley's articles are far from being "the same", they are hardly even comparable, except for a striking rhetorical and polemical resemblance between calling a certain kind of authorial intention in interpretation "undiscoverable" and "irrelevant" (Radin) and "neither available nor desirable" (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1946, 468; cf. Wimsatt 1968, 222). They are definitely incomparable with regards to the seminal effects they had in the professional theory and practice of their respective disciplines, which is actually nil in the case of Radin (Binder and Weisberg 2000, 81– 84). The article "Statutory Interpretation" is for example not reprinted in Fisher et al.'s standard anthology, though this anthology does list four articles by Radin in its bibliography and actually contains Radin's 1925 article "The Theory of Judicial Decision: Or How Judges Think" (Fisher 1993, 195 – 198). Concluding, Levinson and Mailloux's presentation of Radin does not offer a new type of intention in legal interpretation. Rather, they seem to project aspects of the contemporary "intentional fallacy" debate in literary criticism onto the history of interpretation in law, in order to

legitimate their own view on intention in legal interpretation by identifying what seem to be historical allies – but who turn out not to be.

Summarising my argument so far, the passionate debate on intention in law at the end of the twentieth century seems to be mainly a strategic debate that reveals more about the debaters, their projections and their need for allies and enemies than about typologically different concepts of intention in legal interpretation from a historical perspective. The debaters at the end of the twentieth century make use of the fact that the concept and the notion "intention" are frequently used in jurisprudence and legal interpretation, ignoring that this use seems to be based on a rather stable model of presumed intention and an intentional unity of author, text, context and a professional reader's interpretation.

A final example may suffice to corroborate my claim that this historical projection is a widespread phenomenon in debates on intention in law from the end of the twentieth century onwards. A famous case on wills in *The Law of Succession* may illustrate this:

> The testatrix, who had lived in Scotland throughout her life, gave a series of legacies to Scottish charities. In the midst of these legacies there was a legacy to 'the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children', which was the precise name of an English charity. There was no evidence that the testatrix had taken the slightest interest in the English charity. As the description fitted the English charity exactly, there was no ambiguity entitling the court to admit extrinsic evidence that the testatrix almost certainly intended the legacy to be given to the Scottish National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. (Margrave-Jones 1991, 131)

Thus the House of Lords decided in 1915, overturning two Scottish Courts in Edinburgh who had decided the other way round. For Hancher, this case shows that the "'interpretive strategies' invoked for the different readings (intention versus plain meaning) were fundamentally irreconcilable" (Hancher 1991, 113). Though this way of presenting the case seems plausible from today's perspective, it can be taken as another example of an ahistorical approach that projects conceptual "interpretive strategies" of the 1980s back into 1915. In the context of the argument of the present book, I would hold that nobody around 1915 perceived this as a clash of two irreconcilable "interpretive strategies". I will argue that the courts basically had to decide in 1915 how likely it was that a mistake had been made in the text of the will, and what this meant for its execution.

The traditional legal way of dealing with mistakes has been phrased by the above mentioned Chief Justice John Marshall. After having described the standard way of collecting the spirit of a judicial instrument "chiefly from its words," he continued in his 1819 judgment on *Sturges v. Crowningshield:* "[I]f, in any case, the plain meaning of a provision, not contradicted by any other pro-

vision in the same instrument, is to be disregarded, because we believe the framers of that instrument could not intend what they say, it must be one in which the absurdity and injustice of applying the provision to the case, would be so monstrous that all mankind would, without hesitation, unite in rejecting the application" (Brest 1991, 71). In other words: when the court disregards the words of the text, the error must be beyond any doubt.

Such a mistake based on a discrepancy between text and intention is another example of "Homer's nap", mentioned several times in the preceding chapters: although poets should not make mistakes, some mistakes may be discovered even in the texts of the giant Homer, Horace tells us. Assessing, and possibly correcting, mistakes in this sense has nothing to do with two irreconcilable interpretive strategies (text versus intention), but only with the question of how to deal with the domain of mistake, inadequacy, etc. This domain confronts the reader with difficulties, but does not invalidate the standard intentional model of how to deal with texts in general, and does not indicate that different interpretive strategies clashed over such mistakes.

Thus, from a historically informed conceptual perspective on intention, the Scottish case is about a "mistake of expression," as Chafee would call it: "the word may not correctly express the thought" (Chafee 1941, 386). Obviously, the House of Lords was not absolutely sure that such a clear-cut mistake had been made when the money was given to an English charity that resembled the Scottish one and had exactly the name mentioned in the will. Because not "all mankind" would and did see it the way the Edinburgh Courts saw it, the House of Lords stuck to the words of the will and did not claim the testatrix had taken a nap. This was not a decision on the basis of another interpretive strategy, but a gradual difference in assessing how likely it was that a mistake had been made in phrasing the will. Homer's nap only *seems* to be about different concepts of intention, but on closer inspection it is not – as is the decision of all courts on this testament.

Institutional contexts

Summarising, there is considerable evidence that the dominant concept of intention in jurisprudence from Renaissance until today is a model in which the author's (i. e. the testator's, contractors', legislator's...) intention is the pole star that guides the interpretation. The interpretation is mainly based on what the text says, and, if necessary, makes use of contextual evidence of different kinds. This concept comes close to what has been called above the standard model of authorial intention which can be traced since antiquity. Given this back-

ground, the increasingly fierce debate on intention in law at the end of the twentieth century turns out to be fuelled primarily by variations aiming for and sometimes going beyond the boundaries of the standard model. On the one hand, we found an orientation – with Dworkin as a typical example discussed here – toward a better understanding of the text of the Constitution in terms of contemporary values and needs, allowing for the transgression of boundaries that traditionally were imposed by the intention of the "Framers" and the historical context. On the other hand, as a kind of intentional conceptual historical rollback, there is the textualism of someone like Scalia, explicitly trying to reduce the range of possible interpretations in the name of what the present book has called the Classical Roman foundation of the standard model, staying as close as possible to the words of the text, bound by its historic context and the general purpose of the text within that context. In addition, it was shown that the frequent use of intention in legal contexts functions for some scholars as a projection screen for fundamentally differing concepts of intention coming from contemporary literary criticism. Modern concepts of intention were frequently projected back in time onto debates that, on closer inspection, show no signs of moving outside an established model of presumed intention in jurisprudence.

Why were these historical and conceptual pitfalls so tempting? It is striking that all the examples of what was called in my argument "projection" were basically published only after the 1970s. It is probably not only coincidence that this happened at the time when the Law and Literature movement got off the ground (cf. Gaakeer 1998, 15–36). For these academic actors, intention was a suitable subject, because the concept was part of the professional practice of both disciplines, Law and Literature. It was furthermore suitable, because it had been debated fiercely in literary criticism since 1946 ("The Intentional Fallacy") and especially since the 1960s, when, as we saw in the preceding chapter, Hirsch, Kristeva, Barthes, Derrida and others became involved. The merging of literary and legal criticism in interdisciplinary Law and Literature programmes offered the possibility of asking new questions with regard to law in synchronic and diachronic perspectives. From an institutional perspective, this gave academics ample opportunity to distinguish themselves with new positions in existing debates and views. However, as far as conceptual content is concerned, the impact of this debate seems to have been rather marginal in law and legal interpretation. In 1995, Ronald Dworkin could still ironically mock Antonin Scalia in the opening remarks of his commentary:

> Justice Scalia has managed to give two lectures about meaning with no reference to Derrida or Gadamer or even the hermeneutic circle, and he has set out with laudable clarity a sen-

sible account of statutory interpretation. These are considerable achievements. (qtd. from Scalia 1997, 115)

Still it is also a fact that not only Scalia showed, in his essay, no affinity whatsoever with the general debates in literary criticism on meaning and intention. Dworkin's was the only one among the five commentaries that referred to literary hermeneutists or poststructuralists. What is more, the quote above was the only passage in which Dworkin did use such a reference, making it primarily a distinctive authority claim – in his lecture, none of his arguments were explicitly taken from the theorists he referred to.

There is another fundamental functional difference between concepts of intention in literary and in legal interpretations. In criticism, as we have seen, concepts of intention departing from the standard model of authorial intention did function as an instrument for professional transgression of limitations. Every new conceptual version of intention (1838 Schleiermacher, 1946 Wimsatt and Beardsley, 1967 Barthes) increased the space in which the critic could act professionally, while at the same time it decreased the author's and others' authority to limit the range of possible interpretations. While this dynamic seems institutionally functional for Law and Literature scholars, too, this is not the case in the practice of jurisprudence and legal interpretation. There, the societal function is dominantly one of offering a promise of certainty and predictability in judicial actions. Consequently, in terms of intention and interpretation, conceptual differentiation and individual position taking play a less central role in judicial professional practices as compared to literary criticism and Law and Literature scholars.

In this context, functionally speaking, it seems that in the recent debate on the interpretation of statutory and constitutional law, intent is used, too, as a weapon in a fight that is basically about political normative orientations. Especially for those who wanted to use the Constitution or laws in a fight for emancipation and human rights, the ethics of the historical founders and lawmakers were more often than not an obstacle to overcome. Schleiermacher's "better understanding" or intentional fallacy may be used in this regard as a viable interpretive strategy to get rid of limiting authorial, historically bound arguments that were turned against contemporary progressive interpretations of laws or against "a general principle of political morality", as Dworkin would have it (qtd. from Scalia 1997, 119). Accordingly, the choices in the legal debates for specific concepts of intention generally seem to be connected to specific political preferences, as Levinson and Mailloux already diagnosed. Concerning the contemporary debate, they admit "a modicum of truth" in the "tendency to identify intentionalism with political conservatism" (Levinson and Mailloux 1991, 10) – which is

definitely not what they themselves as editors of *Interpreting Law and Literature* and as adherents to intentional fallacy would vote for, as the contributions to their volume clarify. However, clashes of political or ethical normativity dressed as different concepts of intention are not a fertile ground for finding a consensus concerning the role of authorial intention in interpretation. This political and ethical normative dimension of the debate on intention in interpretation is another explanatory factor for its fierceness as well as for its fading out in silence, without a result in the conceptual matter: intention seems to have been more a strategic instrument at a certain historical moment than the core of the debate in jurisprudence and legal interpretation.

Finally, still institutionally speaking, even within the relatively limited range of conceptual developments concerning authorial intention in legal practices, a tendency towards enlarging professional participation can be reconstructed behind the back of the participants in the debates. When one subtracts from the following quote Scalia's polemics against a style of interpretation he disapproves of, its descriptive substance shows the unlimited opportunities for professional work, especially when turning to legislative history. While there are ambiguities in every technique of interpretation,

> the manipulability of legislative history has not *replaced* the manipulabilities of these other techniques; it has *augmented* them. There are still the canons of construction to play with, *and in addition* legislative history. Legislative history provides, moreover, a uniquely broad playing field. In any major piece of legislation, the legislative history is extensive, and there is something for everybody. [...] The variety and specificity of result that legislative history can achieve is unparalleled (Scalia 1997, 36; *emphasis Scalia's, RG*).

For the present book it is interesting that Scalia also uses "poetry" in his crusade against this tendency towards variation, diversification and maximalising participation: "There is little use in having a written constitution if textual construction is so indistinguishable from poetry," Scalia (1997, 142) writes. This quote confirms indirectly what was one of the results of our historical overview: the range of the concepts of intention available over time, in literary criticism *and* in law – despite their structural differences shown above – primarily functions as a stimulus to produce growth in professional interpretations, both in number and in range.

The comparison of the debate on intention in interpretation between law and literary criticism has shown several things. First, that a systematic historical reconstruction of concepts of intention in legal interpretation might be a piece of critical work definitely worth the effort. For the time being, we must live with exemplary cases. The comparison between these case studies in law and the historical typology of concepts of intention in literary criticism reveals many overlaps

between the standard model of authorial intention on the literary side, and on the side of legal interpretation a model of "presumed" intention. Taking concepts of intention in interpretation as a parameter and historically speaking, interpretation in jurisprudence seems to be more stable and homogeneous than in literary criticism, with lesser deviation and heterogeneity at the core of the debates. The dominating procedure for legal interpretation, also in the last 50 years, is aiming at presumed intention, with only gradual differences regarding the focus on specific parts of the intentional continuum of "author", text, context, and professional reader. Needless to say, that also these gradual differences can lead to diametrically opposing judicial outcomes and passionate debates – as we saw above.

Second, especially in the context of the Law and Literature movement, we found tendencies of ahistorical projection of a wide range of recent literary concepts of intention onto the debates on intent in the field of law. On closer inspection, however, the examples from jurisprudence discussed here showed few indications for structural conceptual changes in the direction of the intentional fallacy or poststructuralist types in almost all judicial practices.

Finally, the comparison seems to indicate a difference in function of the concepts of intention in interpretation in both disciplines. Generally speaking, the dominating mechanism of professional interpretation in literary criticism aims primarily at increasing the legitimate possibilities of interpretation and possibilities for distinction of individual scholars and increasingly so since the 1940s. The field of law, from this perspective, is dominated more by an orientation towards intersubjective foundations for professional academic behaviour contributing to relative stability, certainty and disambiguation in jurisprudence – also with regard to its use of concepts of intention in interpretation. Yet, an overarching tendency towards increasing the range of legitimate professional interpretations even within the more limited legal interpretative spectrum over the years can be diagnosed in jurisprudence and legal theory, too, as we have seen above.

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Conclusion and outlook

The reconstruction of concepts of intention in literary interpretation from a historical perspective has resulted in distinguishing four different types. This typology is meant, first of all, as a tool for description and classification for each specific concept at any moment in time, but also in historical perspective. Before summarising the four types briefly, I would like to explicitly address once more that the types are definitely not part of an evolutionary development in which each new concept gradually replaces its predecessor. The synchronicity of different concepts at specific moments in time has been touched upon in several parts of the present book, for example concerning the rather heterogenous concepts of intention in interpretation to be found within the lines of New Criticism. Instead of an evolution, the relationship between the four types should rather be described in terms of addition. Each new concept of intention in interpretation joins the already existing ones, forming a new option for position taking by the relevant actors from then on. With each new type, the number of possible legitimate views within the debate on interpretation grows, as does the number and range of possible specific interpretations of specific texts. For an imagined eternally wandering critic, every new concept of intention (1838, 1946, 1967), offered extra options to present himself as a professional critic concerning intentional questions.

Of course, the perspective of a non-fictional, historically bound critic is usually completely different, whatever view on intention in interpretation he defends. Because these views are always related to a specific conception of literature, they are in the end normative and often present themselves as the only adequate way of dealing professionally with literature. This individual normativity in connection with a tendency towards addition from an overarching historical perspective has, over the last 200 years, led to constant changes in what at specific historical moments is regarded as a professionally appropriate way of defining and interpreting literature. The speed of these typological changes has accelerated since the nineteenth century, at least until 1967. But, as may be clear by now, these conflicting position takings cannot be seen as a road towards consensually using a more and more adequate concept of authorial intention (or not) in interpretation. All we can say is that at specific moments in time, there are dominant ideas of the most legitimate way of dealing with intention when interpreting texts – but this dominance is always contested, usually fuelled by academic actors or groups. Regardless of the temporary dominance of newer models, the older models keep on existing, sometimes even within the very same circles that claim to adhere to new ones.

After this caveat, I would like to recall in very condensed versions the four types distinguished above.

I. The oldest concepts of intention in interpretation can be found in ancient Greece around 500 BC where a secular concept of human responsibility for the work of art was shaped, in competition to an even older concept in which the singers, performers etc. were seen as a medium of the Muses or other Gods. Only when texts or artworks are conceived as made by humans, can intention be part of ideas on their production and interpretation. The first concepts of authorial intention in interpretation in Aristotle and other sources were based on the idea of an intentional continuum between author, text, context, and reader. However, in Classical Greece as in Classical Rome, the author was primarily praised, criticised and taught with regard to his choices on the level of words, genre and composition. These formal choices were made within a rather stable world of moral and other knowledge that basically gave little room for individual messages from the authors. Authorship and the intention of the author was primarily about correct phrasing and understanding: the author must try to say what had to be said. The same goes for interpretation: the interpreter must read what had to be read from the text.

It is towards the end of antiquity around 400 AD that within the Classical model a change of focus comes into sight. The standard model combines the Classical secular idea of human responsibility on the basis of intentional continuity with the idea of authorial intention as the final point of orientation in interpretation. The role of the author in interpretation in the standard model can be compared to the role of the pole star in navigation. This includes in both cases, interpretation and navigation, the possibility of practical problems. Of course sometimes one does not know anything about authorial intention except for what the text offers, of course authors can lie or tell only part of the truth, and sometimes it is unclear in which context the author wrote the text and in which context the text functioned – as a sailor may not see Polaris due to clouds, mistake another star for it, may not be accurate enough in setting his course with the help of the pole star etc. Nevertheless, these problems do not jeopardise the model of interpretation – or navigation – as such. Church Father Augustine played a central role in conceptualising this type around 400 and in its spreading in the Middle Ages (based on passages from Hugh of Saint Victor's influential textbook *Didascalion* [1127]), with an undisputed dominance of this standard procedure for interpretation far into the nineteenth century.

Diversity within this model is basically concerned with the views attributed to the author, ranging from hardly visible in antiquity, via Augustine's con-

cept of rather general authorial intention as the overarching point of orientation, to a more pronounced individuality within the standard model from the fourteenth century onwards. In the Renaissance, this stressing of individual views is not only visible in the interpretation of canonised texts but also in what authors themselves claim about their texts, especially when they become part of a public dispute, legal proceedings or worse. Variation of this type can be found from then on up to recent times, for example in actual intentionalism.

II. The first conceptual competitor for this concept of authorial intention in the interpretation of literary texts emerged at the beginning of the nineteenth century, with an exemplary version in the works of Friedrich Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher defended the view, published in 1838, that a literary critic had the expertise to see meanings in literary texts that can go further than what the author himself would have agreed upon as his intention: "To understand the text at first as well and then even better than its author." However, Schleiermacher was in no doubt that step one in the professional's work must aim at reconstructing the intention of the author, before possibly going one step further on a road that leads beyond the horizon. His view provided the critic, so to speak, with a passport that allowed him, in special cases, to travel outside the interpretive borders of the text that were constructed on the foundation of authorial intention.

This special privilege formed an important conceptual foundation for the professionalisation of the critic, in several senses. First of all the critic can distinguish himself as a *professional* reader from other types of readers, including authors, who do not possess the expertise for this transgression and specialisation. Furthermore it functioned as an instrument of distinction with regard to the growing number of colleagues in different literary institutions, from journals to universities. The critic who, due to his professional knowledge, can add legitimate interpretations to those based on authorial intention (or rather on the standard model, in our terms), has more possibilities for professional actions than those acting within the boundaries of the standard model. These extra possibilities include a possible distinction in terms of concepts of interpretation, in addition to a broader range of specific interpretations which were restricted to a lesser degree by authorial intention. Finally, the better understanding was functional for the literary critic with regard to a field that showed a substantial growth of writers in terms of numbers and social heterogeneity to an extent that made it more and more difficult for the critic to act on the foundation of generally shared knowledge about the writers he had to deal with. The "better understanding" concept allowed for the argumentation that whatever an individual

writer might have intended with his text, the author was in the end the object of regularities of literature only the professional critic knew about. This view gave the critic a legitimation to deal with *every* literary author, however large their number and how heterogeneous their social and ideological background might be.

The differences within this model of intention in interpretation concern basically the degree to which they are author focused. For instance, E.D. Hirsch's reading of Schleiermacher emphasises step one of the model (understand the text as well as the author) to a degree that step two (understand the author better than he understood himself) plays only a marginal role for him. The Russian Formalists can be situated at the other pole of the spectrum. As interpreters and literary theorists they concentrate on the text as their primary focus of professional work. They do not deny the existence of an author and his intentions, as they do not principally oppose efforts to understand both – but they see their professionalism definitely on the level of the rules of the artwork, regardless of what the author may or may not have known of this. The common ground for all critics within this model remains that understanding the author better than he understood himself is no longer restricted to the area of mistakes and error, as in the tradition of the Homer's nap: this transgression is now primarily based on the professional knowledge of the critic.

III. From the middle of the twentieth century onwards, concepts of literary interpretation can be found that leave authorial intention behind not only in special cases, but as a rule. Under the label of intentional fallacy, scholars defend interpretations that do not rely on the intention of the author at all, neither as their final aim nor as point of departure. The author is given no authority regarding the work's meaning. Only as the producer of his works is a special position left for him within this concept. Again, strategic dimensions can be recognised in launching the new concept of intention around 1946. The very notion "intentional fallacy" had a polemic implication, since "fallacy" refers to what others – the established literary history scholars – do dramatically wrong. By the same token, the concept promised a greater methodological rigour and technical teachability in comparison with the competitors from the literary history schools. Finally – and again, similar to the "better understanding" model – it offered the critics more opportunities to distinguish themselves, with extra space for original interpretations of texts, whether canonised or not, since the adherents of intentional fallacy could no longer be bound by biographical and historical contextual factors, even not as a starting point. This time, however, the extra space was not built on top of an established foundation (as for exam-

ple with Schleiermacher), but in explicit opposition to both existing models at the time, by dismissing authorial intention rigorously as "neither available nor desirable". The effect of this conceptual choice was that now for the first time in history an actual *debate* got off the ground on the role of intention of the author in the interpretation of literary texts. While the difference between type I and II could be seen as one between different types grounded on the same foundation, the difference between types I/II on the one hand and type III, on the other, is more fundamental – at least concerning how it was presented in 1946. In that sense, the launch of the concept of intentional fallacy in order to overcome an older model prepares the stage for literary criticism as we know it today in terms of intention: competing concepts standing next to each other, with no consensus in sight.

IV. At the end of the 1960s, the fourth concept in our typology can be located which again establishes a new benchmark in comparison to the existing models. Among others, Roland Barthes declares in 1967 the author's death and by this annihilates the last remnant of authority left to the author in relation to intention and interpretation. This conceptual choice can be situated on a line on which critics, step by step, had turned away from the author as the overarching point of orientation in interpretation (type I), via being only its stepping stone (type II), to being not available and desirable in interpretation activities (type III). The poststructuralists basically agree on the latter: also for their interpretations, the author is not relevant. But for all the types I – III summarised above, there was no doubt about the author still remaining in a privileged position as the writer of his texts. With the death of the author, this last stronghold of authorial authority falls. From a poststructuralist view, the process of meaning production is uncontrollable and locates the author, his intention, and intentionality at the periphery of that very process. Again, this enlarges – in relation to the range of already existing conceptual positions in the literary field – the space of possible positions for professional poststructural critics. First of all on the theoretical level of course, but at the same time, this view on language and meaning goes along with a further increase in the number of possible legitimate meanings that can be connected to specific texts. The horizon for poststructural readings is permanently on the move due to the very working of language as poststructuralists see it. Since the role of the critic is to unravel what is excluded by established hierarchies and relations of power, this horizon of interpretation cannot be limited and definitely not controlled, not by the author who is marginal, nor by the text that is not stable, nor by the context that is structurally unsaturated. Consequently, the introduction of this type of intention in interpretation implies further persistent growth in pos-

sibilities for critics to distinguish themselves, since it is the critic who brings in the professional theoretical knowledge of that very process of endless shifts in meaning and hidden relations of power in language itself, in opposition to other critics and their readings of texts.

Summarising, the picture presented here has led to a coexistence of four different types of intention in criticism during the last fifty years (standard model, "better understanding", intentional fallacy, death of the author). This typology should facilitate the description of every specific concept of intention in interpretation at any historical moment, including mixtures between types.

In addition to this possibility for specific description of individual models, a structural dynamics of the literary field itself became visible in the overview of the typology as a whole. This regularity can, from the perspective of intention in interpretation, be described as an *in*crease in space for the professional acting of the critic since 1838 in three senses: first, space to be distinguished as a professional critic; second, space to distinguish himself from his fellow critics; third, space to present original legitimate readings of a text. These growing possibilities for differentiation are accompanied by a *de*creased importance of the author of the literary text as a possible limiting factor. While in type II the transgression of the boundaries of authorial intention in interpretation was an exception in special cases – which still were founded on that very authorial intention – in type III neglecting the author in professional interpretations became the rule. For type IV, then, the author disappeared even as producer of text into the margins of the language processes under the scrutiny of the professional critics.

These different types and their mixtures do exist next to each other as established concepts of interpretation. Because the choices between them are in the end normative choices, a disappearance of one of the types is unlikely – comparable to the case of poetics, where the same applies for example for the four poetic traditions M.H. Abrams reconstructed from antiquity to the twentieth century (mimetic, pragmatic, expressive, objective). What is likely, then, is that the four types of intention form a repertoire that in its full range can and will be used for actual position takings in professional interpretation. Recent literary theory can for example legitimate itself with older models as in the case of the return of the author. Think for example of the debate around actual and hypothetical intentionalists in the US, but also about recent literary theory in France ranging from genetic criticism (*critique génétique*, for example Almuth Grésillon or Dirk van Hulle), discourse analysis and grammar of texts (for example Ruth Amossy and Dominique Maingueneau) to recent forms of sociology of literature (Alain Viala and Jérôme Meizoz). However, none of the names mentioned argues for going back to the standard model of authorial intention.

What they are doing looks more like a positioning in the line of type II, with gradually more attention again for arguments related to the biographical author, his *ethos*, and the utterings in their context.

Looking back from this point to the structural dynamics of the decrease in the role of the author and the increase in the critic's space for positioning, not only the names just mentioned seem to suggest that the four types have fully used the potential productivity of this dynamics. With poststructuralist positions marking the far ends of the poles involved, I would hold that with intentional fallacy and poststructuralism the options for launching radical new views on intention in interpretation have been exhausted, at least within the dynamics reconstructed here. Accordingly, what is found in the debates since 1967 are mainly relaunches of variations of the existing four types, or combinations of them (see for example Stecker 2008). If that is true, then one might predict that this picture of variation and combination will probably dominate future debates, too. Of course not for any kind of teleological reason, but due to the exhaustive use of the space for potential positions on intention in interpretation over the last 200 years.

At the same time, one might feel tempted to recognise another kind of regularity at work behind the back of all the critics discussed here. It becomes visible after having reconstructed the typology of historical concepts of intention in interpretation as a whole, when connecting the conceptual dynamics (increased space for professional critical actions within each new model) with the dynamics of position takings (increased number of models on display, for literary theoretician or critics). This might be interpreted as a tendency towards maximising professional participation within the literary field: enlarging over the last 200 years the space for legitimate professional actions *of* and *for* growing numbers of literary critics.

Of course, with this regularity we are not talking about the actual, conscious intention of the scholars and the positions they took in the debates reconstructed above. So in a sense, what has popped up at this point of the argument is a constellation where, after having finished the effort to understand the critics as well as they understood themselves concerning concepts of intention, this reconstruction might allow us now to understand them better than they understood themselves. Since this is not the main focus of the present book, all I will do here is give this tendency in academic literary criticism a thought or two. The level on which I will try to discuss some aspects of hidden regularities in the debate on intention in interpretation will be focusing on the production of knowledge in literary studies as an academic institutional context.

Outlook

Let me start with looking back at the point when common ground between legal and literary studies was at its largest. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, scholarly behaviour in philology and law was fuelled by the better-understanding-than-the-author-understood-himself, I have argued. This motor for academic disciplinary specialisation offered extra room for scholars in both disciplines to take legitimate professional positions. At the same time, however, the formula coined by Schleiermacher and von Savigny bound the scholars of the respective disciplines together in a collective project of growth of knowledge, as the parameter "better" implies. Each scholar contributed so to speak his brick to this project as part of the disciplinary building of scholarly knowledge – a building, by the way, with no fixed plan or fixed outlines, being always under construction. In the course of the twentieth century literary studies seem to have taken a different turn, as the historical reconstruction of concepts of intention in interpretation has shown. From the introduction of the concept of intentional fallacy onwards, the fierce fight against biographical, contextual, textual or other constraints on interpretation brought a new dynamics into the way literary scholarship produces knowledge. Primarily, this dynamics can be characterised as a shift between two poles, getting on the move around 1946: aiming for distinction within a joint project of contributing to the *accumulation of better knowledge* about authors, texts and interpretations (standard model, 1838-better-understanding), as opposed to aiming for distinction primarily via *deviation* from established scholars, their theoretical positions and their specific interpretations (intentional fallacy, death of the author). Obviously, more and more scholars of literary studies tend towards the latter pole during the last decades.

There are some indications that this tendency is not restricted to concepts of intention in interpretation. Recent empirical research on general academic criteria of quality, conducted on behalf of the rectors of Swiss universities (CRUS), found that within literary studies two fundamentally different patterns of norms and values for good research could be discerned, a "traditional" and a "modern" one. These patterns are described, on the one ("modern") hand, in terms of variation, diversification, pluralism, interdisciplinarity, cooperation and orientation towards society, and on the other in terms of orientation towards their own discipline, "scientific truth", intense intrusion into the object and the state of the research in the discipline (cf. Hug et al. 2010, 94). Similarly, to take an arbitrary example, the changes in the prefaces of scholarly text editions since the 1970s underline this polarity regarding aims, norms and rhetoric. Traditional scholarly editors in the wake of, say G. Thomas Tanselle or D.C. Greetham up to the 1980s present themselves in terms of striving for completeness of variations and rele-

vant sources, of working in the line of controllability, inter-subjectivity and sys-
tematics, of laying a foundation with critical editions for the professional inter-
pretative work of others in their discipline. More recent developments such as
genetic criticism (*critique génétique*), however, undermine the editorial hierar-
chies between final and preliminary version, emphasise where a manuscript
or a published text *might* have gone but did not, adhere to polyvalence in present
and future interpretation and maximal freedom for the individual scholar (cf.
Grüttemeier 2014).

These are just some indications, but they point in the same direction. Liter-
ary studies seem to have turned gradually towards a kind of machine producing
ever more individual scholarly options for taking professional positions, in two
regards. First, the development of literary studies as a discipline, at least since
the middle of the twentieth century, shows to an increasing extent a substantial
growth in the possibilities for scholars to present themselves as professionals –
as for example our historical typology of intention in interpretation has shown.
Second, concerning the underlying concept of knowledge production activities of
literary scholars, the development reconstructed in the present book also shows
a tendency towards the dominance of ("modern") norms circling around varia-
tion, innovation and distinction – as opposed to norms like building on (criti-
cism of) established research and accumulation of disciplinary knowledge.

A metaphorical opposition that Mikhail Bakhtin has coined with regard to
linguistics and the novel might be useful to clarify this claim and to avoid mis-
understandings. For Bakhtin, language in general is always under the influence
of two opposing forces:

> Alongside the centripetal forces, the centrifugal forces of language carry on their uninter-
> rupted work; alongside verbal-ideological centralization and unification, the uninterrupted
> processes of decentralization and disunification go forward. Every concrete utterance of a
> speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are
> brought to bear. (Bakhtin 1994, 272; cf. 270 – 275)

On the centripetal side, Bakhtin thinks of dictionaries, grammars, academies,
schoolbooks etc., on the centrifugal side dialects, sociolects and other forms
of daily use of languages work towards variation in language. In analogy, one
might discover two normative conceptions of scholarship at work in every con-
crete utterance of literary scholars at every historical moment. The first pole
could be characterised as being dominated by a primarily centripetal mode of
knowledge production, directed towards a common destination such as the
growth of knowledge or a more accurate, theoretically informed understanding
of facts and rules. At the same time, the adherents of this pole follow norms
such as scholarly control, systematic knowledge and a representative choice of

objects of research. These efforts are in the end about navigating towards some kind of truth, even if fulfilling that truth claim will always be beyond reach. In such a centripetally dominated view on scholarship, quite some authority is given to the state of research at a certain moment, either as something to build on or as something to oppose, when it seems to stand in the way of the further development of the scholarly discipline. That is basically how I would describe the conception of scholarship based on variations of the standard model and the "better-understanding" model in the sense of Schleiermacher and von Savigny. Historically speaking, as we have seen, these types were dominant during the disciplinary differentiation of philology and law, contributing to their academic institutionalisation as we know it in the nineteenth century.

At the other pole of that opposition are the centrifugal forces of knowledge production, based on norms such as plurality, difference, innovation and maximising the freedom for individual scholarly activities. As a consequence, authority – be it that of the author, of historical context, of a finished text or of existing research – is much less important for scholarship dominated by the centrifugal vector. What is primarily relevant for this research is distinction in the sense of taking scholarly roads not taken before, while at the same time establishing connections to what is seen as current developments in contemporary society, more often than not with an implicit or explicit political agenda, critical towards those in power and sympathetic with those without. In other words: centrifugally dominated research is to a lesser degree about determining the relevance of one's own research with regard to the results of existing research. Instead, what is aimed for is often based on the rhetoric of innovation, "combining" and "bringing together": combining specific methods, questions or societal developments with specific texts simply *because* they have not been brought together that way previously. The motivation generally is *not* that the combination will solve a research question that existing research has inspired or vexed, neither with regard to the specific text nor with regard to the specific method under scrutiny.

This opposition of centrifugal and centripetal forces of knowledge production is not an absolute one, neither for language nor for literary criticism: it is a relative opposition, on the institutional as well as on the individual level. Of course, innovation plays a role in centripetally dominated research, too, and even the most centrifugally active scholars usually regard their work as being part of scholarship and/or the world of universities. Therefore, this distinction is about dominance and degrees, not about binary categorisation. Used that way, I think it has quite some heuristic value, not only with regard to the reconstruction of the historical debate on intention in interpretation, but also with regard to the present situation of literary studies.

It allows us, among other things, to discover also dominant tendencies in general claims about science. David R. Shumway and Craig Dionne for example hold that although "disciplinary practitioners typically share a set of assumptions, methods, and practices", in the end "the knowledge they produce tends toward dispersion rather than unity" (Shumway and Dionne 2002, 6). From their Foucauldian and from a "centrifugal" Humanities-perspective, this claim has quite some truth in it. However, to take a random but influential example, Max Weber's *Wissenschaft als Beruf* ("Science as a Vocation", cf. Weber 2004) from 1917 leaves little doubt that Weber and with him most scientists, historically and contemporary, would not line up under the dispersion flag. With Weber's strong emphasis on scientific "progress", he is convinced that the main force getting a scientist to work every day is that others will get further than he will. What is nowhere to be found in Weber is a hope to produce "an increasing quantity of narrowly diverging statements", as Shumway and Dionne (2002, 6) have it. In the terms suggested in the present study, their view on disciplinary knowledge production turns out to be based on a centrifugal conception of academia.

From that perspective, summarising the findings of the present book, there is quite some evidence that literary studies over the last 60 years tended primarily towards a centrifugal mode of knowledge production in the interpretation of literary texts. The diachronic development of the typology reconstructed here and the enormous impact of the recent two new types ("1946" and "1967") on scholarship are the main arguments for that claim. At the same time, the dominant tendency towards "dispersion rather than unity" is fuelling an unprecedented growth in publications and participants in literary studies worldwide (cf. Bauerlein 2011). This "modern" tendency in literary studies primarily fosters difference, diversity and innovation, and to a lesser extent pursues shared questions on the basis of what is regarded as the accumulated knowledge of the discipline. It offers unlimited and unlimitable possibilities for new disciplinary and interdisciplinary projects and professional activities. But there is a price to be paid for this domination of innovation and distinction on the level where scholarly relevance is legitimated in competition with other disciplines. As Gerald Graff put it already some time ago: "What proved disabling is not the failure of humanists to agree on objectives, but their failure to disagree on them in ways that might become recognizable" (Graff 1989, 263). The development of the debates on intention and interpretation from a historical perspective are a case in point. Also the projections in interpretation the present book has discussed point in a similar direction and give some evidence for the claim that literary scholarship in the years to come probably should become more centripetal again, or it might not be at all – at least no longer as a discipline in terms of a minimum of shared questions and shared knowledge.

By the same token, one can conclude that discussing intention in interpretation does not necessarily bring out the worst. In this book, it has brought out the outlines of a historical typology of intention in interpretation and tentative institutional explanations for the shifts in the debate reconstructed here. Furthermore, the book has triggered reflections on hidden regularities in the professional behaviour of participants in the debate and literary studies in general. If these outlines, explanations and regularities have been reconstructed here in a way that colleagues, students and interested readers can reflect, agree or disagree on, then at least the intention of this author has found its way into the text of this book.

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The index was made by Daniela Planteur.