THE ROLE OF ARTISTIC INTENTINONS
IN THE INTERPRETATION OF ARTWORKS

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THE ROLE OF ARTISTIC INTENTIONS IN THE INTERPRETATION OF ARTWORKS

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Fatma Kaya, certify that

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ABSTRACT

The Role of Artistic Intentions in the Interpretation of Artworks

The aim of this thesis is to show that the meaning of an artwork is not determined by the intentions of its creator. Even though, in the normal course of affairs, when we are confronted with an utterance, our cognitive goal might be to understand what our interlocutor intends to say, this is not the case for interaction with artworks. Therefore, any theory of interpretation which considers the aim of an interpreter to be seeking for artistic intentions is not acceptable. The reason for the necessity of treating artworks and the ordinary conversations differently is the essential characteristic of artworks. This characteristic is put forward by Wolfgang Iser in an explicative and a convincing way. This essential characteristic makes Iser's theory applicable to not only literary works but also the other forms of art such as paintings and sculptures. This thesis will look for such a feature of applicability in an acceptable theory of interpretation.

ÖZET

Sanat Eserlerinin Yorumlanmasında Sanatçının Niyetlerinin Rolü

Bu tezin amacı, sanat eserlerinin anlamının sanatçının niyetleriyle belirlenmediğini göstermektir. Gündelik hayatta bir tümce ile karşılaştığımızda bilişsel hedefimiz muhatabımızın niyetini anlamak olabilir. Fakat sanat eserleriyle karşılaşmamızda bu durum geçerli değildir. Bu yüzden yorumcunun görevinin sanatçının niyetleriyle belirlenmiş olan anlamın ortaya çıkarılması olduğunu iddia eden herhangi bir yorum teorisi kabul edilemez. Gündelik hayattaki diyalogların ve sanat eserlerinin bu bağlamdaki farklı ele alınması, sanat eserlerinin belirleyici karakteristiğinden kaynaklanan bir gerekliliktir. Bu belirleyici karakteristik Wolfgang Iser tarafından açıklayıcı ve ikna edici bir biçimde ortaya konmuştur. Iser'ın teorisinin sanat eserlerinin belirleyici karakteristiği üzerine temellendirilmesi, onun teorisinin yazınsal eserlerin yanı sıra resim ve heykel gibi sanatın diğer türlerine de uygulanabilirliğini mümkün kılmıştır. Ve bu uygulanabilirlik özelliği, bu tezde kabul edilebilir bir yorum teorisine dair aranan bir özellik olarak öne sürülmüştür.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this thesis is to exhibit that the meaning of an artwork is not determined by the intentions of its creator. Therefore, any theory of interpretation that considers the aim of an interpreter as seeking for the meaning of an artwork, which is assumed to have been determined by the intentions of its creator, is not acceptable. Even though it is arguable that in ordinary conversations the intentions of the utterer determine the meaning of the utterance, this is not the case for understanding and interpreting artworks. The aim of this thesis is to show that because of the very characteristic of artworks, the intentions of artists do not operate in the same way as the intentions of speakers in the ordinary use of language. Therefore, a plausible theory of interpretation which is based on the very characteristic of artworks in general is supposed to be valid for the interpretation of all forms of art such as poems, novels, paintings, pieces of music, etc. In this context, I will argue that Wolfgang Iser's theory of aesthetic response is an acceptable one.

The origin of the debate on whether artistic intentions are relevant for interpreting and/or understanding an artwork is a shift focus from the poet to the text in literary criticism. Before New Criticism emerged in mid-forties, literary critics were under the influence of nineteenth century German scholars. But with the rise of New Criticism, which occurred as a reaction to poet-focused interpretation of poetry, *text* became the center of focus in literary criticism. New Critics were concerned about the lack of a scientific, objective method for interpreting literary texts. In this sense, a close reading of a text became fashionable. However, many critics still defended the relevance of authorial intention in interpreting literary works. The

article "Intentional Fallacy" written by Monroe Beardsley and W. K. Wimsatt in 1946 revived the tension between two opposing approaches on the relevance of authorial intention in interpretation of literary works. Beardsley and Wimsatt argued for the irrelevance of authorial intention in interpretation. I refer to their view as "strong anti-intentionalism". As opposed to strong anti-intentionalism, I will be referring to the views of Joseph Margolis, Richard Shusterman and Wolfgang Iser as "Weak anti-intentionalism," which is thought to be the view that artistic intention is relevant for the meaning and interpretation of an artwork; but that the meaning of an artwork is not determined by the author's intentions and hence interpretation is not a work revealing some hidden truth. On the other hand, what will be called "Intentionalism" is the view that authorial intention is the determiner of the meaning of a literary work and hence is relevant for its interpretation, which is the work of finding out this determinate meaning.

It would not be wrong to say that with the publication of "Intentional Fallacy" the relevance of authorial intention in the interpretation of literary works ceased to be an issue of literary criticism and became an object of thought in philosophical writings. *Validity in Interpretation* (1967) written by E. D. Hirsch took the issue one step further, where the phenomena of meaning and authorial intention were philosophically examined in an interrelated way. Since then, the relevance of authorial intent in understanding/interpreting literary works has been discussed by various other thinkers. The following chapters will explain and evaluate the views of the most prominent figures in this debate. The main theme of each criticism that will be made for each argument of these figures will be the necessity of an account of the essential characteristic of artwork in general which makes artistic intention either relevant or irrelevant for interpretation. Wolfgang Iser's theory of aesthetic response

will have a special place in this context. I will consider his emphasis on the reader's contribution to the realization of meaning as a more general phenomenon that operates in the realization of the meaning of non-literary works as well. In other words, the reader in Iser's account will be considered as including the spectator and the audience in addition to the reader of a literary text. In this sense, Iser's theory of aesthetic response will be spared the criticism of lacking an account of the essential characteristic of the artwork on which a theory of interpretation is supposed to be based, unlike the theories of Noel Carroll, Monroe Beardsley, E. D. Hirsch, Joseph Margolis, and Richard Shusterman.

An account of the essential characteristic of artworks is necessary because the relevance of artistic intentions can be questioned not only in the case of understanding a literary work, but also in the case of a painting. How should Picasso's *Guernica* be interpreted? Does *Guernica* have a determinate meaning? If so, what is it that determinates its meaning? Is it possible to have non-converging interpretations of *Guernica*? Is Picasso's intention in *Guernica* to represent the Spanish Civil War? Is the knowledge that *Guernica* is a representation of the Spanish Civil War sufficient for understanding it? Does the Spanish Civil War mean the same thing for different viewers? Is it impossible to understand or appreciate *Guernica* without knowing that it represents the Spanish Civil War? Should we consider understanding and appreciation to be different in this context?

These questions aim to show that a theory of interpretation is supposed to cover what such questions point out. In this context, as stated above, Wolfgang Iser's theory of interpretation is an acceptable one. In the rest of this thesis, the arguments of the prominent figures in this debate will be discussed and why Iser's theory is more satisfactory will be explained in detail.

CHAPTER 2

THE START OF THE DEBATE

The role of artistic intention in understanding an artwork has become a philosophical issue through the emergence of a debate in the history of literary criticism. With the rise of New Criticism in the middle of twentieth century, the relevance of authorial intention in the interpretation of literary works has become the subject of a debate between "Intentionalists" and "Anti-intentionalists", both of which will be explained in the following two chapters. In this chapter, I will draw a picture of the historical background of this debate. For this aim, I will first introduce “New Criticism” which emerged as a reaction to the former schools of criticism. After introducing New Criticism, I will attempt to make a brief introduction of the concepts we will be dealing with in the following chapters. Finally, I will introduce the controversial article “Intentional Fallacy” written by Monroe Beardsley and Wimsatt, who were influenced by New Criticism, which inspired the revival of a significant issue in the interpretation of poems.

2.1 New Criticism

Before the New Criticism, philology and literature schools of North America US were under the influence of nineteenth century German scholars. For Wordsworth (1989), who is one of the figures of the period before the new criticism, poetry is “the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” (p. 57). Before Wordsworth's period, poetry was considered as a reflection of reality. His statement indicates a change in the history of criticism. The change can be described as putting the poet

and her relationship to the work at the center of attention and hence considering poetry as an expressive rather than mimetic art.

On the other hand, in the mid-forties, a reaction against this approach occurred. The main theme of the reaction was the lack of an objective, scientific method for interpreting poems. Poet-focused interpretations were condemned for being too subjective. This way of interpreting poetry was criticized for pointing out only the beautiful and morally elevating qualities of a poem. The New Critics aimed to have a more systematic method for interpreting literary works. Therefore, "a close reading" of a text was emphasized and poetry, or the literary work in general, was thought to be a self-contained or self-referential object. As a result, the center of attention was shifted from the poet to the text.

The term "New Criticism" is derived from John Crowe Ransom's book *The New Criticism* (1941). I. A. Richards's *Practical Criticism* and *The Meaning of Meaning* are two significant works that contributed the development of the methodology of New Criticism as an empirical, scientific approach. Furthermore, T. S. Eliot's articles "Tradition and the Individual Talent" and "Hamlet and His Problems" which talk about "objective correlative", are also considered as important works that contributed to the formation of this new objective method. John Crowe Ransom's students from Vanderbilt University, Allen Tate, Cleanth Brooks, and Robert Penn Warren were also important figures of this new critical thought.

What exactly New Criticism reacts against and what exactly it suggests as novel and whether these suggestions work perfectly is not as crystal clear. In other words, because of not having a manifesto of New critics, it is difficult to make a comprehensive definition of New Criticism. On the other hand, the attacks made against New Criticism can give some ideas about what it looks like or at least looked

like from some particular perspectives. One of the attacks against the New Critics is their unfavorable attitudes towards academics and journalist-reviewers. Their basic antagonism is put forward by Murray Krieger (1956) as "the self-indulgence of critical impressionism" and the "academicism of university English departments" (p. 4). Works of Ransom, Richards and Brooks can be considered as exhibiting these antagonisms (Foster, 1962, p. 14). Besides, the words of T. S. Eliot and Allen Tate justify these antagonisms: Eliot said that modern criticism sprang from a discontent with the critical impressionism of thirty years ago (Foster, 1962, p. 15) and Tate that the term New Criticism designates "a particular return to the literary text, along with a revolt against historical scholarship." (Arnold, 1955, p. 53) However, for Foster, it is not possible to define New Criticism merely with these antagonisms. In his book *The New Romantics,* Foster claims that Rene Welleck, Austin Warren and W. K. Wimsatt, Jr. are counter-examples of these antagonisms (Foster, 1962, p. 15).

Similarly, it was common to identify New Criticism with a certain rather than exclusive theory of literature, which implies a certain set of tastes of literature, favoring highly organized and complicated poetry. However, as Foster (1962) puts forward, some critics such as I. A. Richards cannot be identified that way, because of his turn to a nineteenth-century English humanist-scholar's tradition of poetry when he wanted something good or bad to work on (p. 16).

In brief, it is difficult to detect all necessary and sufficient identifying properties of New Criticism. Though it is possible to continue discussing the best way of defining it, for the sake of length and the focus of this chapter, I would put fulfilling this task aside and continue with a particular classic and controversial New Critical essay "The Intentional Fallacy" written by Beardsley and Wimsatt in 1946 (revised in 1954). I will work on this particular New Critical writing in detail in the

fourth section of this chapter. For now, I will briefly mention why it is controversial both for my work and in general.

This will of the New Critics to find a new objective method for literary criticism lead many thinkers to focus on the poet in order to reach a truth about the text. In this sense, there was a common view that in order to understand a text, we should search for its author's intention. On the other hand, through the article "Intentional Fallacy" written by Monroe Beardsley and William Wimsatt a significant debate has started. In this article, Wimsatt and Beardsley present their arguments against the view that a text's meaning is determined by authorial intent, which is called as "Intentionalism". By declaring their position as opposed to Intentionalism, they started an ongoing debate between intentionalists and anti-intentionalists.

Beardsley and Wimsatt argue that authorial intention or authorial meaning is irrelevant and distracting for the analysis of a literary work. What they call the “Intentional Fallacy” implies the irrelevance of authorial intent in the meaning and interpretation of a literary work. Their view is an emphasis on close-reading, which is the basic method of New Criticism. On the other hand, another of their articles, "Affective Fallacy", also attacks reader-response schools of criticism. For Beardsley and Wimsatt, the reader’s response or emotional reaction to a literary work cannot be accepted as a criterion for literary analysis. For them, what should be focused on is the text itself. In that sense, this second article can be thought of as complementary to the first one.

In the third section of this chapter, I will talk about this article in details. And after that, in the following chapters, I will draw a general picture of the debate by explaining and evaluating arguments of some significant figures. In the next chapter,

I will talk about the views of intentionalists, such as E. D. Hirsch and Noel Carroll. After that, in the following chapters, I will introduce anti-intentionalists such as Monroe Beardsley and Wimsatt, Joseph Margolis, Richard Shusterman and Wolfgang Iser. Finally, in the conclusion, I will be explaining my own solution. But before that, I think it is a good idea to introduce some terms that I will be using throughout my work and in doing so let me explain why I regard this particular work of Beardsley and Wimsatt as crucial.

2.2 Intention, meaning, and interpretation

I would like to start with the notion of *intention* for two reasons. The first is to clarify the core of the debate between Intentionalists and Anti-Intentionalists, which will be introduced in the next chapter. The second reason is to emphasize that although I would like to join a debate over the relevance of artistic intention in interpreting artworks in general, since the original debate is about literary works, the definition of intention throughout my work should be considered in the context of this original debate, thereby in the context of literary interpretation.

What the notion of intention refers to in this context is basically what the author has in her mind when she is producing her work, namely her state of mind. But still we can talk about two different accounts of intention. The first, which is presupposed by the anti-intentionalist of the earlier debates, declares that the authorial intention is outside the artwork; hence authorial intentions are private and episodic mental events which consequently may cause independent effects (Carroll, 1992, p. 100-101). The second account is the neo-Wittgensteinian one. According to this account, authorial intent is discoverable because it is a purpose manifested in the artwork itself and regulates the way the artwork is (Carroll, 1992, p. 101). The

following chapters will illustrate in detail how these different accounts of intention operate in the ongoing debate. But for now, what should be known is while intentionalists argue that a literary text's meaning is what its author intended it to mean, anti-intentionalists argue that authorial intent is irrelevant for the meaning of a text.

The other notions that will be dealt with are "meaning" and "interpretation". Although New Criticism's concern was finding a new and objective method for interpreting literary texts the debate in time has evolved into an issue of "meaning". In other words, rather than whether a close reading provides a better interpretation, or even whether a valid interpretation is possible, the core of the debate has become how the meaning of a literary text is determined. It is obvious that these two notions, "interpretation" and "meaning", stand in a certain relation to each other. But due to the distinct characteristic of artworks, how the utterer's intention operates in "interpretation" and "meaning" must be thought in the context of artworks rather than ordinary conversations. However, the recent version of the debate seems to be dismissing this point. To be more precious I will briefly mention Hirsch's approach.

Hirsch assumes that each literary text has one single determinate meaning. In order to understand this meaning, a critic must search for authorial intention which is the determining will of the word sequence appearing in the text. This argument has three bold assumptions. One: it assumes that each literary work has one single pre-determined meaning. And two: it can be acquired only by finding out the intentions of the author, which is an accomplishable job. Three: that interpreting a literary text is a work of revealing this determined meaning. Hirsch's second assumption follows from his consideration of poems or novels as indifferent from the ordinary use of language. I will explain Hirsch's view in the next chapter in detail. What I want to

emphasize here is that seeking for the meaning of an artwork, if there is any, and making a valid interpretation of it requires serious work. This work essentially includes having an account of what a work of art is and what makes it different from the normal course of affairs. Without completing this task, suggesting an account of interpretation would be void. As a result of this faculty, a plausible account of interpretation is supposed to be applicable to all forms of art, including paintings, pieces of music, etc.

Since the meaning of a poem and the interpretation of it are not necessarily identical, making a conceptual clarification of the notions of "interpretation" and "meaning" would be a good idea. However, such an attempt would go beyond the focus of this thesis. The issues "What is meaning?" and "what is interpretation?" are wider than the issue of the relevance of artistic intentions in the interpretation of artworks. Therefore, what we are supposed to understand from the notions of "interpretation" and "meaning" is their general concept. Although those notions are thought and used by most of the figures in this debate solely in the context of literature, as it will be argued for in the following chapters as well, this thesis aims to seek for a theory of interpretation which has an argument for the relevance or irrelevance of artistic intentions in the interpretation of artworks in general. Thus, what should be kept in mind throughout this thesis is that any theory of interpretation is based on some assumptions about the notion of meaning (which is assumed as being determinate in both ordinary conversations and in literary texts in the same way) is going to be considered unacceptable.

2.3 Intentional fallacy

In this section, I will explain the point Beardsley and Wimsatt make in "Intentional Fallacy". In order to do this, I will follow the way that George Dickie and W. Kent Wilson used in defending Beardsley's anti-intentionalism in their article “The Intentional Fallacy: Defending Beardsley” (1995).

The notion of "intentional fallacy" was first used in the entry "intention" of *Dictionary of World Literature* by Beardsley and Wimsatt in 1943. After that, they wrote an article in 1946, entitled "The Intentional Fallacy". While suggesting the doctrine of intentional fallacy Beardsley and Wimsatt were inspired by Lewis's doctrine of "the Personal Fallacy" (1939). The personal fallacy arises from thinking that "all poetry is about the poet's state of mind" and therefore a critic's task is to use the poem to infer the state of a poet's mind. In the original debate, there are three items which fall under the intentional fallacy:

1) Inferring the artist’s intentions from evidence internal to an artwork (what Lewis pointed out as “personal fallacy”).
2) Relevance of authorial intentions to the interpretation of a work of literature
3) Relevance of fulfilling or not fulfilling the authorial intention to the evaluation of an artwork.

However, in time, item (1) disappeared from the debate.

In the dictionary entry, Beardsley and Wimsatt make a distinction between the use of authorial intention for the evaluation of literature and for the interpretation of literature. However, in time, as happened to item (1), the relevance of the authorial intention to evaluation of literature disappeared as well. Consequently, the scope of

the relevance of authorial intention is fixed in the interpretation of literature in the debate between intentionalists and anti-intentionalists.

Wimsatt and Beardsley make another key distinction in the dictionary entry. They distinguish "the meaning of the work itself" from "the meaning that the author intended to express in the work". The meaning of the work itself can be found out by the semantics and syntax of the work. They claim that to find out the general meaning of an art work, we need two opposites: one, the elements of the work of art and two, the public context. But the intentionalists claim that theory of Beardsley and Wimsatt is incomplete because it ignores artist's intention due to the distinction they make.

Neither in the dictionary entry nor in "The Intentional Fallacy″ do Beardsley and Wimsatt explicitly state what distinguishes these two, namely, the meaning of the work itself and the meaning that the author intended to express in the work. However, in "The Intentional Fallacy″, they clearly state that these are two different and distinct entities. Even though they can be the same in some cases, as a matter of criticism, the meaning of a poem ought to be attributed to a dramatic speaker. If we attempt to claim that the dramatic speaker of the poem is the poet, we can do this only by biographical inference.

Dickie and Wilson claim that what it means to commit a fallacy when the authorial intention is concerned is not explicitly stated by Beardsley and Wimsatt. By considering their two key claims, Dickie and Wilson formulize what Beardsley and Wimsatt call the intentional fallacy in two senses: the broader sense and the narrower sense.

- Broader notion of fallacy: thinking that an artist's intentions are relevant to the meaning of the artwork.

- Narrower notion of fallacy: “the meaning of the work itself” and “the meaning that author intended to express in the work” are identical (which means the latter determines the former).We call this claim *The Identity Thesis* put forward by Beardsley in his response to Hirsch’s *Validity In Interpretation*. In this chronological course of the debate, Beardsley's main concern is to argue on the narrower sense of intentional fallacy.

Beardsley and Wimsatt start their discussions by introducing five axiomatic propositions. I will first summarize them.

1) "A poem does not come into existence by accident." Although the words of a poem come out of the head and the cause of a poem is the poet's intellect, that does not essentially entail that the poet's intentions are to be the standard by which the critic judges a poem.
2) "One must ask how a critic expects to get an answer to the question about intention."
3) "Judging a poem is like judging a pudding or a machine."
4) Even though the meaning of a poem may be personal, we ought to impute the thoughts and the attitudes of the poem to the dramatic speaker. If we attempt to claim that the dramatic speaker of the poem is the poet, we can do this only by a biographical inference.
5) The poem is not the critic's own since it belongs to the public.

As stated before, neither the dictionary entry nor *The Intentional Fallacy* contains a positive argument for anti-intentionalism that explains why the intentionalist approach is committing a fallacy. What we are looking for, namely a positive argument against intentionalism, appears twenty four years after the first publication of "The Intentional Fallacy", in Beardsley's book *The Possibility of Criticism* (1970).

I will talk about Beardsley's positive in the fourth chapter entitled "Anti-Intentionalist".

So far, I have described the era from which literary criticism developed the new critical perspective and drawn a minimal picture of what this new perspective looks like. I have also introduced the controversial new critical view of Beardsley and Wimsatt which became an impetus for New Criticism by inspiring the production of theories with regard to the relevance of authorial intention in the interpretation of literary works. Beardsley and Wimsatt's view is called anti-intentionalism. But before explaining what it is, in the next chapter, I will introduce the view to which Monroe Beardsley and W. K. Wimsatt, Wolfgang Iser and later on Margolis, Shusterman and had an "anti" perspective. Thus, in the next chapter, I will introduce the intentionalist view by explaining three different arguments for the relevance of authorial intent in the interpretation of artworks, namely the arguments belonging to Hirsch and Noel Carroll.

CHAPTER 3

INTENTIONALİSTS

Beardsley and Wimsatt's controversial article, "Intentional Fallacy" became a bold voice of New Criticism by making a big emphasis on the necessity of "a close reading". However, since every movement is confined to the reaction by its founders, as well as the other New Critics, Beardsley and Wimsatt were opposed by many thinkers. In this chapter, I will present the arguments of E. D. Hirsch and Noel Carroll who are against the point made in "Intentional Fallacy".

Hirsch, who was a scholar of romantic poetry in the beginning of his career, wrote a book in which he argued against the views of Beardsley and Wimsatt. In *In Defense of the Author* (1967), he posits a theory of meaning that is founded on the "Identity Thesis". The Identity Thesis is basically a refutation of semantic autonomy. According to Hirsch, the meaning of a text is identical to what its author intended it to mean. In other words, textual meaning is identical to authorial meaning. Thus, considering authorial intention as irrelevant to the meaning of a text is itself a fallacy. Hirsch supports this thesis by positing an assumption of the non-shareability of indeterminate meaning. Hirsch's point necessitates the communicative characteristic of an artwork and meaning in general. I say artwork in general because for Hirsch, an artwork is an artwork because it is necessarily meaningful and meaning is necessarily sharable.

Noel Carroll, who is one of the most productive figures of the debate, has a positive intentionalist view. He thinks that in the normal course of affairs, when we are confronted with an utterance, our cognitive goal is to understand what the speaker intends to say. Thus, in order to have a valid account for irrelevance of

authorial intention in interpretation, one is supposed to give an account for what makes a literary work different from the normal course of affairs. He says that if an anti-intentionalist theory of interpretation is based on an account of what makes an artwork or an ordinary conversation different in the sense of the relevance of authorial intent, we should consider it as an ontological argument against intentionalism. In other words, an ontological argument which can explain why authorial intention is irrelevant to literary interpretation while a speaker's intent is relevant to understanding her in an ordinary conversation would be a plausible one. Carroll thinks that there is also one other way of arguing against intentionalism which is the aesthetical. For him, an aesthetical argument which explains that for the aesthetical purposes revealing authorial intention is not required would be a plausible one. In his "Art, Intention, and Conversation" (1992), Carroll argues that anti-intentionalist accounts are incapable of giving either ontological or aesthetical argument against the relevance of authorial intention in interpretation. After refuting both ontological and aesthetical anti-intentionalist arguments, Carroll puts forwards his own theory of interpretation which is based on what ontological and aesthetical anti-intentionalist accounts lack; namely, the conversational characteristic of literary texts.

In the following parts of this chapter, I will explain positions of these figures in details, namely, E. D. Hirsch and Noel Carroll, and make an evaluation of each.

3.1 E. D. Hirsch

Hirsch starts his controversial article "In Defense of the Author", by defining what he calls "semantic autonomy". Semantic autonomy, which is embraced by Eliot, Pound, and Heidegger and his followers, means that all written language remains

independent of the subjective realm of its author (Hirsch, 1992, p. 11). Hirsch (1992) thinks that semantic autonomy is liberated so much in time that, in a way, having an adequate principle for judging the validity of an interpretation has become almost impossible. In this context, semantic autonomy caused doubt for the possibility of an objectively valid interpretation (p. 12). As a result, talking about a critic's "reading" became fashionable because "what a text says" was replaced with "what it says to an individual critic". In other words, the text started to represent the critic's meaning rather than author's. In his article, Hirsch emphasizes that a theory based on the notion of semantic autonomy ignores that meaning is an affair of consciousness, not of words.

Then, in his article "In Defense of Author", Hirsch puts forward his own theory. His basic claim is that a word sequence can have more than one possible meaning. According to him, this very fact enables interpreters to have their own liberal reading of a text. Hirsch claims that a word sequence means nothing until either someone means something by it or understands something from it. Namely, whenever a meaning is connected to words, there must be a person who is making this connection. Furthermore, "the particular meanings he lends to them are never the only legitimate ones under the norms and conventions of his language" (Hirsch, 1992, p.13).

Hirsch states that semantic autonomy theory cannot resolve the possible different readings of a text. He states that the "chaotic democracy of reading" caused by the theory of semantic autonomy leads us ask a value question: what is the best reading of a poem? Here, Hirsch (1992) thinks that there is a need for deliberating on two compelling notions: (1) "author's meaning" and (2) "the best reading/meaning". Since semantic autonomy theory allows for no particular viable normative ideal, it is

not possible to claim that there is one determinate or determinable meaning of a poem (p. 14).

After stating his reasons for rejecting the theory of semantic autonomy, Hirsch puts forward his own intentionalist argument. For Hirsch (1992), "Determinacy is a necessary attribute of any sharable meaning" (p. 14). If a meaning is not sharable, we can talk about neither it self-identity nor its identity with another meaning. But what Hirsch means by "determinacy" is not definiteness or preciseness. When we call verbal meanings ambiguous or imprecise, we still acknowledge their determinacy in the sense that they are what they are. Thus, for Hirsch, these ambiguous and imprecise verbal meanings simply serve to define the character of a meaning. Briefly, determinacy means self-identity and it is the minimum requirement for sharable meaning. Therefore, without determinacy communication and validity in interpretation are impossible.

Hirsch points out that the kind of "determinacy" which he means is not a verbal meaning determinate in one sense, even if it were merely a locus of possibilities. He thinks that this kind of determinacy is not shareable in any act of understanding or interpretation. An array of possible meanings has a boundary and hence a determinate entity in the sense of not being an array of actual meanings. But when a verbal meaning is entertained, then it is actual because the human mind cannot entertain a possible meaning (Hirsch, 1992, p. 15). He also notes that the determinacy of a verbal meaning requires verbal meaning to be unchangeable and non-temporal. This is a criterion for self-identity and therefore determinacy. Since the determinacy of a verbal meaning is possible via actualization through entertaining a meaning, then a determining will is required for determinate meaning. Hirsch defines this determining will as a discriminating force which discriminates

the possibilities and hence as the reason for the uncertainty of what an author does mean by a word sequence and what he could mean by it. Hirsch puts it forward as:

> But if a determinate word sequence does not itself necessarily represent one, particular, self-identical, unchanging complex of meaning, then the determinacy of its verbal meaning must be accounted by some other discriminating force which causes the meaning to be this instead of *that* or *that* or *that*, all of which it could be. That discriminating force must involve an act of will, since unless one particular complex of meaning is *willed* (no matter how "rich" and "various" it might be), there would be no distinction between what an author does mean by a word sequence and what he could mean by it. Determinacy of verbal meaning requires an act of will. (Hirsch, 1992, p.16)

Hirsch also notes that the reproducibility of a verbal meaning is possible through its determinacy, namely via its determining will. Since a determinate verbal meaning is reproducible, it has room for identity with other meanings in the sense that a particular determinate meaning can be the same in different acts of construing. Thus, the core of Hirsch's theory is that even though there can be ambiguity and imprecision in many usages of language, each word sequence has a determinate meaning or a determinate character. This determinacy allows verbal meaning to be sharable, reproducible, self-identical, and possibly identical with other meanings. As he claims, this determinacy is possible and real by means of a determining will. Consequently, the viable normative or criteria for a valid interpretation is the "determining will", namely the authorial intention.

After positing his own theory and arguing for it, Hirsch puts forward an argument against another theory of determinacy. According to this theory, what determinates the textual meaning is the context. But according to Hirsch, context can only narrow the possibilities of meaning rather than determine the actual one. For Hirsch, context has a determinate character; however, what it determinates is the guess of an interpreter. In other words, because interpreter constructs a context in her act of interpreting, it is still the case that the context constructed by an interpreter can

be wrong. Thus, if textual meaning is identical to verbal intention of the author, then a context which is formulated by a critic merely narrows the possible meanings rather than determining the actual one. And a context itself is something to be determined. First, the author does it and then the interpreter. "It is not something that is simply there without anybody having to make any determinations..." (Hirsch, 1992, p.17).

To sum up, Hirsch thinks that in order for meaning to be shareable, it is to be determinate. Therefore, anything we consider as having a meaning must have a determining will. In the case of literary works, the meaning is determined by its author. And if we do not consider literary meaning in this context but rather embrace the theory of semantic autonomy, resolving possible meanings would be impossible. In this case, determinacy which makes self-identity, reproducibility and shareability possible would be absent and hence there would be no way to make a valid interpretation of a text. Therefore, textual meaning and authorial meaning are to be thought of as identical. In other words, the meaning of a text is what its author intended it to mean. And what an interpreter does is simply finding out the authorial intent.

As we see in his reasoning, Hirsch's main concern is finding a criterion for a valid interpretation. When we consider the start of the debate as emerging out of a new tradition of literary interpretation, Hirsch's concern is a plausible one. However, as with of the other figures of the debate, what is said in this context goes far beyond what at the starting point they aimed for. The object of an interpretation is an artwork. Thus, an account for how to interpret artwork requires a job for grounding its theory on the nature of artworks, which identifies the appropriateness of the interpretation because of its very nature. In other words, even though what Hirsch

says about determinacy, shareability, and reproducibility is true, there is no necessary reason for considering finding out what the authorial intention is in order to have a good interpretation of a literary work of art. There can be either an ontological or an aesthetical argument for why all these linguistic "facts" about meaning are valid also for literary works of art. The need of especially an ontological argument makes it obvious that any attempt for giving an account of interpretation must include interpretation of artworks in general. Hirsch's words on indeterminacy and shareability as components of an account of interpretation make the necessity of ontological argument clear when we consider that pictorial meaning or audial meaning. For instance, conventions of pictorial representation are not as clear as linguistic conventions and hence determinacy of pictorial meaning is worth for deliberating. Therefore, an account which is grounded on some "facts" about meaning that is based on ordinary use of natural languages lacks an ontological base and hence is incapable of being valid for artworks in general.

It is also arguable that Hirsch's theory is not an economical one in the sense that what he posits for the sake of giving an account of interpretation requires more work than his account gives. Consider his theory of determinacy of meaning. Hirsch believes that what we call meaning is something shareable and if not, then we cannot call it as meaning. This is one of his assumptions that require an argument or even a theory to be accepted as true. Secondly, Hirsch thinks that an indeterminate meaning, if any, cannot be shared just because indeterminacy makes shareability impossible.

So far, I have explained the views of Hirsch, who is one of the most significant figures of the debate, on the relevance of authorial intention in the interpretation of a literary text. At the end of the part written for this aim, I have

briefly stated my criticisms of his view. I will move on with the intentionalist arguments of Noel Carroll and evaluate them.

3.2 Noel Carroll

In his article "Art, Intention, and Conversation" (1992), Carroll argues against both ontological and aesthetical theories of anti-intentionalism. While arguing against these two ways of arguing for intentionalism, Carroll makes an emphasis on the conversational characteristic of artworks. For Carroll, neither ontological nor aesthetical theories are defendable in the sense of missing this essential characteristic of artwork. In order to show that for Carroll, I will consider Beardsley's "Intentions and Interpretations: A fallacy Reviewed" as an example of ontological theories of anti-intentionalism. In the first section of this part, I will introduce Carroll's refutation of Beardsley's ontological argument. Since Beardsley's ontological argument is grounded by Austin's Speech Act Theory, in order to make Carroll's criticism of Beardsley's account clear, in a small section, I will explain Austin's Speech Act Theory. In the second section, I will present his arguments against Beardsley's aesthetic account of interpretation. At the end of each section, I will put forward my evaluation of Carroll's criticism of anti-intentionalist theories.

3.2.1 Refutation of ontological arguments

Carroll claims that in the normal course of affairs, when we are confronted with an utterance, our cognitive goal is to understand what the speaker intends to say. This is also the case in non-verbal behavior. Even though there can be some unintended consequences of an utterance, in order to explain such a situation, we need to have a conception of agent's intention. For Carroll, what historians do in order to make the

past intelligible is the same; namely, trying to understand intentions of historical figures in order to make sense of their actions. Carroll (1992) thinks that denying the relevance of authorial intention for the meaning of a work is an odd thing because we generally presume that historians' attempts to understand the intentions of authors or historical agents when documentary record is scant is possible (p.97). Then Carroll asks, why are we supposed to treat artworks differently than what he describes as normal course of affairs? What makes art and real life different and what makes intention relevant for one and irrelevant for the other? In his paper, Carroll aims to show distinctions and continuities between the two. But before showing these distinctions and continuities Carroll puts his replies for Beardsley's anti-intentionalist examples of intuition pump.

1. Beardsley writes, "If a sculptor tells us that his statute was intended to be smooth and blue, but our senses tell us it is rough and pink, we go by our senses" (as cited in Carroll, 1992, p. 99). The example implies that artistic intention is irrelevant because a sculptor cannot make a pink statute blue by reporting that his intention was to make it blue Carroll thinks that the solution to the case is too hasty. He thinks that rather than concluding that artistic intentions are irrelevant, we can say that the report is insincere. In other words, the sculptor in the example did not really believe that his intentions were to make a blue statue by painting it pink. Carroll's reply is based on Beardsley's claim that intentions are constituted partly by beliefs. Carroll thinks that if this is the case, then we can question whether an artist really believed x to mean p by his activity (in our case x: pink statue and p: blue statue and the activity: painting the statue pink). He thinks that such an artist might intend to make irony.

2. Another intuition-pump example from early arguments is the following: an artwork cannot provide evidence of failed intentions. For example, in many cases, as

in the case of Shakespeare and Homer, we do not have any external evidence of artist's intentions; what we have is only the poem itself. Therefore, we have to assume that those artists did not fail in the realization of their intentions. And this assertion is equal to "the poem succeeds because it is the way it is because it is the way it is." This is circular.

Carroll's refutation on this argument is through an attack of the assertion that artwork cannot provide evidence of failed intention. He thinks the contrary and explicates his thought by giving an actual literary example. In the introduction of "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions", Kuhn (1970) writes, "having been weaned on these distinctions ['the context of discovery' versus 'context of justification'] and others like them, I could scarcely be more aware of their import and force" (p. 9). Carroll claims that the whole text is an evidence for what Kuhn intended to say and for what he failed to say. He thinks that an alert reader can very easily and quickly recognize that what Kuhn actually intended to say was that he had been nurtured on these distinctions rather than being weaned on them. For Carroll, the text as a whole makes such mistakes recognizable. Similarly, in the case of art works, Carroll states that their genre, style, historical context and overall aesthetic direction make such mistakes and failures recognizable.

Carroll has another way of refuting this particular argument of anti-intentionalists. His refutation is based on distinction between two different accounts of the notion of intention. The first one is presupposed by the anti-intentionalists of the earlier debates. That account announces that the authorial intent is outside the artwork hence authorial intentions are private and episodic mental events which consequently may cause independent effects (Carroll, 1992, p. 100-101). Thus, what we have as evidence for the interpretation of an artwork is the artwork itself, and

these intentions are likely to be unavailable. Therefore, the artwork itself is suspected as being basis of the meaning.

The other account is a neo-Wittgenstein account of intention, which Carroll thinks that should be embraced. According to this account, authorial intention is discoverable because it is a purpose manifested in the artwork itself and it regulates the way the artwork is (Carroll, 1992, p. 101). Therefore, an artwork can be successful or not in the context of realization of authorial intention. Namely, it is legitimate to search for authorial intention. Through the neo-Wittgensteinian account of intention, Carroll believes that the anti-intentionalists' arguments lose their validity.

However, for Carroll, there are still two ways of arguing against intentionalism, which are ontological and aesthetical. The ontological way of refuting intentionalism implies that there are ontological reasons that make authorial intention irrelevant to the interpretation of artworks. The aesthetical way of arguing implies that authorial intention is irrelevant for the aesthetic purposes. He points out that both ways regard artworks as having to be interpreted differently from ordinary words and actions while he aims to show that they should not be.

Carroll criticizes Beardsley for lacking an account for which ontological reasons make authorial intention irrelevant for interpretation. Through the deployment of speech-act theory, Beardsley gives an account for why we should treat literary works differently from the ordinary usage of language. Before presenting Carroll's argument against Beardsley's account of the ontological reasons for irrelevancy of authorial intention, I will introduce Austin's speech act theory.

In *How to do things with words* (1962), Austin basically puts forward a theory of language that is an alternative of theories which consider all statements as

verifiable. However, as Austin (1962) states, many utterances which look like statements are either intended or not intended partly to record or import straightforward information about the facts, such as ethical statements (p. 2). According to his theory, there is a special kind of sentences which do not “describe” or “report” or “constate” anything at all and hence are neither true nor false. He calls these sentences "performatives" More importantly, uttering such sentences does or partly does an action. For instance, sentences like “I do” uttered by the bride or groom in a marriage ceremony or “I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth” uttered by the authorized person for naming the ship or “I bet you six pence it will rain tomorrow.” Austin calls the utterances that look like descriptive statements as "constatives".

The performatives are not the sole things necessary for the act to be performed, but it is usually a leading incident in the performance of the act. It is because some certain necessary circumstances should be fulfilled in order that those performative utterances to be realized. For instance, in order for person x to name a ship, that person is supposed to be appointed for this task. Austin defines the doctrine of performative utterances that fall under such failure as "The doctrine of infelicities" which is "the doctrine of *the things that can be and go wrong* on the occasion of such utterances" (Austin, 1962, p.14). Performative utterances that fall under the doctrine of infelicities are not *false* but in general *unhappy* such as unrealized promises, losing a bet, etc.

Then Austin (1962) juxtaposes conditions for happy performative utterances:

> (A.1) there must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances, and further,
> (A. 2) the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.
> (B. 2) completely.

> (Γ. 1) where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant, then a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings, and the participants intend so to conduct themselves, and further
> (Γ. 2) must actually so conduct themselves subsequently. (p.14-15)

Austin makes a categorization of these six rules. He calls the infelicities (A. 1)-(B. 2) "misfires". "Misfires" are void acts or acts without effect. Within those rules, misfires, means that the act in question is not successfully performed. For instance, if the bride or groom is already married or a person utters the formula incorrectly On the other hand, in the two Γ, the act is performed successfully, namely it is achieved, although there can be an abuse of the procedure, such as making a promise and not keeping it. Austin (1962) calls these infelicities, (Γ. 1)-(Γ. 2), as "abuses" (p. 16). Thus, unlike misfires, abuses are professed and hollow while they have not been voided, and they have an effect.

Austin divides performatives in two groups. He thinks that there are "explicit" performatives and" implicit" performatives. According to his account, for a performative to be explicit or implicit depends on whether its verb is performative or not. For him, the verb "to promise" is explicitly performative. Consider the utterance "I promise to wash the dishes". The utterance is in the first person pronoun and with an active, simple verb. However, this rule of being an explicit performative has an exception for utterances like "Passengers are requested to cross the railway line" which is in a plural pronoun with a passive. Implicit performatives, on the other hand, are the ones that do not have a performative verb and hence detecting them as being performative depends on recognizing the real intention behind them, such as "I shall be there".

In his book *How to do Things with Words*, Austin makes an attempt to give a list of performative verbs. However, as he himself admits that neither giving a full list of performative verbs nor distinguishing performative utterances from the constative ones is an easy job. Thus, rather than making more effort on these, Austin prefers to classify the utterances as the following.

According to Austin (1962), saying something is a performance of a locutionary act. A locutionary act is "uttering a certain sentence with certain sense and reference, which is again roughly equivalent to "meaning" in the traditional sense" (p.109). Thus, the study of utterances is the study of locutions (or of the full units of speech). And a locutionary act consists of three different acts which are "phonetic", "pathic", and "rhetic". The phonetic act is the act of uttering certain noises. The phatic act is on the other hand is the act of uttering of certain vocables or words, i.e. noises of certain types, belonging to and as belonging to, a certain vocabulary, conforming to a certain grammar. And finally, the rhetic act is the performance of an act of using those vocables with a certain more-or-less definite sense and reference.

After defining a locutionary act, Austin makes a definition of an "illocutionary" act a "perlocutionary" act. An illocutionary act is what we perform by performing a locutionary act such as informing, ordering, warning, etc. which has a certain force A perlocutionary act which is not the consequence of a locutionary act is what we achieve by saying something such as convincing surprising, misleading, etc. Thus, the distinction between in saying "I was warning her" and "by saying it I convinced her" is that the former to look like an illocutionary act and while the latter like a perlocutionary act.

Carroll (1992) puts forward Beardsley's argument that is based on Austin's theory as the following:

> 1. If *x* is a literary work, then *x* is only a representation of an illocutionary act.
> 2. Though actual authorial intentions are relevant to whether *x* is a representation
> of an illocutionary act, what *x* is a representation of (its meaning) is solely a matter of the relevant linguistic conventions (the literal sense of words and the conventions or established strategies for grasping the sense of a verbal context and metaphors) *and not* a matter of fixing authorial intent.
> 3. Therefore, if *x* is a literary work, then what *x* is a representation of is solely a matter of the relevant conventions. (p. 105)

Beardsley illustrates his argument by an example. Imagine that a pickpocket takes your wallet and you say, "You stole my wallet". According to Beardsley who follows Alvin Goldman, that is performing an illocutionary act which "is generated by the production of a text under certain conditions and according to certain language conventions" (Carroll, 1992, p. 103). On the other hand, if a stage actor plays a character and performing the same sentence, "you stole my wallet", that is only representing an illocutionary act rather than performing it. According to this distinction Beardsley makes, literary works, and pictorial works as well[1], represent/imitate an illocutionary act rather than performing it. Carroll claims that an argument against intentionalism based on that distinction can be considered valid only if the literary work is representative.

Carroll, however, thinks that a literary work is not necessarily a representation of an illocutionary act. Rather, it may be a performance of an illocutionary act if the literary text is not fictional (or characters speaking in a text are not fictional) such as Lucretius's *Concerning the Nature of Things* and *The Mahabharata*. Carroll states that when it is prove that literature can be regarded as a performance of an illocutionary act rather than as an imitation of an illocutionary act,

[1] Similarity between depiction and the referent is analogical to performance and representation of an illocutionary act.

then the authorial intentions become relevant for interpretation of literary works in the sense of relevancy of intentions of the speaker for our cognitional goal.

My first criticism of Carroll's arguments against ontological arguments for anti-intentionalism is the following. As I stated above, For Beardsley, a text can be an evidence for a failed intention. However, Carroll claims that the whole text is an evidence for what the author intended to say and for how he failed, as in the case of Kuhn's mistaken writing. He thinks that an alert reader can very easily and quickly recognize that what Kuhn actually intended to say by means of the genre, style, historical context and overall aesthetic direction of the text. However, Carroll's example is not correct. Kuhn's failed intention is recognizable because it is just a matter of a misuse of some word; therefore, the rest of the text makes this mistake recognizable. But the anti-intentionalist view does not highlight this kind of failure. This intuition-pump example talks about the failure of the text or reader as a whole. All in all, we do not know what Shakespeare or Homer actually intended to say. Also, comparing Kuhn's book with Shakespeare's works requires some presuppositions about some significant common properties of literary works of art and the non-artistic usage of natural languages. Before clarifying and defending these presuppositions, Carroll's position cannot be considered as valid. Hence, obviously such a failure, the misusage of a word, could not be recognized so easily in a poem for instance.

My second criticism of Carroll's refutation of ontological arguments for anti-intentionalism is the following. I do not think of Beardsley's account of a literary work as a representation of an illocutionary act necessarily implies that all literature consists of fiction. Since even a biographical novel can be written differently by different authors, whether the characters of a novel are fictional or not is not the

determining criterion for whether a work is fictional or not. According to Beardsley, we must take a text as a whole. I can even go one step further and claim that even though a novel tells a true story, this novel cannot escape being fictional in the sense of being represented in a certain way for the sake of making a novel out of it.

Thirdly, I cannot find any reasons from Carroll for treating "reporting an illocutionary act" and "performing an illocutionary act" as the same when I consider Carroll's preference of the "performance of an illocutionary" act over the "imitation of an illocutionary act" in order to define a literary text. Claiming that literary texts are performances of an illocutionary act seems to me even less defendable than rendering them as imitations of illocutionary acts. I think so because performing and reporting are very distinct notions. Even though saying can have a performative aspect, as Austin indicates, we cannot treat artworks as if they are no different from ordinary conversations.

3.2.2 Refutation of aesthetical argument

Although Carroll thinks that there is an aesthetical way of refuting the intentionalist approach to literary works, he states that for an anti-intentionalist, giving an aesthetic argument is not an easy job to do. His reason for this claim is the fact that most anti-intentionalists weave their ontological and aesthetical arguments together in ways that are hard to disentangle because of their belief in the ontological distinction between literary language and ordinary language (Carroll, 1992, p. 113). But Carroll still thinks that it is possible to construct an aesthetic argument without reference to ontological claims about the nature of art in general. Carroll considers Beardsley's account of interpretation in his "The Possibility of Criticism" as being so. Beardsley (1970) states:

> What is primary purpose of literary interpretation? It is, I would say, to help readers approach literary works from the aesthetic point of view, that is, with an interest in actualization their (artistic) goodness. The work is an object, capable (presumably) of affording aesthetic satisfaction. The problem is to know what is there to be responded to; and the literary Interpreter helps us to discern what is there so that we can enjoy it more fully. (p. 34)

As Carroll puts it, Beardsley's account of interpretation is grounded on the idea that the purpose of an artistic object is affording aesthetic satisfaction. Therefore, task of an interpreter is to help readers to maximize this satisfaction promoted in the aesthetic experience. Beardsley states also that alternative "readings" of a literary work must be constrained by linguistic conventions although sometimes they can be aesthetically more provocative than what the author intended to say by means of her work. Hence, more preciously, the criterion for a good interpretation is its ability to afford the best aesthetic experience which is compatible with established textual meaning conventions (Carroll, 1992, p.114). Therefore, when we are concerned with interpretation of an artwork, artistic intention has no relevance. It is of course possible that authorial intent coincides with best interpretation in the context of providing the best aesthetic satisfaction. But for Beardsley, this is only accidentally important. Such an interpretation is the best one not for its overlap with authorial intent but rather its aesthetic richness.

Carroll emphasizes a point about Beardsley's account of interpretation. He thinks that there might be of course other aesthetical theories of anti-intentionalist accounts of interpretation. For instance, a radical version of Beardsley's point can be the view that concern of authorial intent limits the work as a source of interpretive enjoyment (Carroll, 1992, p.116). Such an argument would be in harmony with contemporary literary criticism. However, what separates Beardsley and contemporary literary criticism is their reason for embracing an anti-intentionalist

approach; while Beardsley's main motivation is the autonomy of the text, contemporary critics' motivation is their conviction of freedom and the autonomy of the reader (Carroll, 1992, p.116). Carroll considers Beardsley's theory as a purpose-relative theory as other aesthetic arguments for anti-intentionalism.[2] Although Barthes's theory is grounded in the ontological arguments about the nature of writing, his theory is embraced by many people because its conclusion suits their purpose, which assigns an autonomous reader in making the meaning. Thus Carroll regards Barthes's theory as purpose-relative as well. Carroll has no frustration about purpose-relative theories. However, he thinks that our purposes do not have to be only the aesthetical ones. He has two main frustrations about such aesthetical theories. One is that the notion "the aesthetical" in the phenomenon of aesthetical satisfaction is not clear. What constitutes aesthetical satisfaction is open for debate. In that sense, Beardsley's theory does not seem convincing for Carroll. His second worry about Beardsley's theory is his claim about the overall expectation of aesthetical enjoyment. He suspects that we may have more interests than aesthetic ones when dealing with artworks. Carroll (1992) thus believes that an artwork that reconciles our aesthetical interests with other potentially conflictive interests would be the satisfactory one (p.117).

Carroll identifies these other interests with being "conversational". As he indicates in the beginning of his article, when we are confronted with an artwork, our position is analogous to the one in a conversation. Even though the relationship between an artist and a reader is not interactive as an ordinary conversation in the sense of omission of receiving spontaneous feedback, interaction with an artwork

[2] A view borrowed from Laurent Stern in his "On Interpreting", Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 39 (1980).

enables understanding the artist just as in a conversation one is to understand her interlocutor (Carroll, 1992, p.117).

At this point, Carroll posits his own view for embracing an intentionalist perspective of literary works. He defines a fulfilling conversation as requiring having the conviction of having grasped what our interlocutor intended to say. Thus, a conversation in which we have nothing more than our own educated guess, no matter how aesthetically rich it is, makes us feel like something is missing, as if we did not communicate (Carroll, 1992, p.118). Carroll also thinks that conversation involves a sense of community that itself rests on communication. The prospect of community "supplies a major impetus motivating our interest in engaging literary texts and artworks" (Carroll, 1992, p.118). He states,

> We may read to be entertained, to learn, and to be moved, but we also seek out artworks in order to converse or commune with their makers. We want to understand the author, even if that will lead to rejecting his or her point of view (Carroll, 1992, p.118).

Even more modestly, according to Carroll (1992), "art is obviously in part a matter of communication and that we bring to it our ordinary human disposition to understand what another human being is saying to us" (p.118).

To sum up, Carroll thinks that the constitutive characteristic of an artwork is its being conversational. Since in an ordinary conversation our cognitive aim is to understand what our interlocutor intends to say, in order to have a convincing ontological anti-intentionalist view of interpretation, one is supposed to have an account for what makes artworks different from normal course of affairs. Carroll finds Beardsley's consideration of literary works as a representation of an illocutionary act to be excluding of some sorts of works such as biographical or didactic ones. Carroll criticizes Barthes for the same reason. For Carroll, the views of Barthes and Beardsley could be convincing only if literature consisted of fictional

works. Also for Carroll aesthetical arguments against intentionalism are not convincing, because our interest in artworks is not merely an aesthetical one. Even if it was so, what is aesthetical must be explained in detail in order to have a more convincing theory. Carroll's refutation of both ontological and aesthetic arguments for intentionalism is grounded in the conversational characteristic of artworks. This characteristic negates considering artworks as representation or imitation of illocutionary acts and the reduction of artworks to the sources of aesthetical satisfaction as if aiming to understand what the artist says is irrelevant.

When we consider Carroll's thoughts about the conversational characteristic of artworks, Hirsch's theory reconciles with Carroll's. Hirsch's conception of shareable meaning is analogous to Carroll's conversational nature of artworks. However, Hirsch's theory as well as other aesthetic anti-intentionalist theories is subjected to Carroll's criticism of the implications of purpose-relative theories. Hirsch's theory is also a purpose-relative one and his convictions related to his purpose of possibility of a valid interpretation and a determinate meaning in favor of the shareability of a literary text is lacking the other interest, namely the aesthetical one. I think that even Carroll's own theory dismisses our aesthetical interest in artworks because his own theory is purpose-relative as well. The fact that artworks have a conversational/shareable nature cannot be itself enough to render a theory of interpretation which implies this characteristic. Is being conversational the only characteristic of an artwork? Carroll himself accepts that it is difficult to have an aesthetical argument that is not based on an ontological one. I believe that when we consider that both Carroll's and Hirsch's and Beardsley's theories are purpose-relative and hence the purpose each embraces is not comprehensive enough this difficulty of having an aesthetical argument without it being based on an ontological one, no

matter whether it is intentionalist or an anti-intentionalist, may be indicating a crucial point about the nature of artworks and also of interpretation. Disregarding other ontological constituents, meaning all the characteristics of the artwork, and building a theory of interpretation upon one of these constituents would always lack something vital about artworks. Plus, apart from Beardsley's, all these theories of interpretation are based on one single characteristic of the artworks and I am afraid this is done by the sake of making their intentionalist approach possible. At this point, I want to highlight also the point that such a disregard is also the reason behind these theories seemingly not including the interpretations of all sorts of arts. I want to exclude Beardsley's theory of interpretation from this criticism because his theory of interpretation is not based on a concern of making his anti-intentionalist approach operate appropriately.

Besides, I find Carroll's definition of a fulfilling conversation problematic. Contrary to Carroll, I believe that a conversation that left us with only our educated guess would make us feel like we communed and communicated, if it were aesthetically rich. Of course here what is aesthetically rich should be defined comprehensively. Even though this is a job that I cannot complete here for the sake of length, I can at least tell that an aesthetically rich thought emerges out of a communication of this kind, might teach us more than a particular person's intentions would. I think so because any knowledge that feels like it belongs to one in the sense of reaching to it by oneself is more satisfactory. An aesthetically rich thought flourishing by interpreting someone's personal sayings goes beyond the boundaries of ordinariness and becomes something metaphor-like by involving a structure that can be observed or tested in various cases. It seems to me that what we call as "meaning" is being constructed in such a way. This is why we value the notion of

interpretation. Of course an artwork is a product of a consciousness. But a complete grasp of the states of this consciousness is neither sufficient nor necessary for a fulfilling experience of an artwork. Contrary to Carroll, I believe that an intentionless meaning, in the sense of lacking authorial intention, can make us feel involved in the community and having communicated with the community as a whole.

I admit that my words here lack proof, but at least I would strongly claim that they are defendable. If Carroll's definition of a fulfilling conversation were correct, an artist would prefer to go to the streets and talk to each person she sees and have a fulfilling conversation rather than risking the fulfillment of conversation she starts by writing. If some readers, including critics and interpreters and scholars of literature, want to go and talk to the author or use some strategy to understand their intent, which is, I think, a more tiring job than intentionalist perspective makes us imagine in the sense that in order to grasp it fully we need too much information about the artist to the extent that we become her, it would be just a matter of curiosity. Some might say that that what I have said about comprehending one's intention as being equal to becoming her is too strong. But I find it is defendable as well. I think that when we are confronted with an ordinary conversation, we are always left with some parts which we have nothing more than our educated guess. This is valid for all conversations, including, for example, giving directions to someone in the street to help her find the address where she is supposed to go or a dispute between two related people or a lecture including positions of both listeners and the lecturer. This is the requirement of being involved in a community as a communicating individual. Without knowing authorial intention-as a matter of preference which can be aimed for-we will be left with our educated guess or as Carroll puts it, with our clever construals.

Besides, communicating in a community itself comes into existence through linguistic conventions. Therefore, any aesthetically satisfactory interpretation of a text, no matter whether it coincides with authorial intent, cannot conflict with what the author intended her work to mean, even though we render her intention as isolated from her or the reader's aesthetical concerns. At that point, I cannot find any reason for Carroll not to be convinced by Beardsley's theory.

I also think that Carroll's words on how we want to understand the author even if that will lead to rejection of his or her point of view requires more clarification because of the emphasis he makes about the possibility of rejecting the point made by the author. I think so because this emphasis on this possibility leads me to think that the moral or ideological values of the reader are the determinant for the quality of a work. But such an approach would not be consistent with the concern of finding an objective method for interpreting artworks. At this point, as I said before, arguing for or against the relevance of authorial intention in interpretation becomes a matter of preference.

By saying that art is a matter of communication and that when we are confronted with it we basically try to understand what another human being tries to say, Carroll's modest approach becomes even naïve. In the normal course of affairs, communication is a matter of need in a different sense from an artistic need. I say so because of a very simple reason. Our confrontation with an artwork is dependent on several parameters. Art is not as free as we consider most of the time. It is a product of some certain industry. As in the case of all industrial products, what we are exposed to is chosen by an institution and thereby it is governed by an authority. Therefore, it involves non-authorial intentions as well. Carroll's humanist approach, which renders the artist as the most valuable constituent and the determining will of

the work and the reader as only the receiver rather than a contributor to the environment in which it comes into existence is far beyond modesty. It is almost reductionist in the sense of considering it as having a simple structure like a human being, whose self is so God-like that her words are upon everything and she is the creator or representative of an absolute reality, written to be understood by others. I find his position reductionist also because by criticizing anti-intentionalist aesthetic theories of interpretation, he evaluates his aesthetical satisfaction as consumerist which devaluate esthete and the "linguistic conventions" on which such an aesthetic theory anti-intentionalism is constructed. Neither esthete nor the notion of "convention" is so simple that it can be consumed so easily. Contrarily, by equating textual meaning and the authorial intention, no matter if it is achievable, Carroll's view and the intentionalist view in general, make the meaning something we can reach through the artistic experience, conceivable for consumption in the sense of rendering it as a closed and almost absolute entity by designating the author of it as the determining will.

What I have done so far is to describe the environment out of which a debate over the relevance of authorial intention in interpretation emerged and introduce the views of three crucial figures who believe that what we are after when we interpret literary works is authorial intent. While introducing the intentionalist view, I referred to some anti-intentionalist views as well. In the next chapter, I will be introducing the anti-intentionalist view and briefly evaluating each of them.

CHAPTER 4

ANTI-INTENTİONALISTS

Anti-intentionalism is basically the refutation of the identity thesis. In other words, an anti-intentionalist thinks that textual meaning is not identical to what its author intended it to mean. Monroe Beardsley is an anti-intentionalist because he rejects the identity thesis. His anti-intentionalism is a strong one because he also thinks that authorial intention is irrelevant to the interpretation of a work of art. On the other hand, Joseph Margolis, Richard Shusterman and Wolfgang Iser are weak anti-intentionalists because they think that authorial intention is somewhat relevant to the interpretation and meaning of an artwork. The weak anti-intentionalist view is the opposite of Beardsley's in the sense of defending the relevance of authorial intention in the interpretation of an artwork. However, this view is anti-intentionalist at the same time because they also reject the identity thesis and hence reject the idea of interpreting artworks for revealing hidden truths in them. In this chapter, I will introduce views of Monroe Beardsley as a strong anti-intentionalist, and Joseph Margolis, Richard Shusterman and Wolfgang Iser as weak anti-intentionalists.

I will start with Beardsley's thoughts stated in his "The Possibility of Criticism" (1970) which are constructed upon the perspective he had with Wimsatt in their controversial article "Intentional Fallacy". In this book, Monroe Beardsley first of all posits three arguments against Hirsch's arguments for the "Identity Thesis" which was explained in the previous chapter as regarding the meaning of a text to be identical with what its author intended it to mean. These three simple arguments are, for Beardsley, enough for the refutation of the identity thesis, and the intentionalist approach in general. However, he himself is aware of the fact that intentionalists

cannot be convinced with these arguments because the basic assumptions on which intentionalists and anti-intentionalists disagree on is the criterion of textual identity and hence there is no way to convince an intentionalist of the opposite of the main premise on which she builds her intentionalist account of interpretation. At this point, Beardsley attempts to give arguments for the falsity of the main premise of intentionalism, the "indeterminacy of meaning" as Hirsch puts it. For the sake of showing that the notion of "indeterminacy of meaning" is exaggerated, Beardsley puts forward two arguments.

After refuting Hirsch's Identity Thesis, Beardsley argues for that the plausible criterion for a valid interpretation would be the textual meaning rather than the authorial one due to the reasons explained when showing the unacceptability of Hirsch's position. Beardsley constructs his theory of interpretation by assigning textual meaning, rather than authorial meaning, as a criterion for the valid interpretation. While constructing his account of interpretation, Beardsley uses some of Austin's terminology. By adapting Austin's terminology to his consideration, he comes up with a logical argument and an aesthetical argument for choosing the textual meaning over the authorial. Through these arguments, Beardsley shows that the task of an interpreter is providing as much aesthetical satisfaction as possible within the boundaries of linguistic conventions.

Thus, the first section of this chapter will consist of two parts. In the first, I will present Beardsley's arguments against Hirsch's identity thesis. And in the second, I will explain his strong anti-intentionalist theory of interpretation, which is constructed upon his arguments against Hirsch's intentionalist account.

What I will be doing in the next section is presenting the weak anti-intentionalist account of Joseph Margolis, who believes that regarding an

interpretation as true/correct or false/wrong is not legitimate, contrary to Beardsley. Margolis thinks that anyone who claims that two non-converging interpretations of a text cannot be correct at the same time must give an account for why she thinks so. In this context, Margolis criticizes Beardsley about his adaption of Austin's theory of performatives. Margolis thinks that Beardsley's attribution of truth values to interpretations is contradictory to his adaption of Austin's theory of meaning. Being aware of the oddness of lacking a criterion for distinguishing a good interpretation from a bad one, he posits the notion of "plausibility" as a criterion for operating on the detection of a good and a bad interpretation. Thus, in the first sub-part of this second part, I will present Margolis's arguments against truth-oriented theories of interpretation, and in the second sub-part, I will explain his account for assigning plausibility/implausibility as a criterion for distinguishing a good interpretation from a bad one.

In the third section, I will present Richard Shusterman's criticism of both rivals in the debate. Shusterman is a weak anti-intentionalist because he claims that intentionless meaning is impossible, but claims giving the intentional part of a meaning to only the author is also a mistake. In that sense, he criticizes not only Hirsch but also Beardsley and Margolis. He emphasizes that excluding a reader's intention in the interpretation of a text is a matter of preference for one tradition of criticism over the other. This preference is appointed by the academic industry with the concern of producing as many teachable and scientific truths as possible.

In the final section, I will summarize Wolfgang Iser's weak anti-intentionalist approach to literary criticism which is presented his book *The Act of Reading: a Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Iser's position is similar to Shusterman's in the sense of making an emphasis on the reader. But his theory is more comprehensive because

Iser explicates his claims about the role of the reader as a contributor to the meaning of a text by describing the characteristic of a literary text which enables its meaning to be constituted by an interaction between the text and the reader.

Iser thinks that the consideration of the task of interpretation as searching for meaning implies some other controversial statements about the characteristic of an artwork and truth in general. He thinks that theories of interpretation based on this consideration are incapable of some phenomena in literature. For Iser, the reason of this incapability is the disregard for the role of reader in the constitution of the meaning of an artwork. Rather, Iser thinks and argues that the meaning of an artwork is constructed by the dynamism between the text and the reader and hence the task of an interpreter is elucidating the potentials of a text instead of teaching some truth about it.

As I stated above, in this chapter, I will explain both strong and weak anti-intentionalist views through the positions of some prominent figures of the debate that are mentioned above briefly. I will start with introducing Beardsley's strong anti-intentionalist account and continue with the weak anti-intentionalist views of Margolis, Shusterman and Iser. At the end of each section, I will make my evaluations of their arguments.

4.1 Monroe Beardsley

4.1.1 Arguments against the "Identity Thesis"

In the very beginning of his book *The Possibility of Criticism*, Beardsley defines two of his postulates which he thinks crucial for the dispute on the role of authorial intention. The first one is "The Principle of Independence" which implies that literary works exist as individuals and can be distinguished from other things. Here,

Beardsley (1970) emphasizes the point that whether or not literary texts enjoy a special mode of existence, which is a different issue, the first postulate still must be accepted by everyone (p.16). The second postulate which he considers as complementary to the first is "the Principle of Autonomy": "literary works are self-sufficient entities, whose properties are decisive in checking interpretations and judgments."(Beardsley, 1970, p. 16).

Then Beardsley puts forward his arguments against Hirsch's "identity thesis" which says that what a literary work means is identical to what its author meant in composing it. Beardsley has three arguments against this thesis:

1. Without any agency, a text can be formed. Hence, without an authorial meaning a text can be formed. But we can still talk about the meaning of such a text. Certain kinds of verbal mistakes can be an example of text of this sort. For instance, because of a printer's mistake, Hart Crane's "Thy Nazarene and tender eyes" was transformed into "Thy Nazarene and tinder eyes". But Crane let the accidental version stand.

Besides, a computer can compose a poem, such as:

> While life reached evilly through empty faces
> While space flowed slowly o'er idle bodies
> and stars flowed evilly on vast men
> no passion smiled (Cross, 1966, p. 59).

Beardsley (1970) thinks that the instructions of the programmer cannot be considered as "authorial will" because while the instructions were general, the poem is a particular new composition of words (p.19). So it is possible for there to be a textual meaning without authorial meanings. Therefore, textual meaning is not identical to authorial meaning.

2. The meaning of a text can change after its writer's death. In other words, due to the change in words and idioms in time, new meanings can be produced from sentences in which these words appear. On the other hand, an author cannot change his meaning after his death. For instance, the phrase "plastic arm" in the poem "the Sovereign Spirit of the World" has acquired a new meaning. The lines in which the phrase "plastic arm" appears are the following:

> Yet, by immense benignity inclin'd
> To spread about him that primeval joy
> Which fill'd himself, he rais'd his plastic arm.

Although the older meaning did not disappear, in the twentieth century "plastic arm" has a different meaning which is the dominant one (Beardsley, 1970, p.19). Although it is possible to define these two different meanings of the same expression in different times, this requires two different inquiries. Then it means that although it is possible to define the meaning of the poem according to what "plastic arm" meant in 1744 and to identify it by authorial meaning, since today's textual meaning cannot be identified with the authorial one, the textual meaning and authorial meaning cannot be identical.

3. An author can produce a meaning without being aware of it. Therefore, a text can have meanings that its author did not intend. As a result, textual meaning and authorial meaning are not identical.

These arguments indicate that the authority of text that is implied by the two postulates which Beardsley stated at the beginning of the first chapter. But since what Hirsch and other intentionalist accounts refute is exactly these kinds of presumptions, there should be a different way of arguing against Hirsch. To do this, Beardsley produces arguments against Hirsch's premises. Hirsch's argument in reductio-ad-absurdum form is as follows: If what a literary work means is not

identical to what its author meant in composing it, then there cannot be a determinate textual meaning due to the fact that the determinacy of verbal meaning requires an act of will. But this is absurd. Therefore, the "identity thesis" is right. However, Beardsley thinks that the "indeterminacy" of possible meaning is an exaggeration and he puts forward two arguments in order to show that and thereby refute the identity thesis.

1. Imagine that a person x says "Nothing pleases me so much as Third Symphony of Beethoven." For Hirsch, this utterance is indeterminate because a friend of this person, y, can ask "Does it please you more than a swim in the sea on a hot day?" Hirsch thinks, since this question of y is asked in order to discover what x actually intended to say, it is necessary to accept that an utterance cannot have a determinate meaning without a determining will. However, according to Beardsley, even though it is obvious that y is interested in discovering whether x was comparing the symphony with other musical compositions or makes a general comparison between pleasures, still we cannot identify the situation as indeterminate. Rather, we should accept that the meaning of the utterance of x is not indeterminate; but what y is after is merely further information (Beardsley, 1970, p. 26).

2. The phenomenon of ambiguity is undeniable, but what it refers to is the indecisiveness of meaning rather than a multiplicity of meanings, as for Beardsley. He exemplifies the situation he defines by two sharply opposed interpretations of Wordsworth's poem "Lucy", which is the following.

A Slumber did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears:
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force,
She neither hears nor sees;

Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

The first interpretation is by Cleanth Brooks:

> [Wordsworth] attempts to suggest something of the lover's agonized shock at the loved one's present lack of motion—of his response to her utter and horrible inertness. . . . He chooses to suggest it . . . Part of the effect, of course, resides in the fact that a dead lifelessness is suggested more sharply by an object's being whirled about by something else than by an image of the object in repose. But there are other matters which are at work here: the sense of the girl's falling back into the clutter of things, companioned by things chained like a tree to one particular spot, or by things completely inanimate like rocks and stones. . . . She is touched by and held by earthly time in its most powerful and horrible image. (as cited in Beardsley, 1970, p. 28)

The second one is by F. W. Bateson:

> The final impression the poem leaves is not of two contrasting moods, but of a single mood mounting to a climax in the pantheistic magnificence of the last two lines. . . . The vague living-Lucy of this poem is opposed to the grander dead-Lucy who has become involved in the sublime processes of nature. . . . Lucy is actually more alive now that she is dead, because she is now a part of the life of Nature and not just a human "thing." (as cited in Beardsley, 1970, p. 28)

Hirsch thinks that one of these interpretations must be false. But also he thinks both interpretations can be supported equally by only the internal evidences of the text. He also thinks that in order to identify the true one, we need to appeal to the determining will; namely, the author. The formula for appealing to the author is to posit the author's typical outlook, typical associations and expectations which partly establish the context of the utterance.

Beardsley responds to Hirsch via two arguments as the following.

1. If two interpretations are equally supported by the text, then the poem must be radically ambiguous. However, this is not the case because Brooks' interpretation is not a legitimate one due to the fact that he uses connotations of words that are absent from the poem. Interpreting "Lucy's" "rolling" as "whirling" and her placement

among trees as falling back in a "clutter of things" is Brooks' building his own "horrible image" out of these connotations (Beardsley, 1970, p. 29). Therefore, if Hirsch founds his postulate of indeterminacy of utterances on this particular example, then we must conclude that Hirsch's argument is not an acceptable one.

2. Even if the poem is ambiguous in Hirschian sense, "typical attitudes" of the poet cannot solve the ambiguity. In other words, if a text is ambiguous, its author willing one of the possible meanings cannot solve the problem because willing a meaning is itself an odd notion. It is something like willing "dog" to mean "cat" (Beardsley, 1970, p.29).

Beardsley (1970) thinks that Hirsch's main concern is the lack of a standard for the validity of interpretation other than the identity thesis (p. 30). Then Beardsley suggests to reject the identity thesis and give the authority to one of the parts of the identity thesis; either (1) textual meaning or (2) authorial meaning. Beardsley chooses (1). He has two arguments for this preference. His first argument is the logical one and he names it the "Availability Argument". According to this argument, the general and essential task of an interpreter cannot be discovering the authorial meaning because it is not always available. Besides, an interpreter must be a poem-reader rather than a mind-reader (Beardsley, 1970, p. 33). The second argument is the aesthetic one and it says that an interpreter's task is to help readers approach literary works form aesthetic point of view and hence help them to enjoy the work more. In the following part, I will explain these arguments in detail.

4.1.2 An account of interpretation

4.1.2.1 Logical argument

By arguing for that the standard for a valid interpretation is textual meaning, Beardsley makes an introduction for his theory of interpretation, which deals with the questions like "what it is interpretation?"; "what is the task of a critic?"; and "how can we know which of the interpretations is the valid one?"As I stated above, he has a logical and an aesthetical argument for proving this. In order to make his logical argument clear, firstly Beardsley (1970) introduces the notion of "critical rationality" (p.39). He thinks that the most crucial property of the notion of interpretation is its being necessarily reasonable. However, for Beardsley, an interpretation being reasonably arguable does not automatically make it the true one.

Beardsley thinks that an interpretation must be either true or false. Beardsley and Hirsch's theories reconcile on this claim. On the other hand, since Margolis argues against this claim of Beardsley and Hirsch, Beardsley responds Margolis before he goes on with his argument. As I explained before, according to Margolis's account, an interpretation cannot be true or false; but can be plausible or implausible. This is why one text can be interpreted differently by different people. However, Beardsley thinks that since plausibility is an appearance of truth that is based upon the relevant evidence and hence any plausible statement must be in principle capable of being shown to be true or false, Margolis's position is puzzling. He states "I do not see how an interpretation could be reasonable unless reasons can be given to show its superiority to some alternatives; and I do not see how the reasons could count unless they are reasons for thinking it is true" (Beardsley, 1970, p. 43) Beardsley claims that Margolis does not deal with real life cases, like Wordsworth's "Lucy", rather what he projects upon is cases like Marxist, Freudian or Christian interpretations. Since these

kinds of interpretations are basically analyzing a text through the eyes of some grand systems, it is obviously a vain thing to claim that interpretations of this kind exclude each other. The reason that such interpretations do not to exclude each other is simply them not bringing out what is hidden in the text (Beardsley, 1970, p. 43).

So, what makes two different interpretations of the same text exclude each other? The principle of "the Intolerability of Incompatibles" replaces Margolis's "logical weakness of critical judgment" and becomes the ground of Beardsley's account of interpretation. According to this principle, if two interpretations are logically incompatible, they cannot both be true (Beardsley, 1970, p. 44).

In the third chapter of "The Possibility of Criticism", *Testability of an Interpretation*, Beardsley constructs his theory of interpretation which is based on his principle of "the Intolerability of Incompatibles". Beardsley states that interpretation is applicable to two sorts of meaning: "local meanings" and "regional meanings". The local meanings of a text are identified by interpretation of individual words, phrases, or sentences. On the other hand, the regional meanings of a text are identified by interpreting what is meant by the work as a whole or as some large part of it. The latter is dependent on the former one, obviously. He thinks that when we are establishing the regional meanings upon the local meanings, we must be careful about using local meanings evidently. I mean, the connotations of words must be considered in the context of the other words in the poem, such as Brooks' wrong interpretation of "Lucy", which I mentioned as Beardsley's counter-argument for Hirsch's theory. Thus, according to Beardsley's theory of interpretation, "if we can decide on the local meanings (connotations and suggestions), we can support the regional interpretations (such as that a poem is pantheistic)" (Beardsley, 1970, p.47).

The notions of "local meanings" and "regional meanings" are the keys of Beardsley's theory of interpretation. Without constructing such a relation between them, namely grounding regional meanings upon the local ones, what we will have as interpretation would be baseless and hence arbitrary. He states,

> Without such data to rely on, the interpretive process is in danger of degenerating into idle fancy or arbitrary invention. It is well known that when we come to a poem with an idea in mind of what it may be about to add up to, what we find in it will be much affected by our mental set. . . . But I am arguing that there are some features of the poem's meaning that are antecedent to, and independent of, the entertaining of an interpretive hypothesis; and this makes it possible to check such hypotheses against reality, instead of letting them become self-confirming through circular reasoning. (Beardsley, 1970, p. 57)

And he continues,

> If we make the distinction between regional interpretations of the work as a whole, or some large segment of it, and more localized facts that support them, then we can formulate the interpretation problem as that of connecting macro-meanings with micro-meanings. In order to accept a proposed macro-meaning, we must be able to see it as emerging from the micro-meanings, as growing out of them and yet as making a whole that is more than the sum of the parts. (Beardsley, 1970, p. 58)

However, is describing the structure of a poem in this way sufficient for excluding the authorial intention from the interpretation? The answer is "no". It is still defendable that what we are looking for within this structure is the authorial intent and/or that knowing the authorial intent is a guarantee for building the regional meanings of a text upon the local ones. If we say so, the principle of intolerability of incompatibles would be grounded in a strong base. But Beardsley does not agree with that due to the reasons he has just presented for refuting the identity thesis. Then what? What is the reason for excluding authorial intent from interpretation? Beardsley answers the question by adapting Austin's theory of performatives.

Departing from Austin's account of utterance, Beardsley (1970) tells us what a poem is. He states, "A poem is an imitation of a compound illocutionary act." (p.

58). The conception of imitation here is a key point. Although it is a fact that one writes a poem to perform an illocutionary act, the act of writing cannot be considered as a performance of an illocutionary act because it is a "creation of a fictional character performing a fictional illocutionary act" (Beardsley, 1970, p. 59). He exemplifies this claim by Wordsworth' poetic line about England, "she is a fen." Because the line is fictional, Wordsworth does not perform a castigation by this line, but represents castigation. Fictionalizing here breaks any connection between author's intentions and what is represented in the poem.

But Beardsley finds a weak part in this claim of his. He states that didactic poems look like a performance of an illocutionary act rather than an imitation of it. One way of discarding such a weakness is to restrict the original claim to lyric poems. But Beardsley wants to avoid from that and make his claim applicable for all sorts of poems. His solution is then considering didactic poems didactic not because of their expressions of emotions like pleadings, laments, or cries of joy; but rather initiations of arguments (Beardsley, 1970, p. 60).

Contrary to Carroll, Dickie and Wilson claim that this formulation by Beardsley does not limit his anti-intentionalism to fiction. Although Beardsley does not say so, they think that "illocutionary acts in fiction are twice removed from author's intentions." (Dickie &Wilson, 1970, p.235). However, they point out two crucial problems about this argument. The first one, which they consider not as crucial as the latter, is that this argument applies only to fiction; it may not apply to literary essays, biographies, and criticism. The second one is that by introducing the distinction between locutionary act and illocutionary act, and spotting the quarrel on the illocutionary meaning, Beardsley dismisses the core of the debate which is whether authorial intention determines *locutionary* meaning.

I think that the first objection Dickie and Wilson raise for Beardsley's consideration of poems as being an imitation of an illocutionary act is not appropriate. As explained in the previous chapter, Noel Carroll makes a similar objection as well. Carroll thinks that the inapplicability of Beardsley's account of what a poem is to all sorts of literary texts implies that all literature consists of fiction. However, for Dickie and Wilson, it does not necessarily imply this; rather, it eliminates his account from being an account of what is a literary text in general. Then the question comes: is there an ontological necessity for a poem to be identical to biographies, literary criticism and essays? I do not think so. As stated in the second chapter, the relevance of authorial intention in the interpretation of a literary work of art is an issue that is about the artwork. And what makes an artwork different from the normal course of affairs is supposed to be something about the very characteristic of the artwork. In this sense, expecting a definition of what a poem, or namely a literary work of art, is the indication of reducing what an artwork is to a set of propositions that can be divided into parts and be analyzed in doing so, no matter whether dividing it into intentional parts and conventional parts or into regional parts and local parts.

However, Dickie and Wilson's second criticism is engrossing. Apparently, Austin assigns intention of an utterer as the criterion for the performativeness of her utterance. In other words, for Austin, without realizing what intention of an utterer, it is impossible to understand what is to be performed through an implicit performative. In this sense, what makes an illocutionary act seems like is the intention of its utterer. Thus, it looks like the meaning of a word sequence is determined through the intentions of its utterer. Dickie and Wilson point out that Beardsley's refutation of the identity thesis in "Intentional Fallacy" is contradictory

with his consideration of what a poem is as being an imitation of an illocutionary act which seemingly involves an intentional aspect. In other words, Beardsley seems to be leaving his anti-intentionalist view of meaning and embraces an intentionalist one. But is it so?

I do not think that Beardsley's thoughts in these two different works are contradictory. In "Intentional Fallacy", Beardsley and Wimsatt do not make any claims on meaning in general. All of their claims are about literary works of art, and indeed poems. In that sense, we cannot accuse Beardsley of regarding the meaning as an unintentional entity. By adapting Austin's intentional account of meaning, he restricts his anti-intentionalist artworks. I find this restriction necessary. Otherwise, the very nature of artworks would be dismissed as in the case of most of the figures' accounts.

However, is identifying a poem as being an imitation of a compound illocutionary act sufficient for the refusal of literary criticism as the task of searching for the meaning of a literary text? In other words, is being an imitation of an illocutionary act that involves the intentions of its utterer what makes a poem different from the normal course of affairs? Beardsley would say "no". In his aesthetical argument for his account of interpretation he makes an emphasis on the aesthetical aspect of an artwork. Thus, for Beardsley, not only being an imitation of an illocutionary act (rather than being a performance of it) but also having a nature of providing aesthetical satisfaction makes a literary work of art different from the normal course of affairs and hence requires an anti-intentionalist interpretation of it. Thus, Beardsley's anti-intentionalist account of interpretation is based on two grounds: (1) an artwork is an imitation of an illocutionary act and (2) an artwork provides aesthetical satisfaction. I will evaluate (2) after I explain Beardsley's

aesthetical argument. But (1), which is an ontological claim, needs to be examined in here. What is the necessary connection between being an imitation and exclusion of intention? Even before that, why is a literary work of art supposed to be an imitation of an illocutionary act instead of being a performance of it? I think that Beardsley's motivation for regarding a literary work of art as being an imitation of an illocutionary act is his tendency to exclude authorial intention from the intention. His argument becomes circular at this point. Even he has no account for his claim that being an imitation requires the irrelevance of authorial intention. In this sense, Beardsley's choice of the textual meaning over the authorial one, contrary to his claim in the first place, does not seems to be defended or even grounded logically.

Before continuing with the next part, I would like to make one more criticism of Beardsley's logical argument. As explained above, due to the principle of Intolerability of incompatibles, Beardsley claims that two non-converging interpretation of a particular literary work are not possible. He defends this claim of him by describing the structure of the meaning of a literary text as constructed by regional meanings of the texts upon the local ones. What he means by the notion of "local meanings" is the conventional meanings of the words used in the text. However, his picture of the meaning of a text and its being the reason for intolerability of incompatibles is a presumption of impossibility of gathering non-converging meanings from the linguistic conventions. But is it so? Beardsley would respond to this criticism by reminding us that regional meanings are constructed upon the local ones by considering the texts as a whole and hence making the appropriate choices out of connotations of words. However, it is still conceivable that non-converging interpretations can emerge from this process. Joseph Margolis makes a similar criticism against this presumption of Beardsley which will be explained

later on. I agree with Margolis on the boldness of this presumption. I also have to admit that I cannot see any reason for attributing a truth value to interpretations if the authorial intention is not relevant to the interpretation of a literary text.

To sum up, according to Beardsley, a poem is an *imitation* of an illocutionary act rather than being a performance of it. Therefore, there is no relevance of authorial intention in the interpretation of a literary work of art. Besides, since interpreting a literary work is basically constructing regional meanings upon local ones in a harmony, there is no way that two incompatible interpretations of a text can be correct at the same time. However, the task of an interpretation is not merely constructing the meaning of the text in the way Beardsley puts forward. In the next part, I will explain what Beardsley expects from an interpreter.

4.1.2.2 Aesthetical argument

By offering such a definition, Beardsley aims to eliminate the intentional aspect of writing a poem. In other words, by claiming that a poet does not speak while she is writing but rather is creating some fictional character which is not herself, the poem becomes a public, independent object; but it is a peculiar kind of object because of its aesthetic character that enables it to be different in kind from other physical objects. Therefore, judging a poem independently from its author becomes a necessity. This is how Beardsley establishes his theory of interpretation. He proposes a very basic simple account for the task of an interpreter, or a critic. According to Beardsley (1970) the task of an interpreter is just to tell how good a literary work is (p. 62). In this sense, a critic is someone "who offers to improve our acquaintance with literary works by giving interpretations of them takes on the character of a guide" (p. 62). But what is the criterion of goodness in this context? For Beardsley, evaluating

goodness of a literary work is a work of estimation. And hence an interpreter estimates how good a poem is. Whether a poem is good or extremely good depends on the intensity of regional meanings, Beardsley (1970) claims:

> To be artistically good a poem must bring together some different meanings and include elements of contrast or opposition or tension. It must unify them so that its tension is contained within a whole that possesses a notable degree of integrity and independence. And it must take on, as a whole, a pervasive quality, or set of qualities, which I call regional qualities; its melancholy, its irony, its wit, its vigor, its vitality, etc. The more complexity it enfolds, the more thoroughly it is unified, the more intense its qualities, the better it is as a poem. (p.91-92)

Therefore, a critic does not establish her judgment on whether she liked or disliked the poem. Rather, she gives a rational argument for why she thinks that a particular poem is good at a certain level which depends on the richness of its regional meanings. Since these regional meanings are found in the poem itself by building macro-meanings on the micro ones, and since a literary work is not a real performance of an illocutionary act but an imitation of it, there is no role of authorial intention in the critical judgment. In this context, Beardsley (1970) describes the task of an interpreter as the following:

> What is primary purpose of literary interpretation? It is, I would say, to help readers approach literary works from the aesthetic point of view, that is, with an interest in actualization their (artistic) goodness. The work is an object, capable (presumably) of affording aesthetic satisfaction. The problem is to know what is there to be responded to; and the literary Interpreter helps us to discern what is there so that we can enjoy it more fully. (p. 34)

Beardsley's aesthetical argument seems like he considers artworks as distinct entities from the other physical objects as opposed to most of intentionalists. I think that this approach of him is more plausible than any other approaches what do not emphasize the aesthetical aspect of artworks. As stated, Beardsley has two reasons for that: (1) literary works of art are imitations of illocutionary acts and (2) they are

objects that are capable of providing aesthetic satisfaction. I have made my evaluation of (1) in the previous section. Thus, I will not repeat it again. Then what about (2)?

I have to admit that Carroll's criticism of Beardsley's aesthetical argument is a good one. As explained in the previous chapter, Carroll thinks that a theory which is based on the assumption that the primary characteristic of an artwork as being capable of aesthetical satisfaction requires an account of what the "aesthetical satisfaction" is that distinguishes interpretation from the work of searching for a determinate meaning. Beardsley's answer is the richness of its regional meanings. However, what exactly does "richness of regional meanings" refer to? Cannot such richness by provided by an ordinary conversation? I cannot deny that giving an answer to these questions requires a wider view that is supposed to be a comprehensive account of aesthetics in general. Hence, expecting such a work may be considered as lying heavily on Beardsley's shoulders. However, one can at least expect him to explain why the capability of an artwork to provide aesthetical satisfaction to some extent makes artistic intention irrelevant to interpretation of an artwork. At this point, Beardsley would defend his position by his logical argument which is problematic due to the reasons I explained in the previous section.

To conclude, even though I agree with Beardsley on his view that the task of an interpreter is something to do with aesthetical experience provided by an artwork which enables it to stand in a different position from the normal course of affairs, I am not sure if the reason for this description of interpretation is because an artwork is an imitation of an illocutionary act. Besides, I find his claim on the intolerability of incompatibles to be tenuous. In the next part, I will be explaining and evaluating

Joseph Margolis's relativistic approach to the issue of interpretation which stands in the opposite direction of Beardsley's principle of the intolerability of incompatibles.

4.2 Joseph Margolis

In his paper "Robust Relativism" (1980), Joseph Margolis argues that any thinker who claims for the illegitimacy of defending non-converging interpretations of a text must first of all give an account for why it must be so. In his article, Margolis aims to give an account for why non-converging interpretations of a text can be legitimately defended by proposing that only plausibility and implausibility can be attributed to interpretations, but not truth values. In the first section of this part, I will present Margolis's objection against the view that non-converging interpretations of a text cannot be accepted. In the second part, I will explain his views about assigning the notions "plausibility" and "implausibility" as the criterions of considering an interpretation good or bad.

4.2.1 Objection to excluding non-converging interpretation of a text

Margolis (1980) says that "the most interesting feature of critical interpretation is its tolerance of alternative and seemingly contrary hypothesis." (p. 41). For him, there must be something about artworks which makes such tolerance possible.

In the first part of his article, Margolis (1980) puts forward the motivations for his claim of the tenable legitimacy of non-converging interpretation of a text (p. 42). Margolis juxtaposes his reasons as the following:

1) Unlike Wimsatt, Olsen thinks that authorial intention is relevant if it can be construed as already expressed in the work.

2) There is no satisfactory way to fix authorial intention within a work of art to exclude changing interpretive schemata.
3) There is no logical reason not to accept non-converging interpretations consistently with validly ascribed authorial intent.
4) there is no operative sense in considering a work of art as autonomous like a physical object and so no operative sense in distinguishing formally its internal-external, descriptive-interpretive parts.

Then Margolis' main concern is, as stated above, is that critics are inclined explicitly to claim that there can be only one single correct interpretation of a literary text and theirs is the one. However, Margolis thinks that values like true-false or correct-wrong are not applicable to the very concept of interpretation. To be more precious, he makes an analogy between some particular sort of statements of physical sciences and interpretive judgments. Think of questions like "how was our solar system created?" and "How did life originate?" There are no single true answers of these questions. The possible answers are in the form of a meaningful antecedent and a true consequence. These possible answers are not verifiable within the given set of scientific truths. Some accounts in the physical sciences are in this form such as Buffon's thesis and the Kant-Laplace hypothesis. In the case of such accounts, there is a set of initial conditions that are compatible with known laws of nature and there are demonstrably false hypothesis; but there is no way to give a correct account although the reasonableness and plausibility of these accounts are testable. Margolis thinks that the situation of interpretive statements is almost the same. For him, as in the case of some scientific accounts, we cannot have a correct, verifiable, interpretation of a literary text. However, we can have a procedure for determining the" plausibility" of an interpretation.

In this context, Margolis criticizes both intentionalist and anti-intentionalist accounts of textual meaning and/or of interpretation. He has one significant criticism of Beardsley's position which he holds in his book *The Possibility of Criticism*. In *The Possibility of Criticism*, Beardsley claims that an interpretation must be either true of false. Margolis thinks that this claim is contradictory with his argument against intentionalism that is different from the one he puts forward in "Intentional Fallacy" with Wimsatt. According to his latter argument against intentionalist accounts, as explained in the previous part, the irrelevance of the authorial intention in interpreting a literary text arises from a literary text being an *imitation* of a performance of an illocutionary act. Margolis claims that since what Austin emphasizes with his theory is the performative feature of utterances and hence the inapplicability of truth values to utterances due to the doctrine of infelicities, it is contradictory for Beardsley to argue for interpretations to be either true or false while embracing Austin's theory at the same time.

In brief, since Austin's theory is a refutation of an old tradition which renders all sentences as descriptive and therefore either true or false, for Beardsley to state that an interpretation must be either true or false is a contradiction for Margolis. However, as explained in the previous part, Beardsley does not render literary works as being imitation of illocutionary acts. He claims that being an initiation of an illocutionary act makes literary works different in kind and hence they are not subjected to the implications of Austin's consideration about the performances of illocutionary acts. Margolis might not be satisfied with this answer, and I might not be either. However, since I have talked about this issue long enough in the previous chapter, I will not dig into Beardsley's consideration of the characteristic of the literary works which eliminates authorial intention in interpretation here once again.

Though, I cannot deny that Margolis's criticism of Beardsley in this sense seems plausible.

As I emphasized several times before, Margolis's main concern is the lack of a positive argument for rendering the very concept of interpretation as an evaluation what is to be either true or false. Therefore, not only Beardsley but also Hirsch and Carroll are condemned with this criticism. One could claim, though, that Carroll does not lack an explanation for having an account of interpretation of this kind when we remember that his consideration of literary works is conversational. As explained in the previous chapter, Carroll believes that as in the case of ordinary conversation, there must be one single meaning of a literary work which is determined by the author. Therefore, any interpretation that contradicts with the intention of the author must be wrong. Would Margolis be satisfied with such an explanation? I do not think so, because Margolis considering interpretative statements to be analogous to scientific statements implies that what Carroll and Hirsch aims for while interpreting a literary work, in the sense of searching for the intended meaning, is not doable due to the insufficiency of related data. Therefore, it is impossible to say that a particular interpretation is either true or false. Then two questions are to be asked: (1) are interpretative statements really analogous to scientific statements that answers questions like "How did life originate?" and" Why?", and (2) Is Margolis's claim about the illegitimacy of considering interpretation as being true or false an ontological or an epistemological one?

I agree with Margolis' statement that "the most interesting feature of critical interpretation is its tolerance of alternative and seemingly contrary hypothesis" (Margolis, 1980, p. 41). Margolis pointing out this feature of the conception of interpretation implies something about the distinctive characteristic of interpretation

and hence artworks. This implied characteristic of interpretations and/or scientific statements that answers questions like ""How did life originate?" entails that there is something commonly shared between these two. But is it so (1)? And if yes, what is it and is it something epistemological or ontological (2)? Thus, the analogical relation he establishes between a certain kind of scientific statements and interpretive statements requires some deliberation. Let's have closer look at the statement "How did life originate?". The reason why we are incapable of attributing a truth value to this statement is seemingly the insufficiency of the related data. Thus, it seems like there is no ontological reason behind the impossibility of considering such statements as being true or false; but an epistemological one. What about interpretations? Is the impossibility of considering them as being either true or false because of an ontological reason? If interpretative statements and such scientific statements are analogical, then we have to say that, as in the case of such scientific statements, the reason why interpretative statements are free of being true or false is the insufficiency of related data. Then the question comes: "what data do we need for deciding whether an interpretive statement is true or false?"

One possible answer to this question would be "authorial intention". If what Margolis agrees on this answer, then we have to say the account of interpretation that Margolis embraces is that of searching for a hidden meaning which would be an ontological claim about the characteristic of the conception of interpretation. In this sense, we are to consider Margolis as an intentionalist. However, an intentionalist account of interpretation would have a conception of one single ultimately correct interpretation of a text no matter whether it is achievable or not. In other words, for an intentionalist the epistemological concerns about the interpretation of a text would be secondary. On the other hand, Margolis does not make any explicit claims like

that. In this sense, rendering Margolis's position as an intentionalist one would be not appropriate.

But what if we consider Margolis position as anti-intentionalist? Then the very reason behind the tolerability of incompatibles would be the lack of any truth constructed in a work of art. Such an explanation would be an aesthetical one that is constructed upon ontological reasons. In other words, such an explanation would imply that there is something about the very nature of artworks that prevents its interpretations from being either true or false. In this context, the analogical relation between interpretative statements and scientific statements that attempt to give an answer to questions like "How did life originate?" would be invalid.

In both ways, Margolis's account is inconsistent. It is inconsistent because the antecedents and the consequences of his claim are not operating in the right way. And in both cases, here is no way for assigning a truth value to interpretations as he claims. However, since his premises are problematic due to the reason I have point out, even though the emphasis he aims to make by saying "the most interesting feature of critical interpretation is its tolerance of alternative and seemingly contrary hypothesis" is worthy for consideration, his theory is likely to be purpose-relative of making non-converging interoperations of a text possible. In both cases, no matter due to epistemological or ontological reasons, even though the consequences of what he says imply the opposite, for Margolis, authorial intention is irrelevant for the interpretation of a text, which makes his position anti-intentionalist; but in a different way. Then the question comes: "is there anything testable about interpretation?"; "how a good interpretation is distinguishable from a bad one?", "what is the standard for something to be interpretation?" In the next section, I will introduce Margolis's

criterion of distinguishing a good interpretation from a bad one that is the notion of plausibility.

4.2.2 "Plausibility" and "implausibility" instead of "truth/correctness" and "falsity/wrongness"

Margolis suggests five distinctions between "true" and "plausible" which enable evaluating interpretations to be plausible or implausible rather than as "correct/true" or "wrong/false":

1) Plausibility is invoked when truth cannot be actually determined.
2) No plausible account may be incompatible with a true statement.
3) No true or false statements are merely plausible or implausible and no plausible or implausible statements are merely true or false.
4) Where "x is true" and "y is true" are contraries, "x is plausible" and "y is plausible" are not.
5) Plausible or implausible statements are judged as so in virtue of their use of preferred explanatory models in any given domain.

Margolis (1980) continues, "Where such models can be weighted for preferability, and the features of what is to be accounted for also weighted for priority and importance in explanation, the plausibility of the corresponding statements may also be graded." (p. 44). Margolis exemplifies his point. In science, for instance, one can give a plausible account of the origin of the moon without including any assumption about the gravitational activity of something outside of our present solar system; instead, she can do it in accordance with the density, size and the composition of the moon itself. Similarly, one can give a plausible interpretation of *Hamlet* in accord with a well-defined myth which gives priority to some features of the work

preferably such as Hamlet's 'indecision'. This interpretation can be dialectically against previous interpretations of it which are considered plausible as well (Margolis, 1980, p. 44).

Margolis (1980) notes that plausibility is a concept that is closer to aesthetic criticism than science (p. 44) because while we apply to the notion of plausibility in science due to a technical inability, the reason why we use it in art criticism is because of the demarcation problem in art which designates logical weaknesses. In other words, since there are always logical weaknesses in the accounts of what art is, then how to interpret it inevitably occurs as unverifiable. Therefore, once this relation between the demarcation problem and interpretation is understood, the impossibility of any interpretation as true would be understood (Margolis, 1980, p. 45). However, this tolerance does not entail that it is always the case that any artwork can have non-converging interpretations. But since we cannot ask for more precision than the artist will allow, it is impossible to logically avoid these non-converging accounts.

As explained in the previous part, Beardsley thinks that Margolis's argument for inappropriateness of considering interpretations as either true of false is problematic. Beardsley states that any plausible statement must have an evident whose truth that is provable for being plausible. In his words, "But plausibility is at least an appearance of truth based upon relevant evidence, and any statement that is plausible must be in principle capable of being shown to be true or false" (Beardsley, 1970, p. 43). Thus, the notion of plausibility is not thinkable without being related to truth and falsity. As stated previously Beardsley thinks the sort of interpretation Margolis has in mind as putting forward his position about the tolerability of non-converging interpretations of a particular work is the one like Freudian, Marxist or

Christian interpretation. Beardsley (1970) thinks that such an account of interpretation is not the favorable one because

> … they do not bring out of work something that lies momentarily hidden in it; they are the ways of using the work to illustrate a pre-existent system of thought. Though they are sometimes called "interpretations" (since this word is extremely obliging), they merit a distinct label, like superimpositions. (p. 43-44)

I agree with Beardsley that this sort of interpretation is more likely an exercise or an illustration of a pre-existent system of thought. In that sense, every kind of human action, no matter an imitation or a performance of an illocutionary act, can be interpreted in such systems within the consideration of descriptive principles of these systems. However, in their times, those systems also claimed to bring out something hidden in a work. Thus, without knowing which of these systems is the right one, in the sense is of bring out something hidden not only in the context of literary criticism but also in a general context that covers the set of phenomena they aimed to explain, we cannot attribute a truth value to such interpretation and hence the non-convergence of instances of such interpretations is understandable. Besides, an interpretation which assumedly attempts to bring out something hidden is also to be considered as emerging out of such a system that is existent for its present time. Thus, Beardsley's account of interpretation as a work of searching for a hidden meaning is also an illustration looking at the work from the eye of a grand system which is not yet pre-existent for Beardsley's time yet. Richard Shusterman's article makes a similar emphasis on the existent system of thought under which Beardsley's account of interpretation is also involved. I will explain Shusterman's views in the next part, but before passing into the next part, I would like to make Margolis' view clearer.

Let's assume that every single interpretation is in the boundaries of the thought system out of which it emerges. In such a system, is there any way for two non-converging interpretations of a single text to be true? For instance, can we accept two non-converging Freudian interpretations of a text as are true at the same time? It does not seem so. But if we consider that the principles of Freudian approach are not identified as clearly as a principles of Newtonian physics, it is possible that within the determined principles of Freudian approach, which is understood through his literary texts as well as a literary work of art, two non-converging interpretations of the same text are plausible even though truth or falsity in this context is undeterminable. Therefore, Margolis's account seems to be operating appropriately. However, as we will see in the next part, for Shusterman, Margolis's position is also problematic in the sense of making no emphasis on "the reader".

4.3 Richard Shusterman

In his paper, "Interpretation, Intention, and Truth" (1988), the point that Shusterman wants to make is that both intentionalist and anti-intentionalist accounts of textual meaning suffer from an absent ingredient: "the intention of reader". This is, for Shusterman, a natural consequence of the academic industry whose main concern is producing as many truths as possible.

Shusterman agrees on that any meaning must be intentional. However attributing this crucial role to only the author is a common mistake done by both rivals of the debate. Even in Margolis' account, Shusterman thinks, this delusion appears since the motivation of his theory is based on the academic industry's will to produce as many truths as possible. Although Shusterman accepts that authorial intention is inseparable from the meaning of a text, it does not necessarily mean that

authorial meaning and textual meaning identical to each other. Thus, Hirsch's theory is also subject to the same criticism. He thinks that such a view would ignore another significant intention which is reader's (Shusterman, 1988, p. 67). Shusterman (1988) states that fixing the meaning into authorial intention is an issue of objective truth insistency in the academic industry (p. 67). Hirsch's claim of one determinate meaning and hence one true interpretation is an explicit representation of demands of this industry.

Shusterman thinks that Beardsley's position is not much different from the others. Beardsley's anti-intentionalist account is based on conventional meaning. However, his appeal to the Austinian account of meaning leads him to admit that there is at least one intention of the author that must be recognized in a literary text which is her intention produce a literary text rather than an ordinary speech-act. However, in his account, as in the case of Hirsch, Margolis, there is no place for reader's intention in Beardsley's theory. Besides, he is against the view that there can be more than one valid interpretation of a text due to the fact that interpretations are subjected to the plausibility test rather than truth. The truth insistency of academic industry shows its effect here again. Shusterman states that the reason why academic theorists and critics to prefer to deal with only authorial intention is that an approach that focuses on authorial intention, at least in theory, "provides a single, determinate, unchanging focus and standard for all the different readings or interpretations of the work to converge upon and be judged by their fidelity to such intention" (Shusterman, 1988, p.67). In other words, focusing on merely the authorial intention, no matter for intentionalist or an anti-intentionalist concerns, promises to secure the possibility of achieving objective truth and convergence in literary interpretation. However, at the same time, it creates a paradoxical situation since a single fixed

meaning is possible in theory and hence insistency on such approaches brings out a continuing diversity of interpretive efforts. And this diversity is exactly what the academic industry demands for since it precludes extinguishment of continued interpretive efforts and new readings in order to achieve formulaic, objective and teachable truths as a scientific positivist enterprise would produce (Shusterman, 1988, p. 67).

On the other hand, for Shusterman, it is impossible to have a valid interpretation that would reveal a fixed determinate meaning and descriptive properties of a textual work which is represented in the work because no description describes anything egalitarianly. In other words, each different description of a work of art involves an interpretation of it since "it involves a selection of what to describe, what aspects of the work are important as to be worth describing." (Shusterman, 1988, p. 71). As a result, any attempt to do so and built an interpretation over these descriptive properties and hence to achieve a single objective teachable true meaning by this describing work cannot be successfully maintained.

I think the point Shusterman makes is worthy of consideration. The claim of being capable of having a scientific account of what an interpretation is seems too ambitious for me as well. However, if Shusterman's ground for thinking in that way is dismissing the role of the reader in the interpretation, he is supposed to give an account for why involving the role of reading eliminates the problems he points out. What is the reader? Are we supposed to consider her as standing out of the context which leads the demands of the academic industry to be what they are? In this sense, I find Wolfgang Iser's account more comprehensive; I will explain it in the next part.

4.4 Wolfgang Iser

In the first pages of his book *The Act of Reading: a Theory of Aesthetic Response* (1978), Wolfgang Iser draws a picture of what is going on in the world of interpretation. His basic aim is to give his own theory of aesthetic response that includes the issues like interpretation and meaning. He starts with a deliberation on a presumption which is held by a majority of critics of his period. The presumption on which Iser focuses on is the statement that literary criticism is a work of searching for meaning. Iser thinks that this statement implies some other controversial statements like the following:

- Meaning of a literary work is a mystery to be revealed.
- And thus, literary text is an item for consumption
- the truth that we are after is independent from the text,
- Thus, meaning is not produced by the text.
- Thus, meaning of a text is a referential one. (Iser, 1978, p. 4)

Before putting forward his own theory, Iser keeps criticizing interpretation theories based on these assumptions. He believes that these kinds of theories of interpretation are incapable of explaining some phenomena in literature anymore. To highlight his position, Iser reminds us of Susan Sontag's view about interpretation. Sontag states that since there is no content in abstract painting, the abstract painting should be considered as a total rejection of interpretation of the kind which aims to reveal the truth hidden in a work of art. She also thinks that pop art serves for the same aim. Although there is content in pop art, since it is a blatant one, it is still a rejection of interpretation of this kind. In other words, pop art is a rejection of the idea of representation through art because the theme emerging from pop art occurs by explicitly refusing to contain a hidden meaning by some copied objects (p.11). Therefore, it is not possible to apply this kind of interpretative approach to pop-art. Iser also thinks that the conception of pop art makes it explicit that theories of

interpretation that identify themselves as having a task of searching for a hidden meaning are not sufficient for explaining some phenomena in the art world..

Iser thinks that considering literary criticism as a work of searching for meaning has one more implication, which is that artwork is a representation of the whole truth. He thinks that there are no such universal claims in art anymore. Iser (1978) supports his claim by using Dieter Henrich's words on Hegel:

> It is well known that Hegel considered art to have come to its end, and it is not unknown that by this he meant art could no longer be viewed as the characteristic appearance of truth. No work of art was now - as Schelling would have had it - the medium through which the spirit could come to itself and, sunk in self-contemplation, attain knowledge of its own essence . . . even the Christian world could only incorporate art in the more comprehensive context of faith: The very diversity of modern life makes it quite impossible for any work of art to represent a totality. (Iser, 1978, p.12)

As Hegel puts it, Iser emphasizes that the old thought which regards art as a vehicle through which truth can assume its perfect form is not favorable anymore. Since, as Hegel points out, art carries knowledge of its own essence (Iser, 1978, p.12), modern art does not represent the actual form of truth or the whole truth. On the other hand, art has a feature of revealing and balancing the deficiencies resulting from previous systems. As a result, art turns out to be "the sensual appearance of the idea" in a Hegelian sense. Then the new situation between idea and appearance, in Platonian sense, is established through the interaction between the text and the social and historical norms of its environment and the potential disposition of the reader.

Iser founds his theory of literal meaning upon the idea that the author and reader are indiscernible. Therefore, a text represents not an absolute truth but the knowledge of its own essence which is established through the contribution of a subject that is the reader. As a result, the task of a critic is not teaching the meaning of a text, but clarifying its potential and informing about the process of reading which is not completed without the contribution of the reader (Iser, 1978, p. 19).

To be more precious about the process of the actualization of a text's meaning and hence about the task of an interpreter, Iser keeps on putting forward more of his observations about a literal text. He states that there are two poles of a text: (1) the *artistic* one and (2) the *aesthetic* one. He defines the artistic aspect of a text as the author's text which can be thought as everything about the author, such as her/his psychology, thoughts, biographical facts, etc. He also defines the aesthetic aspect as the realization accomplished by the reader, namely the contribution of the subject via her/his own ontological situation. Iser claims that the meaning of a work cannot be reduced to either of these. Since the virtual position of the work is between the text and the reader, its actualization then is clearly the result of an interaction between the two. In other words, the meaning of a text arises from the dynamism between artistic and aesthetic poles of the text (Iser, 1978, p. 21).

Then the question "what is the structure of this interaction?" requires an answer. Iser states that the structure is a complex one; it is in the text but has not fulfilled its function until it affects the reader. This structure has a verbal aspect and an affective aspect. The verbal aspect guides the reaction and prevents the text from being arbitrary. The affective aspect is the fulfillment of that which has been prestructured by the language of the text (Iser, 1978, p. 21). Therefore, the task of the interpreter should be elucidating "the potential meaning of the text, and not to restrict herself to just one" (Iser, 1978, p. 22).

On the other hand, traditional interpretation, as in the case of intentionalist and anti-intentionalist accounts of interpretation, ignores the very nature of a literary work that is explained above. And therefore it considers the textual meaning as a referential one which leads us to the idea that the interpreter instructs the reader. However, Iser points out that a referential meaning cannot be of an aesthetic nature.

Contrarily, the meaning of a literary work, like any other forms of art, must be initially aesthetic in nature. This is because art must bring into the world something that did not exist before (Iser, 1978, p. 22). For Iser, this is the basic nature of art and this nature arises from its aesthetic aspect.[3] To support this point, Iser brings out Josef Konig's thoughts on the "beautiful". Konig (1957) says, "Certainly . . . the expressions 'to be beautiful' and 'this is beautiful' are not meaningless. However . . . what they mean is *nothing but what* is meant through them . . . and this is only something to the extent that it is nothing but what is meant through these expressions" (p. 321). In these words, Konig points out that the only way of bringing into existence something that has not existed before is an aesthetical work which is achievable through art because of its very essence, that is essentially being aesthetical.

Thus, with this aesthetic experience, one reaches to a non-aesthetic reassurance. As a result, "the aesthetic nature of meaning constantly threatens to transmute itself into discursive determinacy" (Iser, 1978, p. 22). The experience which develops in reader cannot be regarded as aesthetic anymore because "it extends its meaningfulness by relating to something outside itself" (Iser, 1978, p. 23). Since according to this account meaning is understood as the expression or representation of collectively recognized values, it is possible for Iser to have different interpretations of a text.

Iser supports his conception of possibility and acceptability of many different interpretations on the very nature of art, as stated before. This nature of art can be put forward as *openness*, namely, as being a concept that is unclosed. Regarding textual

[3] "It is characteristic of aesthetic effect that it cannot be pinned to something existing, and, indeed, the very word 'aesthetic' is an embarrassment of referential language, for it designates a gap in the defining qualities of language rather than a definition". (Iser, 1978, p. 22)

meaning as referential or as determined by authorial intention is, for Iser, a rejection of this essential nature. According to him, it is a logically vain attempt to define necessary and sufficient properties of aesthetic theory because its unclosed being eliminates such properties. Hence, the task of the aesthetic theory is to reveal and demand its openness (Iser, 1978, p. 25). Therefore, interpretation is a value judgment even though there are objective evidences for such a subjective work. In other words, Iser says that interpretation is a work of objectification of preferences. How is that possible then? How is it possible for there to be different subjective judgments based on the same objective evidences? Iser (1978) answers,

> A literary text contains intersubjectively verifiable instructions for meaning production, but the meaning produced may then lead to a whole variety of different experiences and hence subjective judgments. Thus by ridding ourselves of the concept of subjectivism/objectivism we can establish an intersubjective frame of reference that will enable us to assess the otherwise ineluctable subjectivity of the value judgments. (p. 25)

To sum up Iser's position, we can say that the meaning of a literary text is realized in the reading process. Therefore, any theory of interpretation that ignores the contribution of the reader for the realization of meaning is not acceptable.

My main criticism against the two rivals of this debate is that their accounts are restricted into the context of literary criticism. When we consider the starting point of the debate, the landscape becomes understandable. However, I believe that the deficiencies of these accounts that I pointed out at the end of each section of this and the previous chapter seem likely caused by the lack of concern about the applicability of their account of interpretation to other forms of art. In other words, all explained accounts of interpretation in the context of the relevance authorial intention in the interpretation of literary texts are purpose-relative, as Carroll puts forward. The sense of the purpose-relativeness of these accounts is making a certain methodology of interpreting literary works defendable. However, since such

purposes are not sincere in the sense of lacking a will to say something about the conception of art in general, the grounds upon which their theory of interpretation is based are weak. Besides, since both the rivals of the debate act with such purposes, the implications of their accounts go beyond the aim of making one certain way of interpreting literary texts the single favorable one and, as illustrated above, most of the time they contradict their basic premises. In other words, I find both rivals of the debate insincere because although they are likely to have a tendency of avoiding saying anything about the very nature of artwork and interpretation explicitly, their accounts of interpretation have implications about the nature about the artworks and the notion of interpretation that are not completely grounded and supported. On the other hand, Iser's position seems to be of a different kind. Contrary to the other figures of the debate, Iser has an explicit account of what a literary work of art is and his account of interpretation is based on the very nature of this account which is applicable to all other forms of art.

To conclude, I would like to sum up what I have done so far. After describing the environment in which a debate on the relevance of authorial intention in interpretation of literary texts occurred, I first explained the views of some prominent figures of the debate who aim to show that authorial intention is necessarily relevant in interpreting literary texts. Secondly, I presented the other rival of the debate which considers authorial intentions irrelevant to interpretation of literary text. At the end of each section of the chapters where I explained the views of both rivals, namely the intentionalists and anti-intentionalists, I put forward my criticism of each of the views. As stated above, I render Wolfgang Iser's position as being different from the positions of other figures of the debate. Contrary to Beardsley and Wimsatt, Hirsch, Carroll, Margolis, and Shusterman, Iser has a comprehensive account of

interpretation which is based on a well-supported account of the very nature of the artwork. In the next chapter, I will present my own solution to the problem which will consist of some experimental thoughts about the notions of "interpretation", "meaning" and "artwork".

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have attempted to show that the meaning of an artwork is not identical to what its creator intends it to mean. This is simply a rejection of the identity thesis. However, my rejection of the identity thesis is different from Beardsley's, Margolis's and Shusterman's. In the theories of these figures, the rejection of the identity thesis is not based on the essential nature of artworks. In that sense my position in the debate is an anti-intentionalist one. On the other hand, I can define my approach as skeptical about the relevance of artistic intentions in the interpretation of artworks. My skepticism is caused by the vagueness of the degree of this relevance. Because of the same skeptic thoughts, considering artistic intentions as totally irrelevant to the interpretation of artworks is unacceptable for me. Therefore, it would be best to define my position as weak anti-intentionalism.

In this thesis, I have argued that artistic intention is not the goal in the interpretation and understanding of artworks. Even though our cognitive goal in an ordinary conversation *might* be to understand the intentions of our interlocutor, it is not the case for the experience of an artwork. The reason why the intentions of the speaker and of the artist do not to operate in the same way is the very characteristic of the artwork. This characteristic is put forward by Wolfgang Iser in a way that his theory of interpretation is applicable for all forms of art, namely to paintings, pieces of music, etc. As it is shown, both rivals of the debate lack an account in which the ontological fact about artworks makes artistic intention relevant or irrelevant for the interpretation. Their accounts are based on merely the common properties of literary works and ordinary conversation, which is the conversational aspect of literary work.

However, neither Carroll's nor Hirsch's account explains the point where this similarity ceases to exist. On the other hand, Beardsley's account of interpretation seems like having an account of what makes artworks different from the normal course of affairs. However, his account of this kind has no ontological relation to the meaning and interpretation of artworks. His emphasis on aesthetic satisfaction that is provided by artworks does not have any effect on the regional meanings of an artwork. In other words, his theory disregards the aesthetical aspect of artworks and treats them as the normal course of affairs when analyzing their meanings. His theory of meaning is valid for the ordinary use of language and hence does not entail anything special about the nature of artworks. In that sense, applying his theory to paintings or sculptures is not an easy job.

Even though Beardsley can prove that the aesthetical aspect of artworks is not sufficient for considering constructing and analyzing the meaning of an artwork and an ordinary utterance in an ordinary conversation differently, his strong anti-intentionalist account fails. Beardsley thinks that the aesthetical aspect of a literary work makes the authorial intention irrelevant to the interpretation of an artwork. Since the task of an interpreter is increasing the aesthetic satisfaction provided by artworks, the reconcilement of an authorial intention and a good interpretation is not essential but merely accidental. However, as Carroll points out the conception of aesthetical satisfaction is supposed to be well-defined in order for Beardsley's account to be plausible. If we consider that being informed about artistic intentions provides more aesthetical satisfaction, Beardsley's theory collapses.

On the other hand, Iser's theory of aesthetic response is based on the very nature of the artwork, which is its openness. Iser thinks that considering the notion of interpretation as a job for seeking for the intentions of an author makes the artwork

an object of consumption. But, for him, because the artwork is an open concept whose meaning cannot be realized without the contribution of the reader, it cannot be an object of consumption.

When we consider that both positions in this debate lack the absence of an account of what makes an artwork from the normal course of, it is simple to refute the theories of the figures I have presented. However, making a simple emphasis on absence of this significant constituent of an ideal theory of interpretation would not be strong enough. Therefore, I have explained the weaknesses of each theory at the end of the section in which those theories are explained. To conclude, I will summarize my objections to these theories.

Firstly, Hirsch's theory of interpretation is not an economical one. In his theory, Hirsch introduces two principles which are "The Identity Thesis" and "Determinacy of meaning". The identity thesis says that textual (verbal) meaning is identical to authorial (intended) meaning. This identity is realized through the contribution of the author which is called the determining will. By the will of the author, meaning becomes shareable and thus determinant. However, the determinacy of meaning is an issue that requires even more work than a theory of interpretation requires. Also, if the will of the author determines the meaning of a word-sequence, then it means that there can be intentionless meaning before the will of the author comes upon the stage[4]. This implication of Hirsch's theory shows a contradictory part in his argument. More importantly, Hirsch's identity thesis has no reference to the very characteristic of artworks. Therefore, his theory entails that there is no significant difference between artworks and the normal course of affairs. This makes his theory unconvincing.

[4] Claimed also by Knapp and Michaels in "The Impossibility of Intentionless Meaning" (1992).

Thirdly, Carroll's theory of interpretation which is based on the conversational aspect of literary works of art is also unconvincing not only for having no account of what makes literary works of art different from the ordinary conversations but also the refutability of his claims about the ordinary conversations. Is our ultimate goal in the normal course of affairs to understand the intentions of our interlocutor? I do not think so. If it was so, any conversation which includes speeches like "what you say means also that therefore I also feel as such" would be impossible. The person who utters a word-sequence that causes such a response cannot only think that she could not construct her sentences appropriately, and she will also reconsider the reasons behind constructing her utterance in that particular way. Therefore, the ultimate goal of a conversation is not only understanding the intended meaning but also having a chance to think of the related phenomena implied by the unintended meaning. This is a way for transcending the appearance and having a more general knowledge. It is also controversial to assume that linguistic conventions are capable of representing all the intentions of a speaker. There exists a large amount of literature on this idea. Is there a private language? Therefore Carroll's claim about our ultimate cognitive goal in ordinary conversations is controversial.

Fourthly, as stated above, Beardsley's account of interpretation is not convincing because what he means by aesthetic satisfaction is not clear. Also, Beardsley's adaptation of Austin's Speech Act Theory does not fitting into his overall theory. Fifthly, Margolis' theory does not convince us about how evaluating interpretation as plausible or implausible makes non-converging interpretations of a literary work possible. Lastly, although Shusterman makes a significant point about

the role of the reader, he does not give a comprehensive explanation for the significance of the reader in the interpretation.

However, as it is said before, Iser's theory of aesthetic response is not subjected to such criticisms. The main reason for this is his theory of interpretation is not constructed upon a concern of proving that a particular method of interpretation is the most scientific and hence most acceptable one. Rather than that Iser considers the meaning of an artwork as a special kind and reduces it to intentions the of its creator or to the verbal meanings as a mistake. When we consider Iser's words on the aesthetical aspect of an artwork and the realization of meaning by the contribution of the reader, the questions raised in the introduction about *Guernica* become answerable. The aesthetical way of representing the Spanish Civil War and the particular situation of each viewer makes the meaning of *Guernica* something beyond revealing a truth hidden in it by Picasso. On the other hand, a regional meaning that is supposed to be constructed upon the local ones (in Beardsley's terminology) of *Guernica* seems almost impossible for accomplishing in the case of Guernica. What kind of a language is used in this particular painting? What are the conventions of pictorial language, if any? How can an interpreter help us to have more aesthetical satisfaction from *Guernica*? Although these questions can be answered by Beardsley in some way, the application of his theory to *Guernica* would be coercive and hence not easily imaginable.

In the picture I have drawn in this thesis, my position seems like a weak anti-intentionalist one. Considering Iser's theory as an acceptable one makes this result unavoidable. However, if there were an intentionalist theory of interpretation which is constructed on the very nature of artwork and argued for the determining role of the artist in the meaning of an artwork in accordance with that nature and hence

implied that interpreting an artwork is finding out the intentions of its creator, I would consider such a theory as a plausible one as well. If such a theory existed, I would reconsider my weak anti-intentionalist approach. Also, it is possible to have some other weak anti-intentionalist theory of interpretation as comprehensive as, or even more convincing than, Iser's. Therefore my weak anti-intentionalist approach is not restricted to Iser's theory. But still, since his theory fulfils the minimum requirement of being acceptable, which means having an account of the very nature of artwork and arguing for the relevance of irrelevance of artistic intentions in interpretation of artworks by means of this very characteristic, Iser's weak anti-intentionalist approach is acceptable. As stated before, because of fulfilling this minimum requirement, Iser's approach is capable of covering interpretations of all forms of art rather than being restricted to merely literary works of art.

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