The Constellation editor’s introduction:

At long last, The Constellation is published! The months of perusing papers, editing articles, and drafting email documents have paid off; our first issue is released, and now the students of Dominican University have a permanent location where they can find papers written by both current and past Dominican undergraduates. This is, in fact, one of the many goals that my co-editor, Elizabeth Nichin, and I had in mind while creating the journal. Ultimately, what we wanted was a permanent location to share the work and research of our best Dominican students; we wanted a journal that students would be proud to be published in; we wanted a journal that Dominican could call its own—a journal that Dominican faculty, staff, and students would encourage and be proud of. It seems we have already achieved the majority of these goals.

When Elizabeth and I were first asked to be the first co editors-in-chief of The Constellation in the fall of 2011, our staff was comprised of three people: the journal’s moderator, Dr. Ellen McManus of the English department, Elizabeth, and myself. Numerous Dominican faculty and staff members, especially the members of our Advisory Board, were always ready to offer advice and recommendations if we were in need, however. Nevertheless, the majority of the work belonged to a rather small team. After we had received paper submissions, we realized we would need the help of more students to keep up with the workload, therefore we requested the help of three English 333 The Art of Editing students: Rebecca Luksa, Kristen Coleman, and George Sauvageau. Elizabeth and I had decided which papers we wanted to include in the journal; now we just needed to start a communication with each of our authors. Our original team of three morphed into an actual Editing Team comprised of editors-in-chief, regular editors, and a moderator.

The six of us worked diligently on the papers we had accepted. Each editor read the papers assigned to them, edited them, and returned them to each author; the author then revised
the paper’s draft and sent the revisions. The cycle would then repeat itself. As the process of editing was well underway, however, the Editing Team realized that *The Constellation* needed a design to it; it needed an image. There were more decisions to be made and more people to include in our still rather small team. Jim McQuillan of the Office of Marketing and Communication created our banner image, and we enlisted the help of Professor Jean Bevier of the graphic design department and student Shirley Leal to create a cover image for the first issue of *The Constellation*. Shirley has done more than just create a cover image for the journal; she designed various posters and a brochure, as well as *The Constellation*’s website in correlation with archivist and special collections librarian, Steven Szegedi. Suddenly, we had a Design Team; nine people were working on *The Constellation*.

Progress was made on both paper editing and web design. The Editing Team and the Design Team worked on their respective aspects of the journal with the editors-in-chief and the moderator mediating between them and trying to set up the final fitting together of all the pieces. As Shirley and Steven wrote computer codes and customized web pages, the editors read through last-minute paper drafts and prepared to upload the final 12 journal articles. Even with the release of the first issue drawing nearer, however, the editors-in-chief were aware that the plans had to be determined for next year’s issue of the journal. We sent out an email to all undergraduate students requesting that those interested in editing or design join *The Constellation* team. We hoped that our posters, brochures, and URSCI presentation had caught the interest of Dominican’s students. We were pleasantly surprised by the number of students that attended the meeting and were interested in either working with *The Constellation* or submitting papers to it in future issues.
Prior to the meeting, I had no real indication of how many students would attend or whether there would be any enthusiasm for *The Constellation*. Frankly, I was expecting most of the attendees to lose interest in the project once they had heard what the journal really entailed, but in an unexpected turn of events, they became much more talkative and open as the meeting progressed. They took a real interest in the publication, much to be astonishment. The one thing that probably touched me the most during the meeting was that many of the attendees used the word “we” when talking about the future of *The Constellation*. To some degree, they already considered themselves part of the team through the use of that word. It was not what “you,” *The Constellation* team, can do in the future; it was what “we,” the team, can do. They all seemed very enthused about working on the journal in the future, and they were determined to find new ways to spread news of *The Constellation* to both prospective submitters and prospective readers. They recommended that Dominican faculty encourage their students to submit to and read the journal. Of their own accord, they talked about the journal belonging to Dominican and sought ways to include the Dominican community in *The Constellation*.

That was the ultimate goal in creating this journal: creating a new scholastic outlet for students that would require the involvement of the full Dominican University community. The journal always had the unending support of Dominican faculty and staff members such as Dean Jeffrey Carlson and those on the Advisory Board. The journal staff members always had the personal support of friends, family, and Dominican faculty. On behalf of *The Constellation* staff, I want to thank all these individuals for their constant belief in our cause and our ability to create this magnificent new publication. I honestly can say that we would not have been able to do this without you. We have had a wonderful support system for the publication of *The Constellation*’s first issue, but the journal will only improve and progress as the wider Dominican community
gets involved. When we mention *The Constellation* or recommend people to read some of the articles, we all ought to think to ourselves, “*The Constellation*, now that is what it means to be a member of Dominican University.”

Haley Leboulanger
Literary criticism: while in some ways it is relatively straightforward, in other ways it is ambiguous and mystifying. The concept of literary criticism is very simple to define, even to one unfamiliar with the field: “Everything we encounter we take as something—we interpret it, explain it, mediate between it and what we have already observed and experienced…. And that is precisely what we do when we read a literary text” (Cowles v). It is only when we examine the different literary methods that one’s understanding of literary criticism becomes less clear. There are numerous methods one can use to analyze a text, and different criticisms come in and out of favor with the passage of time. Some criticisms become practically obsolete. One such criticism is biographical criticism, a branch of the larger methodology known as historical criticism, which focuses on how different aspects of history affects one’s interpretation of a text. In biographical criticism, a reader attempts to interpret an author’s works in conjunction with the author’s life. This criticism, however, has been seen as flawed in the eyes of numerous critics, leading to a debate between those supporting this methodology and those against it. While it can be expected that critics debate with one another over the validity of all literary criticisms, the debate on biographical criticism is unique in that it has its origins in a secondary debate surrounding the intentional fallacy. The intentional fallacy asserts that a reader cannot discern an author’s intention when he wrote a text. Researching both debates more fully can help one understand the reasons behind the support and rejection biographical criticism receives, and possibly help determine in what way biographical criticism can prove beneficial in literary circles. To support this claim, the twentieth century author J.R.R. Tolkien will serve as a case study, primarily due to
his unique situation as a modern author whose biography and works are well known, yet very little biographical criticism has been applied to him.

J.R.R. Tolkien is one of the most well-known authors of his age, and he is one of the most mystifying; his reputation as an Oxford don and a fantasy author has led many biographers and critics to look into his life and works in hope of understanding the mystery that is Tolkien. He was a brilliant man—one enamored with mythologies and history. This path led him to create his own mythological world and history. Critics have tried to delve into Tolkien’s life and world to better understand his works. Various critical approaches have been applied to his texts—such as source studies, feminist, and moral and philosophical approaches—and many biographers of Tolkien have attempted something akin to biographical criticism, especially in noting in how aspects of his work might have been influenced by aspects of his life, such as his childhood, Christianity, and scholarly interests. Despite such varied critical approaches, surprisingly few critics have approached his work through biographical criticism. This very well could be due to Tolkien’s vehement dislike of critics attempting to interpret his works in certain ways (Understanding 25). Rather than offering a new interpretation to Tolkien’s works, the use of biographical criticism could help one bring a new sense of focus to certain aspects of a text. Nevertheless, the lack of biographical criticism regarding an author whose biography is well known may seem baffling, yet it can be better understood within the context of the debate surrounding the use of biographical criticism.

Many critics have questioned the value of biographical criticism in interpreting a text. While the debate surrounding biographical criticism is often considered dated, it still exists. Critics often think of text’s author as “dead”; the author is unnecessary in reading a text because it would give a text a set, concrete meaning, making literary criticism unnecessary in literary
studies (Kameen 4-5). In order to change this critical opinion, it is necessary to show why considering an author is necessary in reading a text (8). In *Re-reading Poets: The Life of the Authors*, author Paul Kameen reviews the poststructuralist concept of the “death of the author” and asserts that a reader should acknowledge an author when reading a text. To support his point, Kameen uses examples from poets Samuel Coleridge, William Wordsworth, and Walt Whitman. When reading poems, the existence of each respective author must be acknowledged for different reasons: because of the poet’s ability to weave together a relatable story, because of the universal experiences readers can share with authors, and because of the ability of authors to place readers in their place and inspire readers to write (16, 26, 32). However, despite such recent positive opinions of biographical criticism, the method is still looked on poorly. This debate coupled with the debate surrounding the separate but closely related concept of authorial intention suggest that an analysis of biographical criticism using a test case might be a valuable addition to the conversation. Tolkien serves as an excellent case study for this question because his biography is well known, yet little biographical criticism exists about him. In order to effectively grasp the benefits and limitations of biographical criticism specifically in relation to Tolkien, however, it is necessary to have a grasp of life and writings and the various criticisms written about his texts, in addition to what biographical criticism exactly entails. To understand the first of these points, it helps to have a brief overview of Tolkien’s life.

**On Tolkien’s Life**

Examining Tolkien’s life as a whole helps a reader note the surface-level, superficial similarities between his life and works. It is more important, however, to look at the deeper aspects of his life that likely led to the creation of his works. Nevertheless, having a basic overview of Tolkien’s life may prove helpful. He was born in South Africa in 1892 to Arthur and
Mabel Tolkien (Carpenter 25; Pearce 12). At the age of four, however, his father had died and his mother moved him and his brother, Hilary, to Birmingham, England (Carpenter 31-32; Pearce 13). During this time, Tolkien began receiving an education from his mother, reading books, and developing a love of nature; his mother also converted the family to Roman Catholicism (Carpenter 38-41; Pearce 14-16). His mother passed away in 1904, leaving him and his brother orphans, an event that affected Tolkien severely (Carpenter 49-50; Pearce 19-20). In school, he made friends with a group of boys who called themselves the “Tea Club Barrovian Society” or T.C.B.S. During this same period, he met his future wife, Edith Bratt (Carpenter 60-61, 68; Pearce 27). Following this came Tolkien’s war years, in which he was sent overseas to fight in France during World War I; during the war, he began his fantasy writing (Carpenter 102). Once he returned from the war, he continued work on what would eventually become *The Silmarillion* (126-127). When creating his characters and names, he employed his knowledge of philology, especially in relation to his Elvish languages (132). In 1925, he became the Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford (149). It was during his years at Oxford that he met fellow author C.S. Lewis and became part of The Inklings (Carpenter 192, 200; Pearce 52-53, 64-65). In 1937, *The Hobbit* was published, and *The Lord of the Rings* was published nearly 20 years later (Carpenter 242, 291). He died in 1973 (340). Beginning in his youth, Tolkien had an interest in medieval stories or mythologies, such as Arthurian legends or the tale of Sigur and Fafnir; coupled with this was his passion for archaic languages, such as Old English, Old Norse, and Welsh (39, 55). Such stories and languages served as inspiration for his writings (Shippey 14-17, 30-31, 34). Even in knowing only these few biographical facts, if one is familiar with Tolkien’s writings, one can begin to see which aspects of his life perhaps inspired him.

**On Tolkien Criticism**
Despite such extensive knowledge of Tolkien’s life, most critical works on Tolkien are not works of biographical criticism; instead, the majority of them focus on his writing in comparison to other texts or in a certain context, such as medievalism (Chance). It is important to note that it is impossible to read all critical interpretations of Tolkien because so many exist; it is possible, however, to overview a bibliography of Tolkien’s writings and criticisms on Tolkien. 

*J.R.R. Tolkien: Six Decades of Criticism* by Judith A. Johnson names journal articles, magazine articles, and books that note parallels between Tolkien’s life and writings, though the parallels do not always seem to be described as substantive. (76, 78, 94, 98, 139, 153, 157, 206). Despite acknowledging the various works found in a bibliography, only a small sampling of Tolkien criticisms could be taken for the framework of this paper, most of which are from critical collections published in the 1960s and 2000s. The majority of the critical essays in *Tolkien the Medievalist* (2003) use some method of historical criticism, whether it is source studies, the history of ideas, or biographical criticism (4-11). Of the three essays which employ biographical criticism in part, two of them employ it in regard to the influences between Tolkien and collaborator E.V. Gordon, and Tolkien and C.S. Lewis (5). The only one of these essays that focuses on biographical contexts outside these relationships is “Middle-earth, the Middle Ages, and the Aryan nation: Myth and history in World War II” by Christine Chism. She indicates that Tolkien’s world of Middle-Earth appears to reflect the contemporary world in some way, and that in light of World War II and the fact that many mythologies are Germanic in origin, Tolkien began questioning what mythology was (64-65). Chism argues that Tolkien’s characters do not serve as allegories for events and persons of World War II, but the insinuations of such horrors are present: the scene at Amon Hen in *The Fellowship of the Ring* “admits to the bright, remote world of Middle-earth an oblique engagement with contemporary history…” (85).
Two other collections of critical essays are *Tolkien and the Critics: Essays on J.R.R. Tolkien’s The Lord of the Rings* (1968) and *The Uncharted Realms of Tolkien: A Critical Study of Text, Context, and Subtext in the Works of J.R.R. Tolkien* (2002). The former offers over a dozen essays on Tolkien, but the majority of these essays focus on characterization or genre (Isaacs 12, 18). Some of the essays employ psychoanalytical criticism or source studies, but none use biographical criticism (42-44, 62). The chapters in the latter book focus somewhat more on possible influences from Tolkien’s life, citing examples such as the fact that Middle-Earth is supposed to signify Europe and that Tolkien’s journey to the Alps likely inspired the creation of the Misty Mountains; nevertheless, these individual instances of what could be called biographical criticism can only be found sparsely throughout the essays (Lewis 17). A number of the authors use the branch of historical criticism called the history of ideas; they allude to the belief that Tolkien’s ideas about gender—and women particularly—reflected the popular belief of the day (181-183). The two editors of *Tolkien and the Critics*, Neil D. Isaacs and Rose A. Zimbardo, later released two other collections of Tolkien criticism entitled *Tolkien: New Critical Perspectives* (1981) and *Understanding The Lord of the Rings: The Best of Tolkien Criticism* (2004). Like their earlier publication, the articles focus on the subjects of character, sources, and genre in *The Lord of the Rings*. Of the articles published in the latter text, some use a type of historical criticism in that they note similarities between the world of Middle-Earth and modern society (*Understanding* 25-29, 148-150). Thus, in four collections of essays on Tolkien, none of the essays truly use biographical criticism to its fullest extent. As noted before, the biographies on Tolkien incorporate much more biographical criticism.

The majority of the applications of biographical criticism used by the biographers primarily constitute reductive examples, or examples that focus on superficial similarities.
between Tolkien’s life and texts. They are interesting to consider if one has an interest in what possibly influenced Tolkien in writing, but they do not add much insight into how a text can be interpreted. Examples include Tolkien’s childhood in Sarehole, Birmingham when Tolkien and his brother, Hilary, would go out on adventures in the countryside and an event during World War I in which two of Tolkien’s best childhood friends, Robert Gilson and G.B. Smith, were killed (Carpenter 19-21, 84-86). A reader familiar with Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy can see a parallel between Tolkien’s boyhood adventures and the land of The Shire, as well as between the deaths of Tolkien’s friends and the death of Boromir at the beginning of *The Two Towers* (Fellowship 10, 14-15; Two 15-16). While the parallels appear to indicate that certain events in Tolkien’s life affected his writing, they offer no new insight into interpreting Tolkien’s fiction. More substantive parallels are required to offer a new interpretation of Tolkien. Focusing on such substantive parallels may better support the use of biographical criticism in literary circles, while simultaneously supporting a focus on authorial intention.

**On Authorial Intention**

Authorial intention is a very complicated subject and one not easily simplified; there are many aspects to it and to the debate surrounding its use. Because there are many different definitions of authorial intention—due to both historical developments and different interpreters—it is important to note the specifics of each definition. The basic concept of authorial intention is that it is an attempt to find out what an author intended in writing a text. In the most basic terms, Kaye Mitchell describes the twentieth century concept of authorial intention as being located outside the text—it involves contextualization and looking outside a text in order to understand and interpret it; intention defined in this way takes the form of a “mental state or authorial blueprint” within the author (Mitchell xi). With the establishment of
this definition of authorial intention comes the debate as to whether this intention should be
taken into account when interpreting a work (vii). In this debate, as with most debates, there are
different types of arguments, from the reductive to the complex. For example, typically, those
who are most anti-intentionalist—or against the interpretive use of authorial intention—are the
formalists, the New Critics (xi). Their most reductive argument against intentionalism is that a
reader should have to look only at the text itself in order to grasp its meaning and interpret it; no
outside contexts should matter, especially including the intention of the author (Cowles 11). In a
similarly reductive way, intentionalists argue that an author should have some say regarding the
meaning of a text; the author has a “right” to determine the meaning of a work (Mitchell xi).
Thus, Antoine Compagnon, a critic who has written a recent book on authorial intention, notes
the intentionalist prejudice that “the meaning of a text is what the author of that text wanted to
say” (Compagnon 31). The intentionalists hope that understanding the intention of an author will
make explicating and interpreting a text easier. Compagnon notes a paradox, however; if what an
author wants—or intends—to say in a text is the meaning of that text, then by understanding the
author’s intent, a critic will already have full knowledge of the text’s meaning, and textual
interpretation and criticism will become redundant (Compagnon 30-31). The debate surrounding
authorial intention when it is simply defined as an “authorial blueprint” appears to severely limit
the argument. In order to gain a more substantive grasp on the subject, then, the definition must
be broadened and the arguments must be deepened.

Despite the prevalence of relatively superficial arguments about authorial intention, there
are also more substantive ones. Aside from the formalist argument against contextualization,
anti-intentionalists also argue that an author’s intention is both inaccessible to the interpreter and
irrelevant to the meaning of the text (Mitchell xi, 11-12). W.K. Wimsatt and M.C. Beardsley,
New Critic authors of the essay “The Intentional Fallacy,” state, “…the design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard for judging the success of a work of literary art” (1). By use of the word “success,” Wimsatt and Beardsley focus on the idea that authorial intention is a criteria for judging a piece of literature as successful; they refute this belief by noting the supposed unavailability and undesirability of authorial intention. Essentially, one cannot determine the intention of the author; this is an empirically verifiable statement (Cowles 12). Attempting to figure out the intention of the author, therefore, is the work of speculation. Although the argument about availability of knowledge about intention seems indisputable, the argument about desirability is much weaker because desirability is subjective. Anti-intentionalist critics will assert that authorial intention is not a desired context in interpreting a text while intentionalists will find authorial intention a desirable and enlightening context for interpretation.

Other arguments against authorial intention include the fact that an author may not adequately express his intention in his writing and that the signification—or the meaning—of a text goes beyond the author’s intention for it (Compagnon 57). The former of these arguments is best simplified as follows: “…the relation between a sequence of written words and what the author meant to say by this sequence of words is not guaranteed…” (57). Though an author intends to express A, he might actually express B. In regard to the latter argument, considering that a reader can grasp a meaning of a text outside the context of knowing the author’s intention, authorial intention does not matter. One can see meaning by just reading a text; no other research is necessary, so why look into authorial intention? In addition, the meaning of a text can change over time, so even if authorial intention may have been relevant in terms of the composition of a text, it does not remain relevant to all future readings of a text (Mitchell 38). Another argument focuses on whether an author could intend to incorporate all the meanings readers see in a text
To cite examples from Tolkien, critics of *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings* have looked at such topics as his portrayal of female characters, the idea of morality, and past mythologies. Using an anti-intentionalist approach, one should consider whether Tolkien actually intended to include views on female characters, the idea of morality, and past mythologies. It may be likely that he had one or two of these intentions, but that he intended all three is questionable. If some of these meanings were unintended, then should we consider authorial intention a privileged perspective? A critic might see more in a text than an author actually intended. As can be seen, there are a variety of anti-intentionalist arguments; however, there are equally varied arguments for intentionalism.

Despite offering a number of arguments in favor of anti-intentionalism, Compagnon also offers some support to intentionalists. He quotes Roland Barthes in attempt to show the goal of the critic using intentionalism: “[there is an] interrogation directed by the critic at the dead writer, at his life, at the traces of his intentions, so that he himself can guarantee the meaning of the work: people want…to make the dead person speak…[or] his historical period, the genre, the vocabulary” (45). In criticizing intentionalism, Barthes indicates that a critic looks at these various contexts in hopes that the meaning of the work will come to light. Critics do not necessarily want an affirmation or “guarantee” of the meaning of the work, as Barthes claims; more likely critics want an indication of meaning. Gary Iseminger agrees with this view; a reader can interpret a sentence in a number of ways, but in order to get the “best” interpretation, the reader must have an idea of what the author would likely be intending to express (Iseminger 17-18; Mitchell 25). An understanding of authorial intention helps prevent misunderstandings. This is because an author’s subjectivity influences a work, whether he wants it to or not. (Iseminger 17-18). This belief relates very closely to Compagnon’s later statement that “Every interpretation
[of a text] is an assertion about an intention” (Compagnon 67). Essentially, this belief is the intentionalist answer to the anti-intentionalist question of whether an author can have intended all the possible meanings of a text.

One can also broaden the definition of authorial intention, thus allowing more arguments and interpretations to enter the debate. For example, Compagnon adds a new view to the concept of authorial intention. He asserts that in the process of writing a text, an author indicates his intention or meaning (67). This is a different sort of intention from the “authorial blueprint” mentioned earlier. It is a different “type” of intention that Michael Hancher calls “active” intention. “Active” intention is described as, “‘Intentions to be (understood as) acting’—and [that] ‘characterize the actions that the author, at the time he finishes his text, understands himself to be performing in the text’” (Mitchell 3). It is not premeditated intention, as with the authorial blueprint; it is active, happening as the author works. Mitchell notes that Hancher identified three different types of intention: “programmatic,” “active,” and “final.” Programmatic is his name for Wimsatt and Beardsley’s authorial blueprint. Final intentions are “whatever the author wishes to accomplish by means of his completed work” (3). Final intentions are known by the author to be present in a completed text; they are the meanings the author is aware of having incorporated in that completed text. Broadening what authorial intention means from simply what an author intended prior to writing a text to these three types of intention gives more legitimacy to the idea of authorial intention as a critical concept and greatly increases the complexity of the debate. The anti-intentionalist argument that an author’s intention is irretrievable is difficult to refute; the desirability of taking authorial intention into account is, however, a more complicated issue. It appears that the goal of most intentionalists is not merely to figure out the author’s actual intention, but rather to clarify a text’s meaning or to challenge
other interpretations. Even Wimsatt and Beardsley endorse the idea of understanding the broad context in which a text was written or how the language of a text is organized. They state, “‘The use of biographical evidence need not involve intentionalism…it may also be evidence of the meaning of his words and the dramatic character of his utterance’” (5). This statement clarifies the relationship between authorial intention and biographical criticism. A critic need not focus on the concepts of authorial intention or authorial influence when conducting biographical criticism; the focus can be elsewhere, such how an author’s biography affects the meaning of words in a text. This statement by anti-intentionalists actually serves as the basis for this paper’s thesis, especially in regard to Tolkien. Tolkien’s work as a philologist is widely known, especially in correlation to his writings, in which he often created fictional languages. If one has a better understanding of Tolkien’s biography and work as a philologist, then one can get a better grasp on his fictional languages and character names, thus possibly indicating a new interpretation for Tolkien’s works. One can only discover such a connection with prior knowledge of Tolkien’s life.

Prior to concluding this piece, it might be useful to note another form of literary criticism that has some bearing on authorial intention: New Historicism. This form of literary criticism essentially circumvents the idea of authorial intention in favor of looking at the influence of society on the creation of a text (Cowles 238-239). According to the New Historicist approach, authorial intention is not necessarily irrelevant but not nearly as important as the influence of social factors. According to Cowles, “No single intention…can determine the meaning or impact of a text, in part because context is uncontrollable” (235). Rather, “[books]…have much impact at all, such can be discovered only with a broad view that includes society and the passage of time” (236). The idea of individual intention is replaced with the influence of society because when an author writes a text, he is expressing not only his own beliefs and desires but
also those of the society in which he lives—though such societal beliefs and desires may be expressed unintentionally and unconsciously—and in fact his own beliefs and desires are shaped by those of his society. Therefore, study of that society is favored over study of the specific author’s intention (238). New Historians, in a sense, attempt to “solve” the problem of authorial intention, but in doing so, they may simply circumvent the issue, while also raising new questions about the cause and effect relationships between societies, individuals, and texts.

Due to the complexity of the question of “what can the case study of Tolkien suggest about the benefits and limitations of biographical criticism?” it is necessary to have an understanding of all the conversations briefly described above: Tolkien and his writings, criticisms of Tolkien, and biographical criticism and authorial intention. By weaving together and considering all this information, it is possible to gain a better understanding of biographical criticism and its potential role in literary criticism. While the idea of authorial intention has created a wide-ranging and ongoing debate in literary study, the debate becomes more comprehensible if one recognizes that in looking at authorial intention one should not only focus on the initial intent of the author—which is, indeed, unknowable by a critic—but must define intention more broadly. Similarly, in regard to biographical criticism, the focus should not be simply on the biographical influences on a text. The focus should be on those substantive biographical influences that appear to actually have affected the finished text profoundly; while lesser, superficial influences may be interesting, they may have no impact on how one might interpret a text.
Works Consulted


