

The Intentional Fallacy



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Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley wrote in their essay *The Intentional Fallacy*: "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] The author, they argue, cannot be reconstructed from a writing - the text is the only source of meaning, and any details of the author's desires or life are purely extraneous. Such thinking essentially states that the authors intended meaning and purpose for the exposition are fundamentally unnecessary to the reader's interpretation. This view is extremely useful in a postmodern relativistic framework as it successfully makes the reader or the consumer of the story the only authority on its meaning as opposed to the author or creator of the work. The unfortunate side effect is that this view strips the artist themselves of all value; it implies that only the product of their creation is of any importance.