

PREFACE

This book is written for anyone who is interested in Shakespeare and in how the mind works; like the First Folio that Shakespeare's friends began assembling four hundred years ago, it is addressed "To the great Variety of Readers." It will mainly be of interest to those who already have, or who are gaining, familiarity with Shakespeare's work—scholars and students of Shakespeare. It is not, though, meant to be narrowly academic.

I first encountered Fauconnier and Turner's theory of Mental Spaces, the groundwork from which they developed the theory of conceptual blending discussed here, when I was studying a contemporary of Shakespeare's: the scientist, mathematician and linguist Thomas Harriot. Harriot's intellectual accomplishments were so strikingly varied—he was the first Englishman known to have learned a Native American language, and also the first English algebraist—that I felt he really needed to be considered as a unique, *thinking* individual, rather than simply as someone whose activities illustrated the great movements or ideologies of his time, even though the latter approach was then the prevailing one in literary studies. Contemplation of Harriot's role as an Algonquian-language interpreter turned my attention to current ideas in the academic field of linguistics, and specifically the aforementioned Mental Spaces model, which I found extremely useful for bringing together the Algonquian and algebraic facets of Harriot's work.

As a student of English literature who was drawn to consider such matters, I was fortunate to have the opportunity of obtaining an Andrew

W. Mellon postdoctoral fellowship, for 2006–2008, through the John B. Hurford Center for the Arts and Humanities at Haverford College; this fellowship enabled me to combine my new, deepening interest in cognitive linguistics with my longstanding interest in Shakespeare, and ultimately to convene an interdisciplinary symposium on “Shakespeare and the Blending Mind,” a conversation among scholars in these two fields. The present book was beginning to take shape then, as a long-term vision, which would require several more years of study, teaching and writing to be fully realized. I am deeply grateful to the symposium participants, to the Humanities Center, to Haverford and to the Mellon Foundation.

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<http://www.springer.com/978-3-319-62186-9>

Shakespeare and Conceptual Blending
Cognition, Creativity, Criticism

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2017, XXII, 257 p. 13 illus., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-62186-9