

Annotating the Everyday in a Modernist Scholarly Edition

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Abstract:

This article interrogates current approaches to the annotation of scholarly editions in order to reframe annotation practice within an emerging ‘new modernist editing’. Using the Broadview edition of Dorothy Richardson’s *The Tunnel* as a case study to reflect on the particular challenges of annotating a modernist text for a particular audience, I explore the problems that emerge from the explanation/interpretation dichotomy that commonly frames annotation practice. While this paper does not devise a prescriptive method for scholarly annotation, its aim instead is to refine our conceptions of the purpose and nature of explanatory notes, by putting them into conversation with contemporary literary theory, and particularly recent approaches to modernism situated in the post-critical turn.

Keywords: annotation, post-critique, modernism, Dorothy Richardson, Rita Felski

It is a commonplace statement amongst scholars and academic publishers that annotations to a scholarly edition should explain rather than interpret the text. Scholarly editors, in their dual role as textual editor and annotator, are compelled to do justice to the text by recovering its various contexts, references, and obscurities for an ideal reader, while refraining from imposing an idiosyncratic or critical reading that might push readers toward one interpretation of the text to the exclusion of others. Of course, it is likely that few scholarly editors actually subscribe to the view that explanation/interpretation is a fixed dichotomy. In practice, a range of different types of annotations serve different ends, and the scholarly editor will be aware that even the most benign and seemingly objective explanation involves a degree of interpretation. Nonetheless, in the production of scholarly editions, editors and publishers continue to work under the banner of ‘explanatory notes’, and in the absence of robust theorisation of annotation practice, individual editors are left to make decisions within this problematic and often vague framework. In this article, I aim to unsettle this explanation/interpretation framework, drawing on the Broadview edition of Dorothy Richardson’s *The Tunnel* as a case study to foreground the particular challenges of annotating a modernist text for a particular audience.¹ I reflect on a range of approaches for annotating a text such as Richardson’s *Pilgrimage* series, which is characterised by everydayness, defined in this case as a proliferation of historically-situated detail and impressionistic narrative technique. However, my intention is not to lay claim to a definitive rationale for what should be annotated and how. Each scholarly edition represents a singular transmission of the work,

a unique interplay between the text, its intended audience, its annotator, and its publication format. As such, devising a general rationale would be problematic. This does not, however, mean that an annotator cannot be rigorous or systematic. While this paper does not devise a prescriptive method for scholarly annotation, its aim instead is to refine our definitions of the purpose and nature of annotation, by putting its existing terms into conversation with contemporary modernist studies, particularly those recent approaches to modernism situated in the post-critical turn.²

While textual scholarship has a rich history of debate and theorisation around methods for producing a critical text as part of a scholarly edition, there is less reflection on theory and methods for annotation.³ The new editor, when approaching the task for the first time, might find they lack either a comprehensive set of guiding principles for annotation of a print-based scholarly edition, or even a systematic range of methods on which to draw in making decisions about apparatus beyond the widely used ‘note on the text’ and lists of variants. This elision in textual scholarship has implications for how we understand the job of a scholarly editor. While, as Martin C. Battestin claims, ‘the provinces of editor and annotator are different in kind’, we must acknowledge that the same person usually undertakes both roles, and both are integral to the broader argument each edition makes. In his 1981 ‘A Rationale of Literary Annotation’, Battestin lamented that, while scholarly editors have rigorous rationales and methods for producing the text itself, and ‘every editor, it appears, is confident he knows what a proper note should do’, the results vary substantially in scope, relevance, and purpose.⁴ Since Battestin’s rationale, only a handful of scholars have presented critical and theoretical reflections on scholarly annotation, and while some valuable insights emerge from their works, Matthias Bauer and Angelika Zirker’s recent work in the context of digital editing is the only systematic attempt to follow Battestin’s in developing a rationale for annotation that might work alongside our various and developing rationales for producing the text itself.⁵ While this existing scholarship remains a useful starting point, we must concede Battestin’s is somewhat out of step with scholarly editing practices and contemporary literary criticism, particularly in the privilege it ascribes to authorial intent. Bauer and Zirker’s focus on reader-oriented methods is instructive; however, their method is designed primarily for digital editorial practice, rather than print, and also still relies on a distinction between explanation and interpretation, which I will argue can be problematic.

Before I proceed, some background on the case study text may be useful. The Broadview editions of *The Tunnel*, the fourth chapter-volume of the thirteen-volume *Pilgrimage* series, and *Pointed Roofs*, the first chapter-volume, were published as standalone

editions in 2014 and were co-edited by me and Stephen Ross. My role on the project was to select and compile the contextual material featured in each volume's appendices and to annotate *The Tunnel*. My interest in the process of annotation emerges from my experience working on this edition; while I was new to the business of scholarly editing at that time, I have since had time to reflect on some of the assumptions that underpinned my practice. As such, while I draw on examples from the Broadview edition in this piece, I hold it as just one example among many of how the perceived purpose and scope of scholarly annotation in print is necessarily driven by both a constructed readership and the limitations of the printed page.

This edition, like any other, serves a particular purpose, which is first and foremost to provide a reliable teaching text for North American students. This audience was identified for two reasons. First, the full *Pilgrimage* series was out of print in North America when the Broadview edition went to press, making it difficult to teach the text in either undergraduate or postgraduate classes. The continued absence of Richardson's work on modernist syllabuses reinforced a narrative of modernist literature in which Richardson's influence on and contribution to modernism was significantly downplayed, and credit for techniques usually associated with the 'stream-of-consciousness novel' was still primarily given to more well-known authors, including James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. The appendices to the Broadview editions largely support a reading of *Pilgrimage* as the first 'stream-of-consciousness' text in English, and work to reinforce an argument for Richardson's centrality to modernism and modernist stylistic innovation. Second, due to differing copyright laws in North America as compared to the United Kingdom, the volume could only be printed in North America. While this placed an unfortunate limitation on the edition's reach, it nonetheless enabled us to focus our annotations on a presumed North American reader.

Annotation and Its Readers

Notes are generally used in the following circumstances: to translate words from a language different to the text, words no longer in common usage, dialect, slang and idioms; to identify intertextual references and allusions; to point out 'intratextual' references, such as recurring motifs from other segments of the work; and to explain the significance of objects, practices, people, places, and events from the past that may be 'obscure' to contemporary readers.⁶ Annotations may also explain the significance of such details as may be obscure due to perceived cultural or geographical difference. This is all done with the aim of making 'the

text more intelligible to the reader', in Battestin's words, and intelligibility is a term that emerges in several other works on annotation.⁷ In his preface to the first edition of *The Critique of Pure Reason*, Immanuel Kant equates intelligibility with 'clearness', identifying two modes: 'discursive or logical clearness, that is, on the basis of conceptions' and 'intuitive or aesthetic clearness [...] that is, by examples of other modes of illustration in concreto.'⁸ Most annotation appeals to the first kind of intelligibility, yet to render a text 'intelligible' in this way suggests a practice underpinned by a belief in linguistic stability. This does not sit well with post-structuralist approaches to literature and language, which would privilege the multiplicity of the text and the elusiveness of signification. Bauer and Zirker's preferred term to describe the purpose of annotation appears to be 'understanding', equally problematic in its implication of a fixed or determined outcome. Drawing on Roland Barthes and Umberto Eco, I would argue any rationale that seeks to foreground 'the place of the reader' must concede that 'comprehension of the original artifact is always modified by [the reader's] particular and individual perspective.'⁹

In contrast, I would suggest Paul Eggert's term 'legible' is more apt for contemporary editors. In 'Apparatus, Text, Interface: How to Read a Critical Edition', Eggert characterises notes as 'attendant lords' that 'may swell the royal progress of the text we are reading but they remain subservient to it. They are meant to make its old-fashioned or other-worldly decorum legible to us.'¹⁰ To invoke legibility, rather than intelligibility, is to insist on a reader-oriented practice and acknowledge an implicit pedagogical function, but to renounce control of the presumed outcome. Eggert's essay describes a note's ideal readers as coming into conversation with them then pursuing their own subsequent lines of inquiry, rather than passively accepting the significance of notes as presented. Of course, as Bauer and Zirker concede, the ideal reader is one who has been constructed by the annotator, and a reader-oriented note necessarily makes assumptions about the reader's knowledge and how the note might support their reading practice.¹¹ This being the case, it is inevitable that every note will not speak to every reader in the same way. As Eco made clear in *The Open Work*, 'the individual addressee is bound to supply his own existential credentials, the sense conditioning which is peculiarly his own, a defined culture, a set of tastes, personal inclinations, and prejudices.'¹²

Generally speaking, the preferred practice in scholarly editing is to provide explanatory notes, rather than interpretive notes. Yet, while the notion of explanation seems to pair nicely with the concepts of intelligibility and understanding, it sits less comfortably with the concept of legibility in its insistence on editorial authority and presumed objectivity.

Battestin's rationale maintains that, though the editor 'is responsible for supplying essential information, [they] should strive to avoid imposing on the reader [their] own interpretation of a passage. Their aim is to make criticism possible, not to perform it.'¹³ Yet, as Ian Small has pointed out, 'annotation will by its very nature validate some readings and attempt to disable others: such, after all, is one of its undeclared purposes.'¹⁴ Crafting the apparatus of a scholarly edition is always a subjective act, with even the most benign of explanatory notes implying interpretation and supporting an argument with their very presence. In this sense, in our very intervention on a text, we necessarily interpret.¹⁵ Nonetheless, the false dichotomy of explanation/interpretation persists in our practical approaches to annotation.

To insist on explanation in scholarly annotation is to foreground two players constructed in a pedagogical relation: an ideal reader, and an annotator as their ideal mediator and instructor. While a reader might interpret a text *for* themselves or others, to explain is to explain *to* others. This resonates with Rebecca Solnit's famous essay 'Men Explain Things to Me', which highlights the potential for explanation to be condescending rather than helpful.¹⁶ Condescension, in this context, is not just annoying in its provision of unnecessary information, it is also egregious in its capacity to close down other voices and conversations. Bauer and Zirker claim that one of the problematic practices in existing literary annotations is 'stating the obvious', not only providing information that readers may already know, but also information they can easily find for themselves.¹⁷ In scholarly editing circles, pedantry of this kind is widely understood as condescending, and to avoid it the annotator must exercise considerable judgement and restraint. This could be a particularly vexing problem in an age when searching online for potentially unknown terms, translations, historical references, and intertextual allusions is so close to hand for most readers. However, there may be instances where 'stating the obvious' aligns with interpreting a text *for* readers, rather than condescending to them.¹⁸

To explore this problem, let us turn to an example from the annotations of the Broadview edition of Dorothy Richardson's *The Tunnel*. Arguably one of the least controversial functions of annotation is to facilitate legibility through translation. In the case of *The Tunnel*, this meant translating not only French and German phrases, but also British terms, idioms, places and cultural practices that might be unfamiliar to a North American reader. For example, I chose to note that 'spanner' in the text means 'wrench' in North American English.¹⁹ Likewise, I deemed it necessary to explain that 'pudding' is the British term for what most North Americans would call 'dessert', not least because pudding in the North American context is just one specific type of dessert.²⁰ These might seem like trifling

details, a clear case of ‘stating the obvious’ or even condescension, but while these words could easily be looked up by readers themselves, I assumed some readers might pass them over without questioning due to their linguistic familiarity. As such, I deemed them useful in supporting a set of readers who would likely be coming at the text from the perspective of a different culture. Furthermore, while these are easily searchable terms, I also thought it practical to consider the perceived added value of a scholarly edition aimed at students. Rather than simply asking myself what readers might not know, I also asked myself what work readers may expect us to do on their behalf. In the case of the Broadview editions of *Pilgrimage*, for example, undergraduate students may purchase them with the expectation that the annotators will do some of the labour of reading for them. Similarly, but on a different scale, readers of George H. Thomson’s *Notes on Pilgrimage* likely have the skills and access to discover much of the stated information about the text on their own, but to facilitate further research, first turn to the edition to draw on the expertise and specialised knowledge of a fellow scholar who has already done so.²¹

Explanation, as this discussion suggests, implies that annotators read the text on behalf of other readers, which in turn implies interpretation. Uneasiness with interpretive notes, as mentioned, marks a desire to avoid literary criticism or overt opinion-making in annotation, to avoid imposing a particular perspective on readers that might further obscure the text. Susan Sontag’s polemic ‘Against Interpretation’ argues that to interpret a text is to suggest the text is not what it appears to be, but means something else. In contrast, she suggests ‘the aim of all commentary [...] should be to show *how it is what it is*, even *that it is what it is*, rather than to show what it *means*.’²² This resonates with Rita Felski’s more recent work *The Limits of Critique*, which I would argue provides a helpful framework for conceptualising the interventions of a scholarly annotator as supporting legibility, while avoiding the impositions of a single critical viewpoint. Felski cautions us to ‘avoid conflating suspicious interpretation with the whole of interpretation,’ highlighting that interpretation is not always critique, nor does it necessarily distort or deface a text in the manner Sontag describes.²³ Indeed, returning to Sontag’s essay with Felski’s point in mind, it seems clear Sontag was arguing against a particular form of critical interpretation with its concomitant attitude of suspicion toward the text, constructing it as a code requiring decryption. ‘We do not need to throw out interpretation,’ Felski argues, ‘but to revitalize and reimagine it.’²⁴ In her attempt to unsettle the predominance of critique as a mode of reading and scholarship, Felski reminds us of other approaches to texts: ‘Rather than looking behind the text – for its hidden causes, determining conditions, and noxious motives – we might place ourselves in

front of the text, reflecting on what it unfurls, calls forth, makes possible.’²⁵ Placing ourselves in front of the text involves, in Felski’s formulations, practices such as descriptive commentary (and others). While neither Sontag or Felski use the term explanation, their descriptive approach to texts resonates with the purposes of scholarly annotation, and may provide a framework for moving beyond explanation as a guiding term. We might instead orient ourselves toward description as a mode of interpretation that does not seek to impose a single critical stance on a reader, but to render the text legible.²⁶

Let me render this with another set of examples from the Broadview edition of *The Tunnel*. As aforementioned, it is widely accepted that annotation serves legibility by recovering details of the past. In annotating *The Tunnel*, I deemed it helpful to describe the nature and significance of some technologies no longer in use, including modes of transport (hansom, brougham, omnibus) or communication technologies from the period (talking tubes), as well as the relative novelty of technologies such as electric light and telephones in people’s homes.²⁷ Other types of historical details annotated include the relative severity of the flu in the early twentieth century as compared to the twenty-first, the resonances of eugenics, or even why London railings would be ‘sooty’, all of which represent specialised knowledge a reader might appreciate in making sense of the text and to facilitate further interpretation.²⁸ However, it is a well-established argument that notes aiming at historico-cultural contextualisation always involve interpretation, or even argumentation, because they work to reconstruct the past ‘bearing the hand of the present’, as Eggert puts it.²⁹ A further, perhaps more controversial, example of this in the Broadview edition is to have noted the significance of a woman seen smoking in public, or to explain that a woman Miriam passes in the street at night is likely a prostitute.³⁰ Highlighting these two details reconstructs the past from a contemporary feminist position, urging readers toward a feminist interpretation of the text and potentially overriding other readings of these scenes, which might foreground different details. However, I would equally argue the feminist orientation of some annotations reflects the feminist orientation of the text itself, presenting a case of descriptive commentary from ‘in front of the text’.³¹ As an annotator, drawing attention to the representations of women smoking, street-walking, and even bicycling, I have not produced a feminist interpretation of *The Tunnel* by plumbing its depths for implied or non-obvious meaning. Rather, this practice renders legible representations that live on the text’s surface, but may be obscured by the contemporary reader’s historico-cultural situation.

These examples demonstrate that annotations also betray the particular interests of the editor, who is ‘necessarily obtrusive in this role’ as annotator.³² Battestin was right to suggest

‘no two editors will annotate a text in the same way because each, according to his interests, competencies, and assumptions – according, indeed, to his temperament and sensibilities – will respond to the text in different ways.’³³ Another example of editorial idiosyncrasy in the Broadview edition comes in chapter two. Miriam is playing one of Felix Mendelssohn’s *Songs Without Words* on the piano, which she identifies as the ‘Duetto’; as she plays, ‘the chords made her think of Beethoven and play the last page carelessly,’ after which she ‘found the Beethoven and played the first movement of a sonata.’³⁴ Miriam does not name the sonata; instead, the text describes impressionistically how the music makes her feel:

It leapt about the piano breaking up her pose, using her body as the instrument of its gay wild shapeliness, spreading her arms inelegantly, swaying her, lifting her from the stool with the crash and vibration of its chords.... “Go on,” said Harriett when it came to an end. The Largo came with a single voice, deep and broad and quiet; the great truth behind the fuss of things.³⁵

In a note, I describe a largo as ‘a piece of music played at a very slow tempo’, but then proceed further to name the unnamed sonata: ‘That this [largo] comes after the end of the first movement, and builds into a “storm”, suggests that Miriam is playing Beethoven’s Sonata Opus 31’ as its ‘second movement begins with the same chord that ends Mendelssohn’s Duetto.’³⁶ To define a musical term is, presumably, to provide ‘uncontroversial and factual information.’³⁷ However, naming the sonata relies both on interpretation – that Miriam thinks of Beethoven in that moment because the chords were the same, rather than for some other reason – and on my own intimate (rather than academic) knowledge of the music. It happened that in the summer I began annotating *The Tunnel*, I had also been practicing playing Mendelssohn’s *Songs Without Words* and some of the Beethoven sonatas. In practice, this is why I seized on the detail of the unnamed sonata in the text, and happened to know the potential range of music well enough to identify the chords. This is an indicative moment of the ‘annotator as ideal reader’, as Ian Small puts it.³⁸ In retrospect, it could be argued this note embodies ‘enchantment’ or ‘rapture without embarrassment’ as another mode of reading, in Felski’s terms.³⁹ I will admit this was a pleasurable moment for me as an annotator, more overtly focused on my reading of the text than of my perception of another reader’s needs. While I considered restraint in this scenario, I chose instead to share that pleasure with other readers who may also wish to reconstruct the scene’s auditory context, and explore the parallels between Richardson’s evocative prose and the style, tempo and force of Beethoven’s sonata.

I am not convinced this annotation is problematic in itself, but generally speaking, the idiosyncratic focus of an edition in its entirety could be.⁴⁰ While the ‘distorting effects’ of ‘subjectivity in annotation’ may be minimized by further study and research, the editor’s particular vantage point will always stand, thus any attempt at objectivity ‘will be imperfect and incomplete.’⁴¹ However, there is another way of introducing multiple readings and perspectives, and the Broadview edition is an example of this: multiple annotators. While I wrote most of the annotations to *The Tunnel*, and Ross wrote most of those for *Pointed Roofs*, we swapped documents afterward to check each other’s work. As a result, *The Tunnel* edition reflects to an extent the varied expertise and interests of both editors. In addition to notes reflecting my personal interest in the text’s feminism, music, or even its representation of *ikebana*, some notes represent Ross’s expertise in representations of Empire and his deeper knowledge of many literary and theoretical works that serve as key intertexts for *The Tunnel*, perhaps most importantly the works of H.G. Wells.⁴² Furthermore, in later stages of the edition’s preparation, Ross consulted with other scholars, whose contributions are highlighted in the notes.⁴³ This collaborative practice, alongside multiple references to published works directly in the notes, makes clear the annotations to *The Tunnel*, while reflecting the sensibilities of its co-editors most prominently, also reflect multiple voices and readings. While acknowledging collaboration may not always be possible in practice, on reflection, I would advocate strongly for the value of this approach in providing richer more multi-vocal descriptive commentary.

Everydayness in the Modernist Text

The examples provided thus far highlight processes of selectivity, and in working with a text like *Pilgrimage*, annotators encounter another significant challenge in addition to subjectivity and interpretation. As Battestin claims, ‘the annotator’s task will vary, and quite appreciably, according to the nature of the work in question – that is, according to whether its allusive and topical texture is complicated and dense or comparatively simple and straightforward.’⁴⁴ In practical terms, one might easily take Battestin’s point, and existing annotations of highly allusive works such as James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, Ezra Pound’s *Cantos*, and the works of T.S. Eliot are testament to the delights of reading, describing, and interpreting a text through allusion, as well as the considerable labour involved in producing them. That said, there are multiple reasons to take issue with Battestin’s statement. Arguably, few literary texts from any period are simple or straightforward, and to equate density and complexity with allusion

is to privilege attention to just one form of literary technique, and consequently to privilege one model of interpretation.

Pilgrimage makes for an interesting case in this regard. From its initial publication, Katherine Mansfield famously criticised the radical subjectivity and excessive detail in *The Tunnel*, charging Richardson with ‘guard[ing] the secret’ of their significance.⁴⁵ In her subsequent review of *Interim*, the fifth chapter-volume of *Pilgrimage*, Mansfield suggested that ‘everything being of equal importance to [Miriam], it is impossible that everything should not be of equal unimportance.’⁴⁶ What Mansfield found so excessive in the text was not the density of literary or cultural allusion (although there is plenty), but the proliferation of mundane details and impressionistic narrative. Recent modernist scholarship has argued that both narratives of everyday life and discourses of everydayness are a dominant feature of much modernist literature. Increasingly, we are paying attention to what Henri Lefebvre called the ‘eruption of everyday life into literature’ in works by Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Gertrude Stein, and many others.⁴⁷ Lefebvre argues that, in *Ulysses*, ‘the quotidian steals the show’, words that could equally apply to *Pilgrimage*.⁴⁸ This body of literary criticism has some bearing on our task as editors and annotators of modernism. I would argue, and especially in the case of *Pilgrimage*, the challenge for annotators lies as much in the text’s dense everydayness as in its allusiveness.

The difficulty of annotating a dense or complex text for a print-based edition is often presented as an issue of space.⁴⁹ As Gabler argues, ‘the text may almost, or even entirely, be crowded out from the page. The mode of design thus becomes what Stephen Dedalus, in James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, satirises as: “Five lines of text and ten pages of notes about the folk and the fishgods of Dundrum”’, suggesting ‘a drowning of text and work and author in heavily positivist scholarship.’⁵⁰ This and similar reflections on scope insist on the ‘how much’ of annotation, and for practical limitations in writing for print, this is an important consideration. However, it can also detract from understanding scope in terms of content, coming back to questions around what we choose to annotate and how this impacts on our reading of an everyday text like *Pilgrimage*. The notion that an annotator needs to resolve the problem of how not to drown the text in its own excess carries obviously negative connotations for the text. However, there is another way to look at this: perhaps the annotator’s challenge, in some cases, is not to treat the text’s abundance or excesses as a problem to be resolved, but as a formal feature to render more legible.

To consider the pitfalls and possibilities for annotating everydayness, let me turn to Miriam’s long work day in *The Tunnel*. Chapter three of the book follows Miriam through

one day in her job as secretary in a dental office. This chapter is notorious for its level of detail, both objective and subjective, and the objective details are often quite specific to the practice, tools and materials of dentistry around the turn of the twentieth century, as well as the administrative workings of a busy office. Assuming readers would not recognize many of these tools and materials, I chose to briefly describe what each one was, and its use in dentistry at the time. In some cases, I thought this particularly important in mitigating potential confusion with contemporary uses of some materials, for instance, chloroform.⁵¹ These were practical choices, linked to the ‘recovery’ function of notes. However, the spectre of Mansfield’s critique hovers over this practice, asking whether explaining these details does, in fact, render the text more legible. There are, after all, many more mundane details that are not annotated. To provide just one example: I note that ‘silicate cement was used for fillings in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries’, yet did not annotate anything that occurs in the subsequent paragraph:

James disappeared. Miriam secured the little box and made off. On her table was a fresh pile of letters, annotated in Mr Orly’s clear stiff upright rounded characters. She went hurriedly through them. Extricating her blotter she sat down and examined the inkstand. Of course one of her pens had been used and flung down still wet with its nib resting against the handle of the other pens.... Mr Leyton ... his gold filling; she ought to go in and see if she could help ... perhaps he had finished by now. She wiped away the ink from the nib and the pen-handles.⁵²

Looking at this passage, I appear to have decided my ideal reader would find nothing all that unusual or illegible about it, although on reflection that may not be the case at all. I could have, for instance, written a note about the ‘blotter’, ‘inkstand’, ‘nib’, or even the ‘clear stiff upright rounded characters’ to describe past practices, materials, and norms in handwriting. Given Miriam’s job as a secretary, writing, annotation, and handling letters is central to her work-day activities, and finds a parallel in her own writing practice, which develops throughout the series. By focusing on the objects I have, one could argue that my annotations detract from other themes and objects, including the chapter’s impressionistic subjectivity, making it seem the text is more about dentistry than about Miriam’s experience of paid work, her thoughts and intersubjective relationships, and ultimately, the alternating busy-ness and boredom she encounters. In this sense, as an annotator, I must ask myself if by highlighting certain details, I have inadvertently rendered others less visible. This is an inevitable pitfall –

in the space of a print edition, we rarely can annotate every possible salient detail, lest the notes take over the text itself and exhaust the reader.

That said, my example speaks to the larger problem of which aspects of the text we value over others. Why do we agree it is generally uncontroversial to annotate literary intertextuality, allusion, and historical figures, yet we refrain from annotating rather more ordinary details of a text? There is a presumption that such details are not obscure – and in practice, as individual details, perhaps they rarely are. Yet what may remain obscure if we annotate in the conventional way is the text's form. Returning to 'Against Interpretation', Sontag places value on what she calls 'transparence', or 'the luminousness of the thing in itself, of things being what they are.'⁵³ To reveal a text is to render it legible, yet to achieve 'transparence', Sontag argues we must pay 'more attention to form' than content, as 'excessive stress on *content* provokes the arrogance of interpretation'.⁵⁴ Arguably, attending to the more ordinary details in a text like *Pilgrimage*, in addition to those we already annotate, could help to render the text's formal everydayness legible. Although Lefebvre urges us to not overlook the 'eruption of everyday life into literature,' he also suggests it might 'be more exact to say that readers were suddenly made aware of everyday life through the medium of literature or the written word.'⁵⁵ To annotate only the exceptional or extraordinary details of a text that brings everyday life to the surface thus arguably threatens to obscure its very everydayness.

Theory into Practice

While Battestin devised a set of principles we might work with for annotation, he simultaneously conceded 'there can be no single rationale of literary annotation that will prove universally practicable and appropriate.'⁵⁶ Each edition will have particular material conditions, and as such, annotation will always be 'the attempt of a particular editor to mediate between a particular text and a particular kind of reader'.⁵⁷ However, this does not mean the process of annotation need be without method or guiding principles. Following Eggert, one might argue that annotation is more concerned with the phenomenology of reading the text than with its provenance or authority. As such, a systematic approach to annotation should be grounded, first and foremost, in the theoretical-pedagogical approach most supportive for its particular audience. However, as I hope my examples have also shown, there is a case for a different understanding of annotation's purpose, as unsettling. 'Sometimes,' Eggert reflects, notes 'seem to have a will of their own, one that is apt to upset

our old, instinctive way of reading.’⁵⁸ Notes may, on occasion, urge a reader toward a further string of notes, references, explanations, or contexts, which may raise new questions for the reader, and while ‘no overtly literary-critical opinion or ready-made interpretation is offered’, the reader is tempted to ‘pause and follow up some of these references.’⁵⁹ In this scenario, ‘the note’s very effort at explanation, which we supposed was there to clarify and undergird a difficulty we had in reading the text, ends up working with equal strength in the opposite direction.’⁶⁰ This can perhaps shed further light on the notion of ‘legibility’ – the process by which the edition’s notes teach the reader ‘to think about what reading-the-work consists in and therefore about what that work is.’⁶¹ Implicit in Eggert’s formulation is that annotation is not so much about making the work intelligible, but laying bare the critical reading process. He continues to argue that the problem an editor/annotator must solve is how to effectively ‘infringe’ upon the readers’ ‘desire to read as we normally do – in a linear fashion, uninterrupted’ to enable them ‘to traverse those textual and contextual webs’ and ‘ask [their] own questions of the work.’⁶²

With a continued focus, then, on rendering a text legible for readers while opening up a range of potential interpretations beyond the individual edition, I suggest we might ground a new modernist editorial approach, by first de-centering our terms for scholarly annotation – for example, by substituting ‘descriptive commentary’ for ‘explanatory notes’. As I have argued, to approach annotation in terms of the explanation/interpretation dichotomy, privileging the former while passing over the inevitability of the latter, does not fully account for existing practices any more than it offers a clear rationale for working toward legibility. Of course, different notes serve different functions, but framing them as ‘descriptive commentary’ acknowledges that annotation is always interpretive, yet differentiated from styles of interpretation such as ideological critique, theoretical or ‘*decryptive*’ reading.⁶³ Similarly, in the case of texts characterised by everydayness, we might reframe our approaches to annotation – for example, by shifting from individual work to collaboration, and by reorienting our focus to account as much for the text’s everydayness as its exceptional details. Practices such as these, along with their theoretical underpinnings, might be made transparent in a ‘note on annotations’, akin to the ubiquitous ‘note on the text’, as a core feature of an edition. Exploring further resonances between post-critical theory and scholarly annotation may yield more possibilities. All of these are suggestions rather than prescriptions; however, if I were to prescribe one thing, it would be that as we editors pursue a new modernist editorial practice, we continue to collectively work toward more robustly theorised

and various approaches scholarly annotation, to complement developing theories and methods for production of the text itself.

Notes

¹ Dorothy Richardson, *The Tunnel*, ed. by Stephen Ross and Tara Thomson (Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2014).

² The post-critical turn marks the emergence of a body of theory aiming to decenter ideological critique and 'symptomatic reading' as dominant modes of literary criticism (Rita Felski, *The Limits of Critique* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2015), pp. 2-3). Gaining momentum just over a decade ago, with Sharon Marcus's *Between Women* (2007) and Rita Felski's *The Uses of Literature* (2008), post-critique draws on thinkers such as Bruno Latour and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick to theorise other 'regime[s] of interpretation', as described by Felski in *The Limits of Critique*, p. 189. While this article draws most heavily on Felski's approach, post-critique is variously interconnected with affect theory, actor-network theory, object-oriented ontology, and queer theory. While some theory associated with post-criticism has found its way into modernist studies – most prominently, affect theory, queer theory and 'weak theory' – some strands of post-critique are still treated with scepticism in the field. The September 2018 special issue of *Modernism/modernity* on 'Weak Theory, Weak Modernism' (25.3), edited by Paul K. Saint-Amour, reflects some of the ways modernist scholars have both adopted and challenged post-critical theory, and Saint-Amour's introduction usefully charts the varied influence of the post-critical turn on modernist studies.

³ There are two potential exceptions to this point: digital humanities research and some German-language scholarship. Surveying bibliographies of recent publications on annotation, it appears a number of German-language publications attend to annotation, suggesting more open dialogue on the topic between English-language scholars and scholars based in continental Europe would be welcome. Annotation is quite rigorously attended to in many publications pertaining to digital editions and digital knowledge production, though annotation in this context is usually focused on digital textual markup and the technical capabilities of digital annotation. Matthias Bauer and Angelika Zirker reflect on the absence of a theory of annotation for print editions, which poses a problem for digital editing, particularly in their article 'Whipping Boys Explained: Literary Annotation and Digital Humanities', in *Literary Studies in the Digital Age: An Evolving Anthology* (MLA Commons, 2015) <<https://dlsanthology.mla.hcommons.org/whipping-boys-explained-literary-annotation-and-digital-humanities/>>.

⁴ Martin C. Battestin, 'A Rationale of Literary Annotation: The Example of Fielding's Novels', *Studies in Bibliography*, 34 (1981), 1–22 (p. 2).

⁵ Those works on annotation that most inform my thinking include: Ian Small, 'The Editor as Annotator as Ideal Reader', in *The Theory and Practice of Text-Editing: Essays in Honour of James T. Boulton*, ed. by Ian Small and Marcus Walsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 186–209; Stephen A. Barney, *Annotation and Its Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Christa Jansohn, 'Annotation as Cultural Activity Or, Re-Constructing the Past for the Present', in *Problems of Editing*, ed. by Christa Jansohn, Beihefte Zu Editio, 14 (Tubingen: Niemeyer, 1999), pp. 211–23; Paul Eggert, 'The Hand of the Present', *Textual Cultures: Texts, Contexts, Interpretation*, 7.2 (2012), 3–19; Paul Eggert, 'Apparatus, Text, Interface: How to Read a Printed Critical Edition', in *The Cambridge Companion to Textual Scholarship*, ed. by Neil Fraistat and Julia Flanders (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 97–118; Matthias Bauer and Angelika Zirker, 'Explanatory Annotation of Literary Texts and the Reader: Seven Types of Problems', *International Journal of Humanities and Arts Computing*, 11.2 (2017), 212–32.

⁶ Eggert, 'The Hand of the Present'.

⁷ Battestin, p. 8.

⁸ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by J.M.D. Meiklejohn (Project Gutenberg) <<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/4280>>.

⁹ Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', in *Image, Music, Text*, ed. & trans. by Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), pp. 142–48 (p. 143); Umberto Eco, *The Open Work*, trans. by Anna Cancogni (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 3.

¹⁰ Eggert, 'Apparatus, Text, Interface: How to Read a Printed Critical Edition', p. 100.

¹¹ Bauer and Zirker, pp. 214–215.

¹² Eco, p. 3.

¹³ Battestin, p. 13.

¹⁴ Small, p. 109.

¹⁵ G.W. Bowersock similarly claims 'the very presence or absence of an item is, in itself, an expression of the author's judgment'. G.W. Bowersock, 'The Art of the Footnote', *The American Scholar*, 53.1 (1984), 54–62, p. 57. More recent scholarship continues to draw attention to the impossibility of annotator objectivity, including:

Jansohn, pp. 215–216; Hans Walter Gabler, ‘From Argument to Design: Editions in Books and Beyond the Book’, *Variants*, 7 (2008), 159–77 (pp. 1–2).

¹⁶ Rebecca Solnit, ‘Men Explain Things to Me’, in *Men Explain Things to Me and Other Essays* (London: Granta, 2014), pp. 1–18.

¹⁷ Bauer and Zirker, p. 215.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Richardson, p. 263.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 189.

²¹ George H. Thomson, *Notes on Pilgrimage: Dorothy Richardson Annotated* (Greensboro, NC: ELT Press, 1999).

²² Susan Sontag, ‘Against Interpretation’, in *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (London: Penguin, 2009), pp. 3–14 (p. 14).

²³ Felski, p. 10.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 12.

²⁶ In ‘Introduction: Weak Theory, Weak Modernism’, Saint-Amour also evokes a decryption/description opposition, drawing on discourses in post-critical theory by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus, although he does so to position ‘strong’ theory against ‘weak’ theory. In his words, decryption is ‘bent on decoding or unmasking a vast array of phenomena’, whereas description seeks ‘to know but not necessarily to know better than its object’, p. 444. This formulation is strikingly similar to Felski’s and Sontag’s formulations of interpretation, as described here, and provides further useful terms for reflecting on scholarly annotation.

²⁷ Richardson, pp. 194, 223, 74, 79, 203, 90.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 309, 310, 294.

²⁹ Eggert, ‘The Hand of the Present’.

³⁰ Richardson, pp. 62, 75.

³¹ Felski, p. 9.

³² Battestin, p. 4. Ian Small likewise concedes ‘there will always be areas [...] where annotation will reveal as much about the values and social experience of the annotator as it does about the work.’ Small, p. 99.

³³ Battestin, p. 7.

³⁴ Richardson, pp. 72–73.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 73.

³⁶ Richardson, p. 73.

³⁷ Amanda Gailey, ‘Cold War Legacies in Digital Editing’, *Textual Cultures: Texts, Contexts, Interpretation*, 7.1 (2012), 5–17 (p. 15).

³⁸ Small.

³⁹ Felski, p. 175.

⁴⁰ This is demonstrated brilliantly in Christa Jansohn’s analysis of the Cambridge Edition of the Works of D.H. Lawrence, in which she points out how the annotations assume an established interpretation of *Women in Love* as ‘Wagnerian’ to the detriment of other possible readings and with questionable historical evidence.

⁴¹ Battestin, p. 7.

⁴² Richardson, pp. 97, 163, 171, 256, 267, 287.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 67, 216.

⁴⁴ Battestin, p. 6.

⁴⁵ Katherine Mansfield, ‘Three Women Novelists (From Review of Dorothy Richardson’s *The Tunnel*)’, in *The Gender of Modernism: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by Bonnie Kime Scott (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990), p. 309 (p. 309). Bowersock, p. 55.

⁴⁶ Katherine Mansfield, ‘Dragonflies (From Review of Richardson’s *Interim*)’, in *The Gender of Modernism: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by Bonnie Kime Scott (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990), p. 310 (p. 310).

⁴⁷ Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, trans. by Sacha Rabinovitz (London: Continuum, 2002), p. 2. For reference on modernism and the everyday, the following key works in the area are an excellent starting point: Bryony Randall, *Modernism, Daily Time, and Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007); Bryony Randall, ‘“Telling the Day” in Beatrice Potter Webb and Dorothy Richardson: The Temporality of the Working Woman’, *Modernist Cultures*, 5.2 (2010), 243–66; Liesl Olson, *Modernism and the Ordinary* (Oxford University Press, 2009); Lorraine Sim, *Virginia Woolf: Patterns of Ordinary Experience* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010); Lorraine Sim, *Ordinary Matters: Modernist Women’s Literature and Photography* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2016).

⁴⁸ Lefebvre, p. 3.

⁴⁹ It speaks volumes that Don Gifford's annotations to *Ulysses* and George H. Thomson's *Notes on Pilgrimage* were published as standalone, companion volumes. Don Gifford, *Ulysses Annotated: Notes for James Joyce's Ulysses*, rev. ed. (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2008); Thomson.

⁵⁰ Gabler, p. 171; Michelle R. Warren similarly reflects on the stakes at play in excessive annotation, arguing that 'when the apparatus far exceeds the text, it signals a kind of interpretive exhaustion even before the reader reaches the text itself.' Michelle R. Warren, 'The Politics of Textual Scholarship', in *The Cambridge Companion to Textual Scholarship*, ed. by Neil Fraistat and Julia Flanders (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 119–34 (p. 125).

⁵¹ Richardson, p. 79.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁵³ Sontag, p. 13.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁵⁵ Lefebvre, p. 2.

⁵⁶ Battestin, p. 3.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁵⁸ Eggert, 'Apparatus, Text, Interface', p. 100.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁶³ Saint-Amour, p. 444.