

# Taking Note

## Twentieth-Century Literary Annotation and the Crisis of Reading

by

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Contents

Abstract	3
Introduction	4
Chapter One	62
Chapter Two	145
Chapter Three	231
Conclusion	302
Works Cited	305

## Abstract

The aim of this project is to provide a detailed reconsideration of the role that literary annotation plays in twentieth-century literature. The need for such a reconsideration stems from the fact that despite some of the last century's most enduring and significant works using either endnotes or footnotes, there has been very little scholarship written about it. Thus, T.S. Eliot's use of endnotes in *The Waste Land* or David Jones's footnotes to *The Anathemata* or David Foster Wallace's use of annotation in *Infinite Jest* have all been largely overlooked. This dissertation is an attempt to redress what I take to be a regrettable gap in twentieth-century literary studies. In order to do this, I examine how my chosen writers register through the figure of the note wider debates around notions of information overload, the necessity of the reader expending effort, and the cultivation of desired epistemic and interpretative strategies. Thus, I elevate the note to a point where it is far more culturally, critically, and artistically compelling than has previously been acknowledged. In other words, I aim to demonstrate that certain key works of literature within the twentieth century could not have realised their respective projects without the structural technique of annotation. Moving as it does from one end of the century to the other, the dissertation also traces the inheritance of an annotative template as a textual mechanism for indexing and responding to a crisis of reading borne out of the shifting literary landscape of the twentieth century. The figure of the note is as such central to the wider literary aims of my chosen texts and to disregard it, as has so often been the case, is therefore to misunderstand the text to which they have been attached.

## Introduction

Bald heads forgetful of their sins,  
 Old, learned, respectable bald heads  
 Edit and annotate the lines  
 That young men, tossing on their beds,  
 Rhymed out in love's despair  
 To flatter beauty's ignorant ear.

W.B. Yeats, 'The Scholars' (1919)

In these opening lines to his short poem 'The Scholars' Yeats presents the familiar understanding of a note. It is the tool of a pedant: the critic, bald headed and respectable, attaches his dusty annotations to that which is 'rhymed out in love's despair' (158). The note is bibliographic and ancillary, even parasitic, to the poem itself. The poem continues with these lines: 'All shuffle there; all cough ink; / All wear the carpet with their shoes; / All think what other people think' (158). Yeats is developing here the same distinction between the scholar and the poet that he established in the opening lines: in addition to being 'old' and bald headed the scholar also shuffles his feet, coughs ink, and does not appear to be capable of an original thought. Whilst the poet tosses on his bed in the throes of passion the scholar wears down the carpet in rumination. The note, Yeats seems to suggest, is the scholar's Trojan horse: it is a way for him to infiltrate a world to which he does not belong. Thus, annotation, like the scholar, is an interloper: it exists where it does not belong and survives not by virtue of its beauty, but because of its unique ability to *cling* to the bottom of a page. This sentiment is further typified by the French writer Alain who once declared that 'a note is the mediocre attached to the beautiful' (qtd. in Genette 319). However, what of the notes not

written by the scholar, but by the poet? What of the notes that are every bit as poetic as those lines that are ‘rhymed out in love’s despair’?

In a 1923 review of T.S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* (1922) published in *The New Statesman*, F.L. Lucas complains that ‘Mr Eliot’s notes [do not] succeed in explaining anything’ (116). Lucas, understandably, questions the point of ‘giving a quotation from Ovid which begins in the middle of a sentence, without either subject or verb, and fails to add even a reference’ (117). Lucas’s reaction comes from his misunderstanding of the role of a poetic note: Lucas expects Eliot’s notes to perform a bibliographic function even though, as he concedes, they do no such thing. It is because of this expectation for scholarly rigor and bibliographic accuracy that Lucas is able to conclude that since ‘Miss Weston is clearly a theosophist’ (118) so too ‘Mr Eliot’s poem might be a theosophical tract’ (118). Here, Lucas equates the note’s content to that of the poem and in so doing he is labouring under the false assumption that the latter is there to bibliographically substantiate the former. What Lucas is doing here is erroneously transplanting onto poetic annotation the rules of scholarly annotation, believing the two are one and the same. He develops this distinction further by admonishing ‘the way in which modern writers of real creative power abandon themselves to the illusion that they have philosophical gifts and a weighty message to deliver’ (118). It is inconceivable, Lucas argues, for the note to be considered anything other than discursive and scholarly. The note represents not the continuation of ‘creative power’, but its abandonment. However, what Lucas fails to appreciate is that Eliot’s notes are an entirely different breed of annotation wherein the note is just as much a creative enterprise as the verse to which it is attached. It is with these literary notes, written as part of a novel or poem, that this study is concerned.<sup>1</sup> When confronted with either a footnote or an endnote in a poem or novel it is all

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<sup>1</sup> The definition of the note that I adopt throughout this dissertation is as follows: it refers to the inclusion of either a footnote or endnote in a novel or poem, the note being written by the author as an original component of that text and not added at a later stage by an editor. Thus, the notes that hold my interest are those specific to a literary text. The notable exception is my analysis of Charles Olson’s relationship with his annotator George

too tempting to approach that note in the same manner that one might approach a note in a monograph or an article. As we see in the example from Lucas, his familiarity with the scholarly note becomes detrimental to his ability to escape the presumption that a note can be anything but bibliographic. Just as with the speaker of ‘The Scholars’ critics have persistently overlooked the creative and poetic potential of the note. It is to this potential that I draw attention.

Thus, this dissertation is borne out of a grievance: there is not a single book-length study of twentieth-century literary annotation.<sup>2</sup> This is a woeful underrepresentation of a technique that is, as this dissertation will demonstrate, of vital significance to twentieth-century literature both in terms of the specific texts to which they are attached and to the wider cultural moment. It is also despite the fact that between 1900 and the present day there

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Butterick. However, as will become clear, I argue that this relationship is much more akin to a poetic collaboration than the scholarly relationship evoked in Yeats’s poem. The most detailed taxonomic study of the note can be found in Gerard Genette’s *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (1997). In order to further pinpoint my area of study it will be useful here to include Genette’s definition of the note in full: ‘A note is a statement of variable length (one word is enough) connected to a more or less definite segment of text and either placed opposite or keyed into this segment. The always partial character of the text being referred to, and there the always local character of the statement conveyed in the note, seems to me the most distinctive formal feature of this paratextual element’ (319). Genette further divides the note into seven types and whilst it is not necessary to list all seven the kind of literary notes I examine fall under the following categories (322 – 323). First, assumptive authorial notes, which are notes written by the author of the text as is the case with Eliot, Moore and Jones. Second, authentic allographic notes, which are written by an editor or translator as is also the case with Olson and Butterick. Third, fictive allographic notes, which are notes written by a fictional editor or translator as is the case with Nabokov. Another term that I use throughout this dissertation in order to denote the act of providing notes or the note itself is annotation. For the purposes of this dissertation, the two will be used more or less interchangeably: they both refer to the inclusion of a segment of text that is appended to another, often but not always larger, segment of text. However, I do want to distinguish between intertextuality more generally and annotation. Whilst the majority of literary notes are intertextual or allusive in nature, not all intertextual gestures need to be notational. Ultimately, the decision to use the note as part of a particular fictional construct is a significant formal gesture that some writers adopt and others do not. I am interested in why certain writers in the twentieth century opted for the figure of the note and why it was deemed to be conducive to their specific project.

<sup>2</sup> As far as I am aware, there are only four full-length studies of the note at present. The first, and most famous, is Anthony Grafton’s 1997 *The Footnote: A Curious History* in which he examines the use of historical footnotes by writers such as Pierre Bayle, Edward Gibbon, and Leopold van Ranke. The second is Chuck Zerby’s *The Devil’s Details*, which is a journalistic history of the note from its beginnings alongside the inception of the printed book to its most recent iteration in the form of hypertext. The third is a collection of essays edited by Stephen Barney and titled *Annotation and its Texts*. The essays included in this collection vary from an analysis of medieval glosses to a short essay by Jacques Derrida which examines the distinction between a written and spoken footnote. The fourth and final full-length study of annotation and the only one specifically concerned with fictional annotation is Edward Maloney’s 2005 unpublished PhD dissertation *Footnotes in Fiction: A Rhetorical Approach*. As one might glean from the title Maloney’s analysis differs to mine in that his area of interest is much more in-line with Genette’s: a taxonomic analysis of fictional notes as opposed to a consideration of their wider literary significance.

have been published at least 350 novels or volumes of poetry that use either footnotes or endnotes. It is also despite the fact that included in this list of 350 texts are authors such as: T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, W.B. Yeats, Marianne Moore, Virginia Woolf, Ernest Hemingway, James Joyce, David Jones, Samuel Beckett, Jorge Luis Borges, Charles Reznikoff, Jack Spicer, John Berryman, Robert Duncan, Charles Olson, Ed Dorn, Vladimir Nabokov, John Fowles, John Barth, Paul Auster, David Foster Wallace, and Mark Z. Danielewski. The note is a substantial literary technique used by some of the twentieth century's most influential writers and yet it has received next to no critical attention. In the chapters that follow, I seek to fill this gap in twentieth-century literary studies. As such, I see this dissertation as a series of interventions into not only twentieth-century literary studies more generally, but also into the scholarship surrounding the six specific writers that I examine.

Beginning, then, with T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and moving through Marianne Moore's *Observations*, David Jones's *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata*, Charles Olson's *The Maximus Poems*, Vladimir Nabokov's *Pale Fire*, and finally arriving at David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest*, I will demonstrate that in each case the figure of the note is not peripheral to the debates that each of these writers enters into, but rather absolutely central. This being said, it is also important to stress at the outset that by no means do I wish to suggest that the literary note is *unique* to the twentieth century. From Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* to Alexander Pope's *The Dunciad* and Lawrence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* to S.T. Coleridge's 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' and Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*, the literary note has a rich and varied history prior to the twentieth century. However, given that scholarly analysis of literary annotation is noticeably lacking and also given the naturally restrictive rubric of the current project it is inevitable that many note takers would remain untouched. The decision to focus my attention on a specific tranche of twentieth-century literature does, therefore, mean that discussion of annotative texts prior to this still

ambitious timeframe will be far beyond the scope of the present dissertation. It is my hope, though, that my research will help to reconfigure how the note is perceived within literary studies and as such similarly detailed examinations of, say, Melville or Pope perhaps may follow. All of this said, it is worth clarifying that equally the choice to focus my attention on the twentieth century is not somehow incidental. Whilst there are significant literary note takers prior to the twentieth century, this dissertation will seek to come to terms with the unprecedented concentration of annotators in the last century and will argue the technique gained special prominence because of various cultural and literary upheavals, with writers turning to the note in order to negotiate and index these shifts.

In order to demonstrate that the note is a central structural and aesthetic technique in the period in question, and moving as it does from one end of the century to the other, this dissertation takes the form of an historical taxonomy looking at the varied types and functions of the literary note as it is used in each of my six chosen writers. By constructing such a taxonomy and pressing upon the formative connections between and across the texts I examine, as well as the wider cultural matrix within which they exist, I work towards demonstrating the following claim: the work of twentieth-century literature discussed throughout this dissertation, important as they are, could not function without recourse to the figure of the note. It is the case that many of the most sophisticated and artistically ambitious literary texts of the past century, a small selection of which are discussed here, depend upon annotation as a necessary articulation of their specific project. With this in mind, it becomes apparent that the note is diagnostic of the cultural moment within which each text is working since it becomes a highly effective way for a writer to consider his or her relationship to the reader, his or her own text, and other texts. In order to demonstrate the validity of my claim, the methodology that I adopt throughout my project, whilst not overly reliant on a theoretical framework, is one of exemplification. I proceed by citing and interrogating specific examples



both from my chosen literary texts and also from the scholarship that surrounds them and from these examples I construct an argument predicated on an aggregate of carefully chosen and precisely sequenced close readings. In some ways, then, my discussion of annotation comes to resemble, through its methodological structure and strategy of accumulated examinations of key critical and literary moments, the character of annotation itself. What is at stake here is a detailed reevaluation of the literary note and its place in the twentieth century.

In the course of reconsidering the role that literary annotation plays it will be necessary to pinpoint and labour over moments where critics have disparaged or otherwise trivialized the note and to replace this with an appreciation of the note, which in fact enriches our understanding of key texts and their relationship to one another. To give a sense of this neglect at the outset one might begin by pointing to Eliot's own dismissal of his notes in 1956 as 'a remarkable exposition of bogus scholarship' ('Frontiers' 109) and the subsequent acceptance of this position by critics such as Hugh Kenner and Lawrence Rainey. One could also turn to contemporary reviews of *The Waste Land*, such as Edgell Rickword's 1923 review in which he proclaims that the notes 'will be of more interest to the pedantic than the poetic critic' and that whilst they 'certainly warn us to be prepared to recognise some references to vegetarian ceremonies' Eliot's notes are 'of no poetic value' (110) in themselves.<sup>3</sup> In an effort to live up to Rickword's accusation that the notes only interest the pedantic critic, one might also point out that despite Eliot's use of endnotes scholars persistently and erroneously label them footnotes.<sup>4</sup> Then, turning to the poetry of Marianne Moore, one might cite Victoria Bazin's 2010 study *Marianne Moore and the Cultures of Modernity*. In the one paragraph that Bazin is attentive to Moore's notes she first of all, like

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<sup>3</sup> Given that Rickword's essay was recently reprinted in the *TLS*'s 'Then and Now' series it appears that views such as these are still used to frame how contemporary readers approach the poem's notes.

<sup>4</sup> See Harold Bloom's *T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land* (73); James Miller's *T.S. Eliot's Personal Waste Land* (76); Peter Middleton's 'The Development of *The Waste Land*' (175); Lowell Edmund's *Intertextuality and the Reading of Roman Poetry* (21). There are, however, many other examples.

Eliot's critics, mistakenly labels them as footnotes and then reasons that their inclusion in Moore's later works 'makes relatively little difference as her sources are not meant to be identified' (106). This obvious lack of interest is seen throughout Moore scholarship, most notably in the recent tendency to analyse her poetry in terms of montage in which, to quote Susan McCabe, Moore's 'words, then, are handled bodily [and] stripped of their referents' (*Cinematic Modernism* 197). This line of thinking comes directly from William Carlos Williams, who describes Moore as 'wiping soiled words or cutting them clean out [...] taking them from greasy contexts' (541). This, of course, ignores the very specific contexts that Moore supplies in her notes. One could also point to scholars of David Jones, such as Tom Goldpauh, who describe his poetry as labyrinthine and allusive, despite the hundreds of notes that are attached to his verse and which provide a very specific path through the text.<sup>5</sup>

These critics and the many like them are part of a narrative within twentieth-century criticism that perpetuates the idea that the footnote and endnote are not worthy of sustained study and this is a position, summed up also in the epigraph, which is as entrenched now as it was eighty years ago. In the three chapters that follow, I chart an appreciation of the art of the note whilst all the time attempting to demonstrate that it is an integral aspect of twentieth-century literature that has been systematically overlooked. This will be accomplished through a series of close readings of my six chosen authors in which I argue that the note is an index of and a response to what I describe as a crisis of reading. The twentieth century has witnessed an unprecedented explosion of textual matter made possible by technological advancements such as the Monotype and Linotype printing machines of the 1880s to the advent of the internet in the 1980s. Consider, for instance, the following. In 1800 the library of the British museum held 48 000 volumes with this rising to 250 000 in 1833. However, as of 2015 the library now holds over fourteen million books (Battles 9). These include the 184

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<sup>5</sup> For the discussion of Eliot's now famous description of his notes as 'bogus scholarship' and the subsequent critical appropriation of this sentiment see the beginning of the subsequent chapter.

000 new or revised titles that were published in 2011 in the United Kingdom, which is compared to a total of 8468 new books published in the United Kingdom in 1910 (Naughton 17). This rapid expansion was made possible through the introduction of new printing technologies. Invented by Ottmar Mergenthaler in 1884 and remaining the industry standard in newspaper publishing until the 1970s the Linotype printing press could print between 5000 and 7000 characters per hour. However, this seems sluggish when compared to the latest industrial printers that can often print up to 180 pages per minute. Furthermore, ‘as of February 2006’, Alex Wright explains, ‘there were more than 20 billion web pages residing on more than 28 million web sites around the world’ (225). Finally, at the time of writing this dissertation entering the term ‘internet’ into Google returns approximately 4 340 000 000 results in 0.45 seconds. With these inventions the literary and cultural landscape has altered irrevocably giving particular prominence to what is labelled ‘information overload’. This refers to a sense of distress or anxiety that incumbent mechanisms for filing, storing and retrieving information are no longer viable. At its most mundane level, then, my understanding of the literary note is as a footprint of the cultural impact of this crisis on twentieth-century literature and the multiple ways in which overload is negotiated and registered by various writers.<sup>6</sup>

Throughout the dissertation, I will call upon the concept of information overload by arguing that it serves as a material and technological basis for the wider questions and debates that arise out of a study of literary annotation. What this means is that the radical upheaval created by the phenomenon of overload is an explanation for the occurrence of the

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<sup>6</sup> Coined by Alvin Toffler in his 1973 book *Future Shock* the topic of information overload has seen a particular vogue in the last few years. See, for instance, Alex Wright’s *Glut: Mastering Information Through the Ages* (2007); Daniel Levitin’s *The Organized Mind: Thinking Straight in the Age of Information Overload* (2015). These two particular studies typify the two most frequent approaches to overload. In Wright’s text there is advanced a history of overload: how overload came to be and how the present iteration differs to previous moments of overload. Levitin, however, is far more concerned with what might be done about it now. What are the strategies that might be implemented in order to navigate a saturated textual environment? In this dissertation I aim to straddle both of these analytical strands: in my attempt to provide an historical taxonomy of the note I both follow Wright’s desire to trace the origin of overload and, though my focus on the note itself, Levitin’s motivation to understand *how* to confront it.

note, and specifically for the cultural and epistemic shifts that, as I will demonstrate, have been registered and articulated through it. This being said, it is essential to recognise at the outset that the debate I am entering into is a confused one and what I describe as a crisis of reading is used to mark often disparate and even opposite reactions to the sense of anxiety brought about by overload. Eliot's reaction to overload is quite different to Marianne Moore's whose is different again to David Jones's, and in each case the note is employed in very different ways. Thus, I use the figure of the note both to understand specific reactions to overload in certain texts and also to trace paradigmatic shifts that occur between and across different generations of writers. My study of the note aims to be at once both diachronic and synchronic: it is concerned with the specific text at hand in addition to that text's historical relationship to other literary note takers.

The note, then, opens up a discussion of Eliot's *The Waste Land* and also allows for an analysis that places Eliot alongside Nabokov or David Foster Wallace. That such a wide ranging analysis is made possible is one of the contributions this dissertation makes to twentieth-century literary studies. At the beginning of Chapter Three I examine the following quotation from Vladimir Nabokov regarding taxonomic analysis: 'It should attempt to express structural affinities and divergences, suggest certain phylogenetic lines, relate local developments to global ones – and help lumpers to sort out properly the ingredients of their lumps' (*Strong Opinions* 321). Nabokov's sentiment has been a guiding principle of this dissertation and its approach to examining literary annotation. By juxtaposing writers as seemingly disparate as Jones and Wallace or Moore and Olson under the banner of note takers I too seek to explore the points at which the writers intersect and diverge, to trace phylogenetic lines, and to relate specific texts to wider concerns, whilst all the time celebrating what I take to be the enduring poetic merit of literary notes.

It is also important to point out that anxieties around overload do not necessarily manifest themselves only in regards to an influx of printed matter. Rather, coalescing around the notion of overload is a series of anxieties about the act of reading itself. In other words, overload forced writers at the beginning of the twentieth century to reconsider what exactly the cultural and social role of the literary text was. In what is perceived to be a saturated cultural marketplace the question becomes what reading practices are best suited to dealing with the new cultural moment and how might one inculcate those practices into a reader? In other words, should the text take on a pedagogical role so that it might educate its readership as to what and how to read? If the answer is yes then should the text say so explicitly through a preface or accompanying essay, or should it make the reader work by encoding its instructions into the oblique structure of a poem? It is clear to see how what started as an anxiety about information overload is transformed into a deeper discussion as to what the relationship is between a text, its author, and a reader. It is through the figure of the note that these debates are indexed and worked through. Thus, to investigate the role of literary annotation is to address these questions and through them, even if not always explicitly, to address the material condition of information overload. The introduction will proceed by first of all further examining information overload and then investigating the literary and annotative responses to it in the twentieth century. I will do this whilst trying to pinpoint the specific questions that arise out of overload as it is often these questions, and not always the topic of overload itself, that writers engage with and register through the figure of the note.

### **Information Overload: The Material Conditions of Literary Annotation**

At this juncture, then, it will be useful to pause and consider specific reactions to information overload across the twentieth century before further investigating the role that annotation

plays in indexing and responding to this crisis. Looking back on the first few years of the twentieth century George Soule, writing in the September 1914 issue of *The Little Review*, warns his readers: ‘The crisis is here; for that we must be grateful to the films and the cheap magazines’ (40). Soule continues in the next issue: ‘The bookshops are being overrun with mediocre novels’ (38) and ‘clergymen, editors, and all other forces of decency are powerless to stop the flood’ (38). Four years later, in the January 17 issue of A.R. Orage’s magazine *The New Age*, A-G-ST-NE B-RR-LL would condemn the ‘plague of books’, which, he claims, ‘is worse than a plague of locusts’ and whose ‘very din’ means that ‘even the library, the home of learning itself, is no longer sacrosanct’ (232). What B-RR-LL feels threatened by is the same flood of ‘cheap magazines’ that Soule worried over. B-RR-LL’s review is interesting for another quite coincidental reason: it is published in the same issue in which Ezra Pound concludes his series of essays ‘Studies in Contemporary Mentality’, which ran from 16 August 1917 to 10 January 1918.<sup>7</sup> The format of the series was to dedicate each essay to a particular weekly or daily, such as *The Hibbert* or *Blackwood’s*, in order to investigate what was being written in a given issue. Pound’s stated aim was to chart what, in the fifteenth essay, he described as ‘those dreary and smeary penny weeklies’ that ‘seem innumerable’ and ‘stretch about the inquirer as the dismal grey-yellow brick of dingy houses one sees in S.E. London coming in on the Dover train’ (129). He continues: ‘The statistician will explain to you that the multitude of these papers is not infinite; but for the purposes of psychology they are infinite, and the mentality they feed is unknowable’ (129).

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<sup>7</sup> In addition to being the editor of *The New Age* Orage was also the editor of *The New English Weekly* where, sixteen years after ‘Studies in Contemporary Mentality’, Pound’s encounter with Bridson would be published, which will be discussed later. For a fuller discussion of *The New Age* see Robert Scholes’s *Paradox of Modernism*. It is also worth pointing out here that the version of Pound thus far evoked is by no means the only version of Pound that exists. Whilst it is the one that most associate with him – the vitriolic and caustic puppeteer of modernism – his work has many shades. A fascinating essay in this regard is Ardis’s ‘The Dialogics of Modernism’ in which she traces Pound’s early involvement with *The New Age* and paints a picture of Pound far more akin to Bridson: conciliatory, engaging and helpful. This said, Ardis does emphasise that in later years Pound discarded this persona for the one seen in ‘Contemporary Mentality’.

So important was the issue of information overload to Pound that twenty-four years later, in his 1942 essay 'A Visiting Card', he would return to these very same texts. In this essay Pound castigates the 'intellectual filth' that pervades the printed page and 'poisons the reader' along with being 'toxic to a whole race' (*Selected* 331 – 332). He concludes, as with Soule and B-RR-LL, that what a 'nation chooses (or lets be chosen) for the distribution of books and printed matter are of importance' and as such it is imperative that we 'import every year say twenty, perhaps even fifty, books that are not crap and filth' (*Selected* 332). In order to then convey his utter indignation at the state of affairs, Pound bemoans the fact that he 'made an analysis in eighteen numbers of the *New Age*, but no publisher has wanted to reprint the series' and that it is because of this that 'a whole system is collapsing, and for want of having paid attention of the symptoms of its own defilement' (*Selected* 331 – 332). Pound is here referring to the same series of essay previously discussed. Two years later he would make a similar point in the essay 'Gold and Work':

They say that it is impossible to eliminate idiotic books, but that it is easy to distribute the antidote, and they do this by means of a very simple system. Every bookseller is obliged to stock the best books; some of outstanding merit must be displayed in his window for a certain number of months each year. As they become familiar with the best books, the disgusting messes served up periodically by *The Times* or the *Nouvelle Revue Française* gradually disappear from the drawing rooms of the more empty-headed young ladies – of both sexes (*Selected* 337).

Pound's outpouring of vitriol and overt homophobia reiterates one of the central concepts of information overload and this dissertation also: that of cultural policing. In each of these examples there is immediately noticeable a distinction between what is flooding the market and what is being drowned out. The anxiety that stems from overload always operates from a position of bias: what are perceived to be the 'wrong' texts outweigh and engulf what are

perceived to be the 'right' texts. The problem is not the bookshops, but rather that they are 'being overrun with mediocre novels' (Soule 38) and whilst the library might be 'the home of learning itself' it is compromised when besieged by a 'plague of books' which do not belong there (B-RR-LL 232). Thus, Pound uses the language of contagion in order to denigrate certain texts as 'filth', 'poison' and 'toxic' whilst he positions himself as able to 'distribute the antidote'. This rhetoric is made all the more insidious given the publication date of Pound's two essays: 1942 and 1944. When he speaks of 'intellectual filth' being 'toxic to an entire race' and extends the discussion of overload to the scale of national importance it is, sadly, all too obvious what the geo-political inflections of such statements are. Pound's discourses on culture and its perceived 'defilement' and his overtly coercive responses, in the form of his 'very simple system', intersect directly at the level of rhetoric with his various anti-Semitic pronouncements.

Thus, the label 'overload' does not describe a quantifiable point at which the proliferation of textual matter becomes too great, but rather a subjective and local sense of anxiety that is aligned to various political, social, and cultural markers. The publishers and authors of the penny weeklies and 'cheap magazines' would, for instance, presumably not share Pound's indignation. An acknowledgement of this fact introduces one of the central considerations when examining overload: a solution is always implied and sought after. If overload is subject to variation and is not projected onto society independent of other factors, then the possibility of its impact being reversed or negated through a manipulation of *what* is disseminated must exist. B-RR-LL raises exactly this point when he writes: 'Our consolation in this grievous affliction is that it cannot last forever. There may likely be, indeed there must be, a lull; a sudden turn in the tide; a momentary weakening of the opposing forces' (232). The question that must be asked then is *how* one might go about weakening the opposing forces. How might one promote the kinds of material that you want at the expense of material



that you do not want to see? In the first two chapters of this dissertation I look at Eliot, Moore, Jones, and Olson with this in mind and argue that the note is chosen as the mechanism best suited to mobilizing this wider literary and social change. In its structural capacity to point deictically to texts beyond itself the note permits such an injunction to read specific and elected materials.

The wider anxiety of overload describing the influx of unwanted texts at the expense of ones that are desired is further played out in a short essay written by Amy Lowell in the May 1915 issue of *The Little Review*. Lowell begins by describing a high-street bookstore:

One of those large and flourishing establishments where every sort of book is sold that you do not want to read [...] a whole counter labours to support the newest and dullest novels, and another is covered with monographs which instruct you minutely as to how to grow fruit-trees, catch salmon, handle golf clubs, or bicycle through the home counties (19).

It was in one of these stores, Lowell admits, that she ‘broke into open revolt and started off to The Poetry Bookshop’ (19).<sup>8</sup> What is interesting is the similarity of how she describes the bookshop with the high-street one. Upon entering Lowell notes: ‘The walls were lined with shelves, and under the window was a little ledge entirely filled with reviews from all over the world’ (20). She goes on:

I turned to the shelves and my surprise was even greater. There were a lot of shelves, all round the room and even more over the chimney-breast [...] There were French books, too, and Italian. It goes without saying that the book I wanted was there. I know I bought it, and others, and came out laden and happy (20).

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<sup>8</sup> The Poetry Bookshop operated from 1913 to 1926 and was owned by Harold Monro. The Bookshop also doubled as a publishing house and was instrumental in publishing Pound’s imagist anthology *Des Imagistes*. See Joy Grant’s 1967 *Harold Monro and the Poetry Bookshop* for a fuller discussion of its conception and role in modernism.

The salient point, here, is that it is not the quantity of books that is the issue but rather *which* books exist in large quantities. When she visits the high-street bookstore the shelves ‘labour to support the newest and dullest efforts’ almost as if doing so is an inconvenience. Yet, when she leaves the bookshop that happens to sell the texts she does want to see Lowell is ‘laden and happy’. Both stores are equally overloaded with material with the only difference being the consumer through whom the event is focalized.

Coming at the mid-point of the century, Charles Olson registers the tenor of this anxiety in these lines from *The Maximus Poems*: ‘o my people, where shall you find it, how, where, where shall you listen / when all is become billboards, when, all, even silence, is spray-gunned?’ (*Maximus* 6). Captured in this almost panicked flurry of interrogatives is a sense of helplessness that Olson articulates and it is borne out of not knowing how to respond to the proliferation of textual matter that Olson finds himself surrounded by. What Olson is attempting to locate is a mechanism, the ‘it’ of the line, for handling this mass of information: he is involved in probing and creating a circumstance in which the necessity of an active citizenry who are capable of response, what he calls a *polis*, might be implemented. Thus, Olson’s disquiet is juxtaposed with the public mode of address, represented by ‘o my people’, which the speaker adopts. He may feel overwhelmed, but the poet also accepts a position of responsibility: he will be the one, the lines seem to suggest, to lead his readers, to discover what ‘it’ is and where and how it might be pinpointed. Using Olson’s questions as a prompt, what I will demonstrate throughout the course of this dissertation is that annotation is the structural and textual mechanism through which ‘it’ can be substantiated. In other words, annotation as handled by writers such as Eliot, Jones, and Nabokov provides a space in which the ‘how’ and ‘where’ of Olson’s inquiry can be debated and through which the nature of the mechanism or textual habitat that he seeks can be pressed upon. Each of the six writers that I examine is conversant with and borne out of a cultural moment where the accumulation of

information is continually increasing. As I will demonstrate, each of them leans on the figure of the note as a way to not only consider their position in a rapidly changing landscape, but also as a waypoint around which they can attempt to build what they would rather see. It is for this reason also that the dissertation aims to investigate wider questions of readership and authorship that go well beyond the potentially limiting historical remit of information overload. In other words, whilst overload is a necessary starting point for my discussion of the note since it helps to explain the device's sudden eruption and elevation in twentieth-century literature, it would be remiss to confine discussion within that framework. Overload helps to justify and explain an analysis of the note, but it must not be the entirety of that discussion.

In order to continue pressing on the figure of the note and its relevance to the debates already established around information overload I want to introduce three case studies in which overload is confronted through the use of annotation. Whilst the following examples are not literary in nature they do help to ground the wider textual debates that the remainder of this introduction and the dissertation more generally will consider. The three case studies are taken one each from the beginning, middle, and end of the twentieth century and for the purposes of this study they might best be thought of as installations of annotations. They are each physical, as opposed to purely textual, embodiments of the practice of annotation that arose contiguously with the cultural moments out of which the writers I examine also emerged and as such they speak to one another. The first to be examined will be Paul Otlet's *Mundaneum*; the second, Suzanne Briet's application of 'documentalism' as well as Vannevar Bush's memex machine; the third, Ted Nelson's system of hypertext and Tim Berners-Lee's World Wide Web. These annotative installations will be returned to throughout the dissertation in order to develop and continue to press upon the various points of connection

between the writers I examine, their uses of notation, and the literary, cultural and historical moments they inhabit.

In 1910, seven years before Pound published 'Studies in Contemporary Mentality' and immediately after the Belgian world's fair, Paul Otlet and Henri La Fontaine began work on what would later be named the Mundaneum. Housed in a government building in Brussels the Mundaneum was a vast collection of over twelve million index cards and other documents and memoranda. Each card would have written on it a fact, diagram, or summary of a particular topic including the sciences, the arts, history, politics, biography, and geography. The index worked through a method of classification not unlike the Dewey Decimal System, which Otlet and La Fontaine named Universal Decimal Classification. Each entry would be aligned to a corresponding number, which would in turn be attached to a topic. By following the topic one could quickly and easily pinpoint a specific card dealing with a specific area of knowledge. In a pamphlet written in 1914 the Union of International Associations, which was founded by Otlet and Fontaine in order to protect the newly founded study of information science, the project was described as 'an encyclopedic survey of human knowledge' (*La Loi* 116) and an 'enormous intellectual warehouse of books, documents, catalogues, and scientific objects' (*La Loi* 116).

However, what made the Mundaneum different to all previous attempts at universal classification was that each card was also painstakingly annotated. These annotations would identify connections to other cards and also add marginal glosses with supplementary information enabling a user to efficiently navigate associated branches of knowledge. Thus, annotation became for Otlet and La Fontaine a means for traversing and managing the burgeoning condition of information overload. The notes added to each card represented an attempt to localize and connect often wildly different topics and as such provide a path through an otherwise unimaginable maze of materials. Despite being initially conceived of as

a philosophical experiment, the project quickly became a commercial success and people from across the continent would submit queries to Otlet and his team and, for a nominal fee, the appropriate card would be located along with any corresponding annotations, copied, and mailed back to the requestor. In its heyday, the service received over 1500 requests per year. However, in 1924 the Belgian government pulled funding from the project forcing Otlet to relocate the Mundaneum and then in 1934 it was closed completely.<sup>9</sup>

However, Otlet's ambitions did not stop here. In the same year that he was forced to abandon his project Otlet began designing a mechanical version of his annotated index. Operating much like a carousel, the user would stand in the centre of a circular structure and through a manipulation of various levers one of several workstations would be positioned in front of him. Each workstation had a screen attached to it, which would be used to display multiple documents alongside, if desired, films, audio, and photographs. The workstations would rotate around the user depending on which files he wanted to access. Whilst it may have been far too advanced an idea for his time, Otlet did retain one aspect of the Mundaneum. 'This new research environment would do more than just let users retrieve documents', Alex Wright explains, 'it would also let them annotate the relationships between them' (186). In Otlet's innovations there is evident a clear response to the influx of information in the early years of the twentieth century that employs the physical act of annotation in order to circumvent and curtail that which Soule, B-RR-LL, and Pound are coming to terms with.

Otlet's work produced a seismic shift in what was soon to be called information science and this was especially felt by Suzanne Briet. Known affectionately as 'Madame Documentation', Briet worked for almost her entire career at the National Library of France and published various academic papers throughout the 1930s and 1940s, culminating in the

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<sup>9</sup> After its closure what remained of the Mundaneum was left in storage until 1940 when Nazi Germany invaded Belgium and used the office space where it was housed to exhibit Third Reich art. The Mundaneum has since been rediscovered and relocated to Mons where, in 1998, it was repurposed into a museum exhibit.

now famous essay *What is Documentation?* in 1951, one year prior to the publication of Jones's *The Anathemata*. As with Otlet, Briet was overwhelmingly preoccupied with the advent of mass media. In *What is Documentation?*, for instance, Briet bemoans 'our age of multiple and accelerated broadcasts' (12) and how this has caused, harking back to Eliot's proclamation in *The Rock*, 'knowledge to become weighted down under a vestment of documents' (12). She continues by explaining that 'Gutenberg's invention has created such a voluminous and intense typographical production, especially in the last one hundred years that the problem of conservation [...] of graphic documents has become acute' (11). She declares, with some perturbation, that technological advances mean that 'an entire library can be contained in a handbag' (12). Briet demonstrates this turn to what she calls 'documentary fertility' (10) by using the example of a new variety of antelope being discovered. As she explains, if such a discovery were to be made then one might imagine a press release immediately being issued, followed by a corollary release by the Academy of Sciences, and then various lectures being delivered before the animal would need to be catalogued, which would then lead to innumerable monographs and articles being written, recopied, and republished (11).

Briet's response to such overload, hinging on the word 'conservation' quoted above, was to employ at the National Library of France a team of so-called 'knowledge workers', a term and idea borrowed from Otlet's group of annotators working at the Mundaneum. Under Briet's guidance, their role was to index and then assess incoming documents and in order to do this she designed a complex system of notation. Upon receiving a document to be archived, the knowledge workers would attach to it copious notes, with the aim being, as with the Mundaneum, to create cross references between the texts, but also to summarise and pinpoint key points of information. These documents would then be filed away, fully annotated, for later inspection, or indeed disseminated to the most appropriate academics. As

Briet explains: 'It is the role of centres of documentation to put on the desk of the specialist an analytical and sometimes critical résumé of new things that interest him or even better to make the material directly available by way of annotated photographic reproduction' (15). Her response to mass print, then, is one predicated, in her own words, on 'order, marking, and selection' as the 'three essential steps in intelligence occupations' (15). This system and the tremendous undertaking it represented was in use for the vast majority of Briet's tenure at the French National Library and it is what she labelled the institution's 'cultural technique' (12). Her choice of 'culture' here is an interesting one and perhaps speaks to the role she felt she played in mediating and delineating the various materials to be researched, an idea that will be pressed upon later in relation to the work of David Jones. This comparison will also provide an opportunity to examine the potentially alienating occupation of the 'knowledge worker'.

Working contemporaneously to Briet, but on the other side of the Atlantic, Vannevar Bush published his highly influential essay 'As We May Think' (1944) six years before Briet's *What is a Document?* and in the same year that Otlet passed away. This was also the year that Olson arguably started his poetic career when he left politics and moved to Key West, Florida. The essay was written whilst Bush was the Director of the Office of Scientific Development and Research and it begins, as with Briet's essay, with a complaint that the scientific community is faced with 'a growing mountain of research' and that the 'investigator is staggered by the findings and conclusion of thousands of other workers' (112). He continues by arguing that the 'summation of human experience is being expanded at a prodigious rate, and the means we use for threading through the consequent maze to the momentarily important item is the same as was used in the days of square-rigged ships' (113). Thus, like Otlet, Bush sets himself the task of reformulating and updating the relationship that exists between information and those who wish to access it. Similar to

Otlet's mechanical device, Bush attempts to solve the problem of information overload by inventing what he calls the memex and again, like Otlet and Briet, it operates through a strategy of annotation.

The memex was a desk-like structure that would use microfilm technology to store and then project chosen documents onto two embedded screens. This would permit, Bush summarized, 'the *Encyclopedia Britannica* [to] be reduced to the volume of a matchbox. A library of a million volumes could be compressed into one end of a desk' (113). Further, what Bush called 'the provision for direct entry' (113) was of central importance to his design: the user would be able to 'add marginal notes and comments' (116) to extant documents and then by pressing a lever these notes might 'be photographed onto the next blank space in a section of the memex film' (116). The machine would then be able to index the annotations and create links between other documents with similar key words. What Bush hoped to achieve in doing this was to simulate what he described as the associative quality of the human mind: 'The human mind [...] operates by association. With one item in its grasp, it snaps instantly to the next that is suggested by the association of thoughts, in accordance with some intricate web of trails carried by the cells of the brain' (118). Again, then, one notices the singular importance of notation as a means to counter the same crisis that both Otlet and Pound identified thirty years prior to Bush. However, Bush also goes one step further by not only using annotation to respond to information overload, but by also ascribing to its structure the very essence of human thought. The subjunctive quality of Bush's title, 'As We May Think', invites one to consider the future possibilities of how one might think and in designing his machine Bush proposes that it is through annotation that the future direction of thought resides. In this, we have come a long way from Yeats's dismissal of the device as belonging only to the bald-headed scholar. One might recognise here a difference in procedure between Briet and Bush and this is something that will be fully explored in Chapter Two. Briefly,



whilst Briet bases her response to information overload on evaluation and mediation in the form of workers annotating and selectively disseminating documents, Bush appears much more committed to empowering his users to make these evaluative judgements on their own terms.

In the weeks following the publication of Bush's article, the memex would gain national media attention, being written about in outlets such as *Life* and *The New York Times*. However, as quickly as it appeared it would also disappear from public view to remain only in the most niche discussions of computer science. One of Bush's most ardent supporters was Ted Nelson who, in 1965 (three years after the publication of *Pale Fire*), published a paper titled 'A File Structure for the Complex, the Changing and the Indeterminate'. In this paper, Nelson coined the term hypertext, which he defined as the following: 'By "hypertext" I mean non-sequential writing – text that branches and allows choices to the reader, best read at an interactive screen. As popularly conceived, this is a series of text chunks connected by links which offer the reader different pathways' (86). Nelson would spend most of his career developing and marketing a computer software package based on the ideas of hypertext named Xanadu and like Otlet's Mundaneum and Bush's memex it would celebrate the productive use of annotation. The ultimate goal of Xanadu would be to create what Nelson termed a 'docuverse' (87). This was a searchable, linked, and annotated digital repository of everything that had ever been written and published. Texts uploaded into the docuverse would be segmented into chunks of text, which could be traversed by clicking hyperlinks attached to specific words and phrases. Clicking such a link would then transport the user to a different node, possibly even in a different text, and this process of clicking between related texts would continue *ad infinitum*. Further, the user would have the ability to attach to each node a note. This note might add supplementary information or suggest a connection between texts and they would be accessible to all users of the docuverse. In 'A File Structure for the

Complex' Nelson explains the potential of notation in this manner: 'This self-documentation feature permits any string of text [...] to be annotated or footnoted for scholarly or other purposes. Such marginalia can be temporary or permanent, for the private memoranda of an individual or for communication among different persons using the file' (92). Then again in a later essay on the topic of Xanadu Nelson identifies the ability to incorporate 'detailed annotation and detailed intercomparison' ('Xanalogical Structure' 37) as an essential criterion.

In Nelson's design and early implementation of Xanadu there is evident the same ideals and motivations described first by Otlet and then by Bush. In fact, Nelson cites Bush as a direct inspiration for his work on hypertext just as, forty years later, the inventor of the World Wide Web cited hypertext as instrumental to his creation. Whilst Xanadu would not be built as Nelson intended, it would lay the groundwork for the subsequent design of the World Wide Web. By the late 1960s the US government had sanctioned and funded an initiative to create a way of securely sharing information between operatives and bases quickly and efficiently. The project, named ARPANET, would pioneer a similar initiative designed specifically for the scientific community so that several institutions could be connected to one another for the purposes of email and file sharing. This would have radical implications for the scholarly community: where once it would have taken days if not weeks for research and raw data to be circulated amongst various researchers now it would take seconds.<sup>10</sup>

It was whilst working at CERN, the most populous node in the scientific network, that Tim Berners-Lee would begin working on a way to expand the idea across the nation. The internet as we know it today, used by billions of people across the world, was officially switched-on on August 6 1991 when a website built at CERN by primary architect Tim Berners-Lee went live. What made this website different to other internet services that had

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<sup>10</sup> The history of the internet is a fascinating one. See John Naughton's 2012 *From Gutenberg to Zuckerberg: What You Really Need to Know About the Internet* for a full examination of how the internet came into being including a discussion of both ARPANET and Vannevar Bush.

been operating for years previously, such as ARPANET, was that it was built on the principle of Nelson's hypertext. Berners-Lee explains his invention in this manner: 'I just had to take the hypertext idea and connect it to the Transmission Control Protocol and domain name system ideas and – ta da! – the World Wide Web' ('Long Live'). By 'the hypertext idea' Berners-Lee is describing adding to an already established network of computer systems that have the ability to share data (Transmission Control Protocol) and the further ability to traverse this network by clicking links and adding annotations. The World Wide Web as envisioned by Berners-Lee not only shared a technological platform with the inventions already mentioned but a philosophical outlook. On the very first website, which is still available as an archived version, Berners-Lee writes that the project is an 'information retrieval initiative aiming to give universal access to a large universe of documents' (*Weaving* 63) and that it is founded on a belief 'that much academic information should be freely available to anyone' (*Weaving* 67). Like its technological antecedents, then, the World Wide Web integrates into its system of information management the twofold structure of a note to provide a citation (linking to another document) and the addition of supplementary or clarifying information (nodal annotation).

By the time the web was created in the early 1990s the crisis of overload had reached new and even previously unforeseen heights. Michael Hobart and Zachery Schiffman, for example, begin their 2000 *Information Ages* by arguing that 'we are deluged with information, accumulating by the millisecond on video and audio tapes, film, microfilm, floppy disks, hard drives, and memory chips, spewing incessantly over airwaves, light waves, television cables, and telephone wires' (1). Similarly, John Seely Brown and Paul Duguid speak of the internet in terms of 'an unstoppable flood of meaningless information' (12) and, continuing to employ the same metaphor of drowning employed by Hobart and Schiffman, that 'where once there seemed too little to swim in, now it's hard to stay afloat' (12). The

latter comment is especially interesting in the context of this dissertation since Seely Brown and Duguid make the mistake of thinking that overload was unique to the end of the twentieth century. In so doing, they ignore overload as it existed, not only in the earlier years of the century, but also since the invention of Gutenberg's printing press.<sup>11</sup> The reason for the error might simply be accounted for by bad history, but it also speaks to the sheer impact that overload has on a particular cultural moment: so explosive is the increase of textual matter and so vicious is the upheaval it creates that Seely Brown and Duguid are unable to conceive that something similar had happened previously. Further, the erroneous nature of the comment perhaps corroborates the notion that overload manifests itself as a personal and local sense of distress where the two writers are able only to recognise the impact it has had on them and their own cultural moment. This also speaks to the urgency of a project such as the one that I embark upon: it is only through an historical taxonomy of the note that one would be able to understand and appreciate the various cultural and literary debates that are registered through the device, and in a continually shifting landscape such a reflection becomes ever more important. If it is through the figure of the note that writers of the twentieth century understand their relation both to other texts and to their own moment, as I argue, then perhaps it is through an examination of annotation that we also can better understand *our* relation to them.

In an effort further to prove Seely Brown and Duguid incorrect, one might also notice here that the imagery of drowning that they use is the same imagery employed, almost one hundred years earlier, by Soule: 'clergymen, editors, and all other forces of decency are powerless to stop the flood' (38). This image also speaks to the description of traversing the web as 'surfing' it and in this one clearly sees that the intended purpose of the internet and its

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<sup>11</sup> One of the most interesting studies of information overload as it existed prior to the twentieth century is Ann Blair's 2011 *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age*. In this text, Blair traces the history of reference books in the wake of Gutenberg's printing press as an early means for managing information.

technological precursors is to create the *polis* that Olson so desperately sought: to surf the web is to remain afloat and it is to do so through concerted and engaged participation with the materials being perused. The internet is nothing more than the latest iteration of the annotative practices of people such as Otlet, Bush, and Nelson. The internet as it exists today is founded on the principle of managing the influx of information through a system of annotation, where people navigate an almost inconceivably vast body of material by following links, adding commentary, and, in effect, citing other websites. Think, for instance, of Wikipedia or the entire industry surrounding blogging, tweeting, and similar activities. Whilst we are ostensibly a long way from the standard typographical format of the kind of notes I will spend the remainder of this dissertation discussing, and a long way from specifically literary notes, the principles remain largely the same: the collation and indexing of information through a practice of commentary and structural notation. Thought of in this way the internet is a collection of interdependent and connected notes. In fact, the constitutive link between footnotes and hypertext is not a new idea. The majority of books on hypertext begin with the proposition that the footnote is an embryonic form of hypertext. Jessica Pressman makes the point when she writes: ‘Electronic hypertexts have print predecessors in experimental novels [...] all of which use footnotes or other textual devices to connect chunks of texts and enable navigation of the narrative as a network rather than a linear path’ (6). George Landow makes the same point: ‘Notes are the basic premise of hypertext’ (2), and Jay David Bolter: ‘In one sense this is simply the electronic equivalent of the footnote used in printed books for hundreds of years’ (4).

The reason why these three case studies have been included is that each one addresses the same questions that Olson raises: how and where might one construct an environment conducive to the expenditure of labour required to confront and respond to the inundation of new information? Further, and most significantly, each one answers this question by

employing an embodied strategy of annotation. What this reveals, then, is the inheritance of an annotative template where one technology builds on the last by finessing the system of notation on which it is predicated. If hypertext and the internet is the latest iteration of the annotative response to the crisis of information overload then what I examine and unpick is the *literary* adaptation of this same inheritance of an annotative template. Just as Otlet's project came out of the early 1900s and Bush conceived of the memex at the mid-point of the century and the internet belongs to the 1990s, I chart the textual imprint and corollary of this same historical and cultural moment as it is registered by my six chosen poets and novelists. What I am describing here is the inheritance of a common crisis and the inheritance of annotation as a means of responding to and managing that crisis. I am tracing the origins of both a contemporary crisis and the contemporary response.

Returning to the opening statement that critics have all but ignored the importance of the note, I also argue that it has taken the advent of hypertext and the theoretical vocabulary it provides in order for the annotative aspect of twentieth-century literature to be taken seriously as a productive aspect of its literature. The textual and cultural relationships that I examine relate to one another in terms of a feedback loop: modernism responded to what it perceived as a crisis of reading through annotation. This response became a template for later generations of writers and these later writers again pass along the annotative template paving the way first of all for the precursors of hypertext and then hypertext itself. In turn, it is hypertext and the theoretical vocabulary that it provides that makes it possible to go back to modernism and properly assess the role that annotation has played in twentieth-century literature. The note is a way in which modernism laid the groundwork for contemporary innovation: the use of annotation by writers such as Jones, Pound, Moore, and Eliot effected a structural and conceptual change in how we manage and frame our relationship to other texts and to information more generally, which has been inherited by other writers. The

introduction will now proceed by investigating the literary note as it exists in literary modernism and then the note as it exists in postmodernism. As stated earlier in the introduction, whilst overload provides an initial material explanation for the emergence and function of annotation, the dissertation will seek to move beyond this framework and work through wider debates which are in turn borne out of the cultural upheavals brought about by overload. The remainder of the introduction thus begins to articulate and refine the nature of these wider debates whilst continuing to introduce the constitutive role that literary annotation has to play in indexing and responding to them.

### **The Spectre of Marx: A Theoretical Framework for Understanding Labour**

In addition to indexing a crisis brought about by information overload and all of its attendant cultural anxieties, one area of related debate that is persistently articulated through and illuminated by the figure of the note is labour. At its most fundamental level, the note is a textual mechanism used to illicit some form of effort from its reader. Through its citational structure and by deictically specifying material to be read and engaged with, the note compels the reader to move beyond the parameters of the host text and therefore to expend effort, both physical and intellectual. This gesture might be as simple and seemingly trivial as turning to the back of the text when required and instructed to, or it might mean halting one's reading in order to consult an additional, cited text. Either way, the note has disrupted the flow of one's reading and has required some exertion of effort on the part of the reader. It is this fundamental bibliographic convention that the writers I explore take advantage of. By interpolating the note into the system of signification that has been constructed within the text, they transform it from something potentially inconsequential into something of aesthetic importance and they do this by manipulating its bibliographic function to invite effort and

specify supplementary material. Whilst the connection between annotative labour of this sort and the perceived crisis of reading already outlined will be developed throughout the thesis, it is enough to say at this point that the capacity for a note to demarcate an area of interest and to require some level of participation from the reader are both constituent elements of the responses offered by my chosen writers. Throughout this dissertation, the labour of reading notes provides a conceptual link between the texts that I discuss and a recurring point of debate is how different writers understand and value what is often intellectual labour as opposed to other kinds of labour.

However, implicit in this discussion of labour, and already explored above in relation to information overload, is the perceived debasement of public readership. Thus, an ancillary line of discussion related to annotative labour is an exploration of authority in that one's labour is always directed *to* something and that something has a value ascribed to it. There is, as such, always evident a hierarchical mode of address when one is invited to expend effort in the service of certain specified materials. In other words, and to varying degrees, the addresser is determining the reading practices of the addressee or, as is sometimes the case, utilising this same structure ironically in order to subvert rather than uphold the idea that the reader ought to follow the textual path designated by the author. Indeed, and by no means coincidentally, beyond the realm of literary notes the device's common usage is intimately bound up with authority as they are used to establish the veracity of certain claims that are being made. Before moving forward and discussing these issues further, it will be useful to elucidate a theoretical framework for understanding the labour of annotation and the attendant notion of authority. In order to do so I will turn to the writing of Karl Marx and specifically *Economic Manuscripts*, *Grundrisse*, and *The German Ideology*. This body of thought will provide a rich set of co-ordinates for thinking about labour and authority



throughout the dissertation and it will be returned to repeatedly in order to illuminate my chosen texts.

Dependent on the specific socio-economic context, labour, for Marx, can either be a highly creative and generative aspect of one's experiences or it can be a crippling mechanism of subjugation that provides the circumstances for alienation. For Marx, this creative aspect of labour has yet to manifest itself in any substantial form, but its potential would, so he envisages, be realised fully under communism. There is, Marx stresses, a quantifiable difference in the function and character of labour depending on the context within which it is exercised. When not used to the benefit of a capitalist mode of production labour is a constituent element of what makes us human: it was a central component of what Marx labels our 'species-essence'. At the start of *Economic Manuscripts*, for example, Marx writes: 'In labour all the natural, spiritual and social variety of individual activity is variously manifested' (13). He makes a similar point in *German Ideology* when discussing the differences between human and animals: 'They [humans] themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their physical organisation' (42). Thus, labour is not only the means through which we can actuate our individual engagement with the world around us, but it is also the very thing that makes us human. Of course, animals are capable of labour also, but, as Marx points out, the key point of differentiation is the principle of organisation. The kind of labour that Marx has in mind here is a co-operative coming together in the pursuit of something greater than each individual participant; a productive attempt to actualize in reality that which has been abstractly conceived, and thus the creative impulse that this would require. As will soon become clear, this generative and participatory model of labour can be quite usefully mapped onto writers such as Moore and Olson, and to a lesser extent Eliot.

However, Marx also identifies the ways in which labour can be conducive to the corruption of that creative impulse. When co-opted into a matrix of money and ownership the expression of labour ensures that, according to Marx, the worker ‘does not develop freely his physical and mental energy, but mortifies his body and ruins his mind’ (*Economic Manuscripts* 52). What Marx is describing here, as he makes clear throughout his writing, is the way in which labour is an alienating force. Marx makes it clear that whilst labour can be creative and enabling, its assimilation into capitalist social structures has largely stripped it of that potential. He explains:

The worker cannot become rich in this exchange, since, in exchange for his labour capacity as a fixed, available magnitude, he surrenders its creative power [...] Rather, he necessarily impoverishes himself [...] because the creative power of his labour establishes itself as the power of capital, as an alien power confronting him (*Grundrisse* 307).

What appears to be at stake is the beneficiary of one’s labour and the extent to which that is a choice made by the labourer. When the beneficiary is the labourer, as it would be under a system of communism, then it has the potential to be creative, but when it is expended in the name of wage relations then it cannot be. The creative capacity of labour hinges on the ability for one to act cooperatively and to enjoy a certain imaginative freedom as to how and where the effort is targeted. However, at the point at which it is used as a tool to generate capital and as such is used for exchange there is introduced a conceptual and physical limit on the labourer. His labour no longer belongs to himself and so the intellectual fecundity that Marx so admires is now expressed by someone other than the one expending effort. One could even go so far as to say that the positive attributes of labour *do* still exist within a capitalist mode of production, but they are administered by proxy and are always one step removed from the source of the effort. There is also an obvious connection to the idea of authority already

outlined in the way that one party seeks to predetermine the activities of another and in this sense this model of labour as reductive can be applied to Pound and Jones, with Nabokov employing this ironically.

Significantly for an analysis of annotative labour, Marx goes so far as to characterise the precise moment of transition from labour as generative to labour as alienating and traces this back to a ‘division of material and mental labour’ (*German Ideology* 52). As further outlined, in *German Ideology* the capitalist mode of production ensures that ‘intellectual and material activity – enjoyment and labour, production and consumption – devolve on different individuals’ (52). For Marx this schism between mental and physical labour and the ensuing alienation is brought about by the loss of what he labels ‘self-activity’ (92). This is precisely the condition described above wherein labour ceases to be exercised at the will of the labourer and, as such, one is forced to relinquish its creative and generative potential. What separates labour as it exists before and within the emergence of a capitalist mode of production and how it might exist under communist relations, so Marx argues, is the extent to which the expression of physical labour is conversant with and aligned to the expression of intellectual labour and whether or not these two belong to the same entity. Taking this idea of self-activity and the contrary characterisations of labour, I wish to trace throughout this dissertation the ways in which annotation allows an act of labour to be reconfigured and, in so doing, to recover its creative potential. Indeed, the possibility for art to realign intellectual and physical labour is something discussed at length by William Morris. In his 1879 essay ‘Art of the People’, for example, Morris questions whether work need ‘be toil only’ (7). He contends that art is the ‘expression by man of his pleasure in labour’ (7) and as such that the ‘chief duty of the civilised world today is to set about making labour happy for all’ (9). He also speaks of the ‘expression of man’s pleasure in successful labour’ and the ‘pleasurable exercise of our energies’ being ‘at once the source of all art and the cause of all happiness’

(11). Within the figure of the note, the potentially complementary, but now contrary states of intellectual and physical effort are navigated with some writers seeking to unite the two and others seeking to widen the gap. This will be developed as a major site of debate within the texts that I examine.

This debate will largely revolve around the notion of self-activity, which is a key concept in my discussion of annotative labour and is a fault line along which different writers approach and value labour. As Marx points out, again in *German Ideology*, the division of mental and material labour

manifests itself in the ruling class [...] as one part appears as the thinkers of the class [...] while the others are more passive and receptive because they are in reality the active members of the class and have less time to make up illusions and ideas about themselves (65).

This further speaks to the politics implicit in annotative labour and the ways in which the expenditure of effort, both physical and mental, is always intimately bound up with notions of cultural policing and coercion. As seen earlier in the introduction, Pound's issue is not that people no longer expend effort, but rather that they expend it in the service of the 'wrong' ideas and his response to this is a despotic one: he will take it upon himself to direct you to the 'correct' place so that you can labour productively. However, as Marx himself concludes, this means that the reader's 'labour is therefore not voluntary, but coerced; it is forced labour. It is therefore not the satisfaction of a need; it is merely a means to satisfy needs external to it' (*German Ideology* 65). What is at issue, and what is registered through the figure of the note and already gestured at in regards to information overload, is the extent to which a reader is able to determine how his labour will be put to use. Related to this, there is also raised the further issue of 'labour-time', which will be addressed more fully in the next section, regarding the conditions one would need to meet to engage meaningfully with a text

such as *The Cantos* and the extent to which these conditions are available to all. Thus, my analysis of labour points to the way in which annotation has the capacity to be intellectually gratifying, but also alienating; generative and creative, but also reductive and coercive. These are key ideas upon which I will build my wider discussion of literary notation.

### **The Modernist Note: The Pound–Bridson Exchange**

Known as the ‘cultural boss of the BBC’, D.G. Bridson began his career as a radio producer in 1935, eventually becoming, in 1964, the Programme Editor for Arts, Sciences and Documentaries (Sound). In a career that lasted thirty-five years, Bridson produced over eight hundred broadcasts, served on the BBC Poetry Committee, and worked with writers that included T.S. Eliot, Louis Zukofsky, W.H. Auden, Wyndham Lewis, ee cummings, William Carlos Williams and Langston Hughes. Prior to working for the BBC, however, Bridson was a freelance writer and occasional poet: he had published four poems in the January 1935 issue of Harriet Monroe’s *Poetry* and, two years earlier, had been published in Ezra Pound’s anthology *Active Anthology*. Bridson would, however, move away from the little magazines and anthologies and towards the BBC in an attempt to cater to a wider audience. One year after joining the BBC Bridson would write and produce the first verse play written specifically for the radio. Writing in his 1971 autobiography, *Prospero and Ariel*, Bridson would describe his reasons for writing *The March of the ’45* in terms of recruiting a broader audience for poetry. He wanted to write something that would be ‘more immediately exciting than anything that had been heard before’ (58). Bridson recalls: ‘The poetry I had been publishing was far too “literary” for mass appeal [and] something far more rousing and declamatory was wanted’ (58). This strategy was a success. *The March of the ’45* was syndicated across the US and many of the then-Commonwealth nations and was listened to,

Bridson claims, 'by anything up to a hundred million listeners' (57). This is compared to *Poetry* which, at the time of Bridson's contributions, had a circulation of little over three thousand readers.

There is at stake in Bridson's transition from little magazines to the BBC a resurfacing of the tension evident in Lowell's essay. In a literary climate where mass paperbacks and so-called 'cheap magazines' monopolize the reader's attention Bridson sought to introduce the populace to poetry and he did so not through Monroe's magazine, but through the BBC. This is a perfect example of the subjective and localized character of overload where Bridson attempts to disseminate the material *he* wants to see in order to then compete with and ultimately usurp the material that he does not want to see. Bridson makes this ambition clear elsewhere in his autobiography. He recalls that when the play was first broadcast the 'only other dramatic medium known to the vast majority of listeners was the cinema' (57) and as 'for poetry – or verse, as I still prefer to call it in this context – that was something acceptable to only about one listener in every thousand' (57). What makes Bridson so interesting, though, and why I begin with him here, is that he happened to have the power to enact the change that he wished to see and thus he focused on the radio audience which, he adds, 'was a vast popular one' and 'was not by any means the audience I had been writing for in the *New English Weekly* or *The Criterion*' (57).

Throughout his career Bridson would aim to replicate this success with the poetry of others. In 1938, for example, Bridson worked with T.S. Eliot to produce a radio version of *The Waste Land*. Bridson recalls this project again in his autobiography:

[A]n audience of millions accepted *The Waste Land* on the air with surprising enthusiasm. For one thing, resolution into its different parts made it a great deal easier to follow. The mail which reached me after the broadcast was something of a surprise

even to Eliot himself. One enthusiastic listener, I remember, introduced himself as “only a bricklayer...” (67).

What is particularly interesting about this passage is Bridson’s obvious desire to extend an appreciation of poetry to the masses and his willingness to alter the poetry in order to accomplish this. As with *The March of the ’45* Bridson used the power of the radio to full effect in his production of *The Waste Land* and used the figure of Tiresias, much as Eliot famously suggested in his notes, to unite the poem. Thus, the rendition is a series of voices and vignettes framed so as to give the impression that Tiresias is observing and listening to a succession of characters from Lil to Madame Sosostris. Bridson is willing to sacrifice the integrity of the poem so that it might spread, albeit in a changed form, to those who would not normally read it including, Bridson proudly tells us, a bricklayer. To recall Marx, the concept of labour time becomes especially relevant in light of Bridson’s comments. Unlike Pound, Bridson is able to acknowledge that the reading public does not exist within a vacuum, but within specific socio-economic circumstances. It is simply a fact that for many thousands or even millions of people the possibility of reading a text such as *The Waste Land* and investing the required time into such an activity would not accord with an otherwise demanding life. Thus, Bridson is willing to bend the poetry to suit the reader whilst writers such as Pound, believing one’s willful engagement with literature to be a panacea, proselytize that the reader should bend to the poetry. Whilst one might quibble about the merit of altering the poem in this manner, Bridson’s strategy undoubtedly worked. When *The Waste Land* was first published in book format by Horace Liveright in 1922 the publisher excitedly reported in a letter written to Pound in 1923 that ‘*The Waste Land* has sold 1000 copies to date and who knows it may go up to 2000 or 3000 copies’ (Rainey *Revisiting* 86). As it turned out, Lawrence Rainey notes, 5000 copies were sold in the first year of its publication, but this is still a far cry from the millions that tuned in to listen to Bridson’s rendition (Rainey

*Revisiting* 86). It was through these activities that Bridson was able to set the poetic agenda at the BBC, using his position as a producer to promote poetry to a mass audience. Looking back to Bridson's time as a freelance writer one sees in an exchange between him and Pound these same concerns being played out. In Bridson and Pound's exchange we see the anxieties around the crisis of reading being articulated through the figure of the note and as such it is a central moment in the history that I chart and worth discussing at length.

It was whilst working as a freelance writer for A.R. Orage's *The New English Weekly* that Bridson reviewed the second instalment of *The Cantos* for the 5 October 1933 issue, the same year that *Active Anthology* was published.<sup>12</sup> The review is not a kind one. Bridson begins by complaining that Pound's poetry reads as if it were 'dashed off in some odd half-hour' (593). This 'impatience' results in 'obscurity' since 'the author has no time to explain or qualify, the reader no time to grasp or question' (593). Pound has produced a poem, Bridson continues, that is 'difficult to understand' and because of this expects 'too much from [its] readers' (594). The nub of the problem, as far as Bridson is concerned, is that Pound has not successfully 'presented' (593) his many hundreds of literary, historical and cultural allusions. Pound's poetry is replete with arbitrary connections between images that remain personal to the poet and thus indecipherable to all but the author. In order to highlight further his objections, Bridson calls upon T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* as an example of a poem that, through its use of annotation, is able to create a 'studied and explained effect' (593). All that *The Cantos* can manage is 'exuberant carelessness and indifference to understanding or appreciation' (593). The poetry might well be 'important' (593) and 'ambitious' (593), but, for Bridson, that does not matter if all but the most erudite readers are

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<sup>12</sup> Whilst working on *The Third Programme* Bridson travelled to St Elizabeth's hospital to record Pound in 1956 after producing Pound's translation of Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* two years earlier also for *The Third Programme*. Bridson would describe the encounter in an article written for the magazine *Agenda* as a very odd one. The session would not be released to the public until after Pound's release from St Elizabeth's when it would become part of a longer series called 'Ezra Pound: Reading's and Recollections' for which Bridson had conducted further interviews at Pound's Brunnenberg residence. It was broadcast in July 1959.



excluded from the work. Thus, as signaled by Bridson's choice of 'presentation', the issue is one of mediation. We see in this description of Pound's poetry the same concern for poetry to be read widely that Bridson would go on to adopt at the BBC. The style of poetry that Pound promotes is anathema to Bridson's project of repackaging and disseminating literary modernism. If Bridson's editorial and aesthetic aim is to dismantle the perceived stranglehold that mass media has on society then Pound's verse represents a direct affront to this mission. Notice, for example, the lexical choice of 'carelessness': it is almost as if Pound is neglecting the cultural and poetic responsibility that he has, as Bridson sees it, to engage as wide an audience as possible.

Bridson's central contention is that Pound fails to explicitly tell the reader what is significant and what is not and without this instruction the reader would otherwise not know. Note the similarity here between Bridson's view of the reader and the idea that his own listeners would only enjoy *March* if it were 'exciting' and 'declamatory'. Despite his willingness to help the reader one begins to notice that perhaps Bridson's view of his audience is that of pessimism and distaste. This is made clear when Bridson muses on the idea of a 'hierarchy of values' in *The Cantos*:

A hierarchy is well enough, provided the sheep are actually sorted from the goats. If, on the other hand, the eyesight of the judge is none too sure, unless the sheep and the goats are actually separated for him, he is apt to confuse them for himself (593).

The crisis of reading, as Bridson understands it, is that the reader is no longer in a position to discern for himself the value of what he reads and, as such, it is the poet's responsibility to make the meaning of his poetry clear. Bridson's solution to this problem is the note: 'If Mr. Pound would take the trouble to publish an annotated and simplified edition of his *Cantos*, no doubt their urgency would be more immediately apparent' (594). Bridson concludes his review by reiterating his issue with *The Cantos*:

He has far too much of importance to say for him to rest content in the appreciation of a few. Human nature and intelligence being what it is he would have been well advised to compromise by meeting his audience halfway (594).

Pound does not take kindly to this suggestion. In his response, written one week later in the October 12 issue of *New English Weekly*, Pound asks Bridson to explain ‘WHAT audience I ought to “meet halfway.”’ He continues: ‘London, is, as you know, full of pimps who do not want to look either facts or ideas in the face [...] Are these the vermin for whom one should write footnotes?’ (478). What is at stake in Bridson’s request for annotation and Pound’s vitriolic dismissal of it is how one reads, what one expects a reader to know, and how one teaches what the reader does not know.

The significance of this exchange for my wider argument is that both writers are articulating and orientating their understanding of the crisis of reading through the figure of the note. Whilst the two have a very different approach as to how the crisis might be abated they do share a similar conception of what it is. For Bridson, the crisis is that readers are no longer able to appreciate or even understand poetry such as Pound’s or Eliot’s. He thus makes it his purpose to disseminate an abridged and more comprehensible version. For Pound, the crisis is that the proposed audience is not worthy of the kind of assistance that Bridson seeks to offer and, were he to add annotation to *The Cantos*, that would only result in the wrong audience being attracted to it. The reading demographic that both envision is one for whom both the ability to select what is worth reading and then the ability to read it once it has been selected has been severely compromised. To style it in a manner that is slightly more to the point: no one knows what to read, no one knows how to read, and no one wants to read. Of course, the notion of ‘reading’ here is quantified by the kinds of material both Bridson and Pound have in mind since part of the problem, as they see it, is that people are in fact only too willing to read. These are all questions and issues that were raised as a consequence of

information overload and they are the same issues raised by Olson and, through annotation, tackled by Otlet, Bush, Nelson, and Berners-Lee. Overload accounts for a change in the literary landscape, which then helps to explain the occurrence of the kind of debates and reconsiderations I am concerned with, and it is through the space afforded by annotation, as is also true of Bridson and Pound, that they are concentrated. What I am attempting to work through is, on the one hand, Olson's question of 'where shall you find it, how, where, where shall you listen', and, on the other hand, the schematic that annotation holds the answer.

Given Bridson's impulse to meet the reader halfway, it is of little surprise that he began a career at the BBC. Founded by John Reith in 1922, Reith saw it as his 'responsibility [...] to carry into the greatest number of homes everything that is best in every department of human knowledge, endeavour and achievement' (qtd in Avery 13). Thus, the institutional practices of the BBC, from the start, were motivated by a desire to educate what was seen as a flawed public and it was from this position that the BBC adopted its long held position of giving the public not what they want, but what they need: 'It is occasionally indicated to us that we are apparently setting out to give the public what we think they need – and not what they want, but few know what they want, and very few what they need' (qtd in Avery 13). This is the same mentality that we see in Bridson and it was at the cornerstone of BBC practices throughout the twentieth century. Both Reith and Bridson identify a crisis wherein the reader must be told what to do because he is no longer capable of knowing for himself. The point, then, is that the BBC, under Reith's leadership and subsequently overseen by its 'cultural boss', became a vehicle for cultural improvement and it saw its role as mediating between the mass audience of its listeners and the 'high literature' Reith believed they otherwise would not be able to appreciate. That the BBC was founded in 1922, the same year that *The Waste Land* was published, is of significance: the BBC is reacting to the same crisis of reading that Eliot's or Pound's poetry is also reacting to, but in a different way. This is the

fault line along which the exchange between Bridson and Pound occurs. The note is used by Bridson to carry out the pedagogical impulses that he would later institute with his tenure at the BBC.<sup>13</sup>

Despite the antagonism in the exchange between Bridson and Pound, Pound's editorial practices reveal a strikingly similar outlook. In his essay 'Editor, Anthologist' John Nichols persuasively charts the shift in Pound's editorial policy from his early attempts at anthology writing to his later attempts. Nichols argues for a distinction between Pound's first two anthologies, which catered to a select audience, and his later ones in which, Nichols explains, 'Pound's reliance on explanatory prefaces and notes attest to his interest in aiding readers' (70). This is especially true of Pound's 1934 *ABC of Reading*. Written as a guide for how to teach poetry, *ABC* includes tests to be taken by students, essays written for the teacher and at the end of the book a series of what Pound terms exhibits where he presents a collection of poetry from Dante to Yeats. Attached to these exhibits are a series of explanatory notes written by Pound that detail historical contexts, etymology, definitions, and possible interpretations. Pound prefaces the exhibit section with this disclaimer: 'The ideal way to present the next section of this booklet would be to give the quotations WITHOUT any comment whatever. I am afraid that would be too revolutionary. By long and wearying experience I learned that in the present imperfect state of the world one MUST tell the reader' (95). Thus, his notes are necessary because of the crisis of reading: the notes, as with Bridson, are a necessary response to the crisis. Pound begins Chapter One with an explanation of why a book such as *ABC* is necessary in the first place:

We live in an age of science and abundance. The care and reverence for books as such, proper to an age when no book was duplicated until someone took the pains to

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<sup>13</sup> Arguably, the exemplary study of the relationship between the BBC and literary modernism is Todd Avery's *Radio Modernism: Literature, Ethics, and the BBC*. In this study, Avery draws attention to the rich intersections between writers such as Eliot, Pound and Woolf and the development of the radio in the early years of the twentieth century demonstrating that their involvement in the radio shaped their literary output.

copy it out by hand, is obviously no longer suited to ‘the needs of society’, or to the conversation of learning. The weeder is supremely needed if the Garden of the Muses is to persist as a garden (17).

This is a very clear statement of the crisis: books have become co-opted by commercial interests and the scientific improvements in technology have enabled the publishing interest to exponentially raise the number of books published. This is the influx of printed matter. Pound then positions himself as the person responsible for ‘weeding’ the garden; in other words, the reader is overwhelmed by the influx of printed matter and is no longer able to filter the good from the bad so Pound needs to do it for him. Thus, both Bridson and Pound appear to agree as to the nature of the crisis and also that the note is a valid and even necessary response to that crisis. One might even note the value that Pound attaches in the above example to the act of copying out by hand and the association this has to note taking: Pound is commenting, here, on the effort and care implied by the painstaking annotation of a text where copying is the physical iteration of this gesture. What, then, is the difference between the two that creates the obvious antagonism in the review?

Pound’s position is predicated on using the notes as a last resort and trying to minimize their impact as much as possible, whereas, Bridson’s position is to call-up the note at the first opportunity as part of a project of repackaging and disseminating ‘high literature’ to the masses. It comes down not so much to whether or not the reader needs help or even whether or not the note is a viable mechanism to deliver that help, but rather at what point and to what extent and how the note should be incorporated into the text. The note comes to represent for both Bridson and Pound a wider debate that is taking place. Unlike Bridson, Pound provides his notes begrudgingly. In *ABC* Pound offers this caveat to his exhibits:

In the present case I shall not tell the student everything. The most intelligent students, those who most want to LEARN, will however encompass that end, and

endear themselves to the struggling author if they will read the EXHIBITS, and not look at my footnotes until they have at least tried to find out WHAT THE EXHIBIT IS, and to guess why I have printed it (95).

As if to force the reader to follow his advice, four of the first five exhibits are written in untranslated Italian, French and Anglo-Saxon and with no notes. Thus, the reader who reads the notes is shamed even before doing so: the notes are a crutch that the most erudite student will not need. As with Bridson and Reith, Pound recognises that the present cultural moment demands notes, but, unlike those two, Pound does not give them willingly. It is this sense of cultural arbitration that Pound so emphatically disavows. This is what is at stake in the exchange and it is exactly this kind of cultural management proposed by Bridson and manifested in the figure of the note that Pound so emphatically disavows.

In his preface to *Active Anthology*, to which Bridson contributed, Pound muses on the difference between himself and Eliot when it comes to readers. Pound sees Eliot as having ‘much greater contempt’ for his readers since, unlike himself, Eliot attempts to correct a reader’s tastes through ‘commentation and elucidation’ (qtd. in Nichols 72). Quoting this same passage Nichols argues that, in contrast to Eliot, Pound ‘posits himself as a more egalitarian editor’ (72) who provides commentary not to dictate but rather to, in Pound’s words, ‘turn a searchlight on something or preferably some work or author lying in the shadow’ (qtd. in Nichols 72). Pound’s comments about Eliot demonstrate the extent to which this is a confused debate: Bridson makes a distinction between Eliot and Pound that Pound is ‘careless’ to his readers where Eliot is not. He concludes that Pound’s lack of ‘commentation’ is the issue. Yet, despite admitting the same premise, Pound concludes that it is in fact those who seek to provide ‘commentation’ who are ‘contemptuous’. There is agreement about the terms of the crisis but disagreement as to how best to respond and it is within the figure of the note that these debates are being registered. As further indicated by Pound’s comments on

Eliot, the antagonism stems from the competing values that are attributed, to borrow Marx's phrase again, to self-activity. Bridson unashamedly disavows self-activity, whilst Pound seems to celebrate it, but only when directed at materials that he deems are worthy of one's time. Thus, he holds the apparent contradictory impulse to both value participation and self-guided exploration whilst also simultaneously dictating and policing the material to be engaged with.

Pound's anxiety about at once using notes and disavowing them is manifested in his own poetry. Spread across thirty-five years of poetry, there are, in fact, only three moments in Pound's *The Cantos* that could be described as using annotation, albeit if one stretches the definition of a note slightly. The first example comes in 'Canto X', published in 1924 by Three Mountain Press as part of *A Draft of XVI Cantos*. Towards the beginning of this canto, Pound interrupts the verse with a long passage written in Latin and capitalised. The passage is further separated from the main body of the verse, since it is enclosed within two lines of dots that spread across the length of the page. At the end of the passage, which is not otherwise designated as a quotation, Pound supplies the reader with two book references. The first attributes the passage to 'Com. Pio II, Liv. VIII, p. 85' and the second to 'Yriarte, p. 288' (*The Cantos* 44). The note, though, is of little instructive use. The reader does not know if the Latin passage is made up of two quotations, one from each cited book, or if the passage is only influenced by those works. Even if the source was clarified it would mean very little unless one spoke Latin. Further, the first citation is written in shorthand to the extent that unless the reader knew exactly the text being referred to it would be near impossible to locate. The second, one can assume, refers to the work of French writer Charles Yriarte. However, in which of his twenty-five published works the reader is expected to turn to page 288 is not explained. In short, the note in 'Canto X' masquerades as a citation, but it is in fact

no more helpful to a reader than any of the hundreds of unmarked quotations that pervade *The Cantos*.

Second, at the beginning of ‘Cantos LII – LXXI’ (1940) Pound provides the reader with an informative table. This table sets out an historical timeline of China that corresponds to the historical events written about in each Canto. In this sense, the table functions as a kind of contents page, but Pound also adds other information, such as: ‘In the text names of Emperors and of Dynasties are in CAPS’ (*The Cantos* 256). He also tells the reader to ‘note the final lines in Greek, Canto 71, are from Hymns of Cleanthes, part of Adams’ *paideuma*’ (256). This is perhaps the closest one gets to an actual scholarly citation in *The Cantos*. The final note-like segment comes towards the end of the poem in ‘Canto XCVI’ (1959). The passage is in prose, typographically offset to the right hand margin and printed in smaller, italicised font, leaving little doubt that it is separate to the surrounding verse. The note reads:

If we never write anything save what is already understood, the field of understanding will never be extended. One demands the right, now and again, to write for a few people with special interests and whose curiosity reaches into greater detail (*The Cantos* 679).

This final example of annotation in *The Cantos* is a playful and ironic commentary on exactly the style of citation that Pound disavowed and Bridson encouraged. Pound is manipulating here the conventional purpose of a note to supply additional and clarifying information, what Bridson would label meeting an audience halfway, and instead of fulfilling this expectation Pound reminds his reader that he writes, on this occasion, for those with ‘special interests’. No sooner has the reader consulted the note, presumably hoping to find some explanation of the otherwise dense verse, than he is told that because he does this he is not one of the few ‘whose curiosity reaches into greater detail’. This is one of the most subtle and yet effective gibes from a poet who is a master of the acerbic remark.



The exchange between Bridson and Pound and the questions it raises is of further significance because it simulates recent critical debates in modernist studies. Pound's rejection of cultural management and of the text being mediated and made fit for a mass audience represents the understanding of modernism best summed up by Andreas Huyssen's phrase 'an anxiety of contamination' from his 1987 study *After the Great Divide*, which is, Huyssen explains, the idea that 'Modernism constituted itself through a conscious strategy of exclusion' (vii). Commenting on this same passage, Mark Morrison explains that Huyssen thus 'upholds the idea of modernism and mass culture as polar opposites' (5): the only response to the encroachment of mass media and the 'vermin' who propagate it is to retreat into a coterie. It is from the safety of a coterie, shielded from contamination, that writers such as Pound can make proclamations about what he elsewhere describes as 'the mass, the half-educated simpering general' ('The New Sculpture' 68). This was the standard narrative of modernism at a certain point in its historical reception. As already stated, the close of the Victorian age saw the invention of mechanical pulp paper, offset printing, as well as the Monotype and Linotype machines. '[T]hese inventions', Mark Morrison writes, 'led to the explosion of mass market print publications and advertising at the end of the nineteenth century in Britain and America' (3). Making the same point, Ann Ardis and Patrick Collier claim: 'The turn of the twentieth century saw a sea change in the world of Anglo-American book, newspaper, and periodical publishing. More newspapers, magazines, and books were published annually than ever before, in a variety of new venues and mixed-media formats' (1). Thus, Pound registers his response to these events through a negation of the note. In other words, Pound and the strand of modernism that he represents see the note as symptomatic of the cultural contamination that overload has brought about and that to use it willingly is a symbol of concession that is, to say the least, unpalatable.

In this, Pound's view was expressed time and time again in modernist little magazines of the period. One particularly instructive example, which also involves Pound, can be found in the July 1917 issue of Margaret Anderson's *The Little Review* in the segment titled 'Reader Critic'. FER, a reader from Chicago, writes to the magazine: 'I have just read your June issue. Won't you ask Ezra Pound if he should mind making an effort to be interesting?' (27). In an attempt to live up to their mantra that the magazine 'makes no compromise with the public taste', Anderson replies: 'I ask you to make an effort to discover why he is so interesting' (27). This is exactly the mentality that typifies modernism as it is understood by scholars such as Huyssen, and modernism as it is represented by Pound in his retort to Bridson: if a reader does not understand the significance of what he is reading then it must not be the responsibility of the poet to reduce the labour that is required to appreciate it. One year later, in the same magazine, the editors parody a Bridsonesque request from one E Hamilton of Chicago: "The use of articulate speech by human beings is inconsiderate", said the pig. "They should consider our capacity for comprehension. We can neither express ourselves in this fashion, nor can we comprehend the utterance of these humans" [...] "O que le monde soit porcine!" (78). The final line expresses an ironic longing for a world that is swine-like. The idea here, as with Pound's response to Bridson, is the paradoxical situation that the person seeking assistance is not worthy of assistance *because* they seek it. Or rather, a wider epistemic and pedagogical issue is being described, where readers need help in the first instance. It is not so much the case that Pound is unwilling to aid his reader, as he did after all, even if begrudgingly, write *ABC*, but he is unwilling to mitigate the challenge of his work and to accommodate those who wish it to be more easily digestible. The vermin are vermin and the pigs are pigs, so Pound's thinking goes, because they are looking for the easy path where difficult verse is annotated. What Bridson represents and what his use of the note

mobilizes is the willingness to become complicit in the commercialization of art and with it the eventual abandonment of those still with ‘special interests’.<sup>14</sup>

In his mission to meet readers half-way, Bridson anticipates a shift in modernist studies that has taken place in the last fifteen years under the banner of New Modernist Studies. In her study *Modernism and Cultural Conflict*, Ardis explains the term New Modernist Studies thus: the term was first used ‘at the inaugural meeting of the Modernist Studies Association in October 1999 to distinguish current revisionary work on modernism from New Criticism’s more purely celebratory presentation of modernism’ (13). Thus, New Modernist Studies is concerned with challenging and dismantling the commonplace narratives of modernism and replacing them with far more nuanced accounts. In studies such as Mark Morrison’s *The Public Face of Modernism*, Kevin Dettmar’s *Marketing Modernism*, and Ann Ardis’s *Transatlantic Print Cultures* this involves dislocating the view that modernism always upheld the standard narrative of coterie and retreat. However, in the work of Susan Friedman and Pamela Caughie, it also involves challenging the definitional procedures of modernist studies by emphasising the plurality of modernism and the marginal narratives that might exist under that banner. Further still, in the work of Lawrence Rainey,

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<sup>14</sup> Pound would return to ideas such as these throughout his career. In ‘The Teacher’s Mission’ (1934), for instance, Pound states his mission in these terms: ‘The first act is to recognise the disease, the second to cure it’ (59). This quotation introduces a recurrent motif in Pound’s critical essays, that of disease, infection and, in Pound’s words, ‘inoculation’ (‘How to Read’ 38). Read in light of Pound’s political aspirations this type of language becomes increasingly disquieting. In ‘How to Read’, for example, Pound begins by describing his aim as to ‘tranquilize the low brow reader’ by introducing him to the great works of art including Ovid, Chaucer and Baudelaire. Pound narrows his list down to eleven texts that are the ‘minimum basis for a sound and liberal education in letters’ (38). In ‘The Teacher’s Mission’ Pound takes these concerns one step further. He argues that what is at stake is nothing less than the ‘HEALTH OF THE NATIONAL MIND’ (*Essays* 59). The primary reason for this crisis, Pound argues, is ‘mental LAZINESS, lack of curiosity, desire to be undisturbed’ (59). Pound offers two solutions. First, a ‘direction of the will toward the light, with concurrent sloughing off of laziness and prejudice’ (61). Second, ‘a definite campaign against human deadwood still clogging the system. A demand either that the sabotage cease, or that the saboteurs be removed’ (61). What Pound is articulating is the need for a way to separate those willing to ‘slough off the laziness’ and those who are not in Pound’s words, the ‘deadwood’. Matthew Feldman’s 2013 *Ezra Pound’s Fascist Propaganda, 1935 – 1945* situates essays such as the above in their wider political and cultural context.

especially his *Institutions of Modernism*, and Gail McDonald's *Learning to be Modern*, New Modernist Studies means investigating the complex institutional practices that resulted in the professionalism of English Literature and the enduring monopoly modernism has held over the academy. Yet another way in which New Modernist Studies has asserted itself is by highlighting the importance of little magazines as a space in which marginal narratives competed with the standard narratives of modernism. Morrison, for example, focuses on various little magazines in order to make his point that far from damning advertising it was used in order to promote avant-garde works.

By looking at the note I aim to contribute to the ongoing revisionary project of New Modernist Studies by demonstrating that in the competing models put forward by Pound and Bridson my chosen six writers come to terms with and work through an annotative project that neither expresses Pound's disdain nor promotes Bridson's overt conciliation. Rather, there is articulated a middle-ground between the two: the note is used as a structural mechanism to promote and incite in the reader the expenditure of effort and participation. It becomes a pedagogical tool that is able to navigate the issues raised by overload and confronted by Pound and Bridson. Thus, I accept Huyssen's analysis of literary modernism as articulated through Pound, but I also aim to complicate it by evoking the figure of the note, represented by Bridson, as a means to train the reader *how* to negotiate the continually expanding literary marketplace.

### **The Modernist Note and the Crisis of Reading as Late-Modern Inheritance**

In a letter to his publisher written circa 1930 William Empson, who will be discussed at length in Chapter Two alongside David Jones, asked this question: 'And if I publish a volume of verse with notes longer than the text, as I want to do, will that be a prose work or a verse

one?’ (qtd. in Hamilton 270). This question becomes particularly relevant when considering the use of literary notes in late and postmodernism. Of the 350 annotated texts that I have surveyed over the course of writing this dissertation, approximately 100 works that make use of notes are volumes of poetry and 250 are novels. Of those 100 volumes of poetry, 70 were published prior to 1940 and of the 250 novels, 190 were published after 1940. The discrepancy can be further demonstrated by briefly pausing over some of the major annotated texts written in the twentieth century and their publication dates: *The Waste Land* (1922); *Observations* (1924); *In Parenthesis* (1936); Charles Reznikoff’s *Separate Way* (1936); some early volumes of Yeats including *Crossways* (1889) and *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899); *Pale Fire* (1962); *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* (1969); *The New York Trilogy* (1985 – 1986); *Lost in the Funhouse* (1968); *Infinite Jest* (1996); *House of Leaves* (2000). There are notable exceptions to this trend such as Ed Dorn’s *Hello, La Jolla* (1978), *The Maximus Poems* (1953), *Finnegans Wake* (1939) and *At Swim Two Birds* (1939), but it is still accurate to claim that before 1940 the majority of annotated texts were poetry and after 1940 the majority of texts were novels. In the second half of Chapter Two and throughout Chapter Three, I trace the nature of this shift and investigate its contributing factors. Beginning with Olson’s *The Maximus Poems* and especially those individual poems that he explicitly labels as footnotes, I will demonstrate that the latter half of the century witnessed the absorption of the note into the main body of the literary text. In other words, the distinction between note and text, which Empson is questioning, is blurred, as the footnote is appropriated into the fictional world of the text. In a poem it is often the case that the note, whilst literary, retains a sense of distance from the poem it is attached to, but in a novel such as *House of Leaves* or *Pale Fire* this is rendered impossible.

In Stephen Barney’s 1991 *Annotation and its Texts*, the first essay, written by James Nohrnberg and titled ‘Justifying Narrative: Commentary within Biblical Storytelling’, begins

by addressing this same issue of defining when a note starts and a text ends. He does so by asking his reader to imagine that the relationship between the first spoken word and the silence that preceded it as that of a gloss: ‘The text itself starts out as a gloss imposed or inscribed upon silence or blankness; it becomes readable [...] when sounds, marks, words, phrases, clauses, and propositions serve to explain their being copresent in a way comfortable to coherence’ (3). He adds: ‘Everything we read is thus a gloss upon or translation of, some original improvement upon silence’ (3). Taking Alfred North Whitehead’s famous assertion that ‘the safest general characterization of European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato’ (39) one step further, Nohrnberg argues, here, that all thought and all discussion, not just of the philosophical bent, is a note. Thus, it would be a methodological error to attempt to delimit the boundaries of text and note because the text is just as much an annotation as the note is. The observation also helps to explain my initial assertion that critics such as Lucas have misunderstood the literary note to be bibliographic: the notes I examine are just as much a part of the literary text as a title or section heading would be. It would be a mistake, then, to distinguish between *The Waste Land* and its notes, as Lucas does, because the notes *are* the poem. One might be forgiven for recognizing in Nohrnberg’s analysis a certain playfulness and self-erasing irony typical of deconstruction and post-structuralist thought since Barney’s collection is very much a product of its time and of this cultural milieu. In fact, most of the essays share this similar style of analysis and especially the final one, written by Jacques Derrida.

Derrida’s essay, titled ‘This is Not an Oral Footnote’, develops Nohrnberg’s thinking by continuing to probe the distinction between note and text. Derrida begins, in his characteristically convoluted way, by defining the note in the conventional manner:

In the strict sense, the status of a footnote implies a normalized, legalized, legitimized distribution of space, spacing that assigns hierarchical relationships: relationships of

authority between the so-called principal text, the footnoted text, which happens to be higher (spatially and symbolically), and the footnoting text, which happens to be lower, situated in what could be called an inferior margin (193).

Derrida's thinking here provides an initial answer to Empson's question, but it is not the same answer one would arrive at from Nohrnberg's discussion of the note. The annotated text will remain verse irrespective of how many notes there are, since the note can never reach the same textual status as verse. In other words, the annotation might heavily outweigh the verse, but it would still be designated as verse and not prose. However, Derrida goes on to complicate his initial definition in a manner much more in line with Nohrnberg and also with the aims of this dissertation: 'The author of the text that seems to occupy the main and highest place can invert and subvert the places himself, or can see himself overturned by the annotator and by the play of the game of the footnote' (194) and again 'we know that in these given pragmatic situations, it is the footnote that conveys the main message' (194). Derrida's analysis of the note provides an important window onto some of his other more well-known ideas that are equally as significant for this dissertation.

In *Of Grammatology*, for example, Derrida offers a critique of Rousseau's analysis of writing in his 'Essay on the Origin of Language'. In this essay, Rousseau claims that writing can become a 'dangerous supplement' for speech if it were to replace it (383). For Rousseau, writing is unable to capture and replicate the organic condition of speech and emotion and as such one is always compelled when writing to embellish or make artificial that which one attempts to portray. Thus, he argues, writing can only ever be viewed as constraining and unnecessarily altering what is natural and veracious in speech. Writing is not an aid to speech, but rather its corruption. However, concentrating on the use of 'supplement', Derrida points out that the word can mean both to add to, but also to substitute for. This raises a paradox where to say something as a supplement is to concede that one is able to add to and

in so doing complete that which is already complete: writing, as Derrida understands Rousseau's analysis, has the capacity to be added to speech, which is already complete, but it also makes speech complete in the first instance. Derrida arrives at a similar conclusion in his discussion of Immanuel Kant's notion of what constitutes the work [ergon] and what lies outside of the work [parergon] demonstrating that ergon is always a necessary component of parergon and as such demonstrating that the frame is always a constitutive element of the work it frames.

The relevance of Derrida's discussion of the supplement and parergon for an analysis of the note is made clear in 'This is Not an Oral Footnote' and it is a point that I will be working towards throughout the dissertation. As with Yeats's 'The Scholar', notes are invariably seen as distractions to the text to which they are attached, but, as with Derrida's analysis of the supplement, they are in fact both an addition and a necessary component; the note adds to its host text, but in doing so it becomes the host. The further point is that in discussing the supplement scholars have always already been discussing the note, but the discussion has not been articulated in that manner and this dissertation is nothing if not an exercise in raising critical awareness in order to demonstrate that the note permeates areas of debate already established as significant. In categorizing the note as a supplement in the Derridean sense there is also provided a preliminary explanation as to why the second half of the century witnessed a shift in the kinds of texts using notes. The first half of the dissertation describes the use of the note to attempt to engage readers in the materials that texts are both composed of and construct. It charts an attempt to respond to the questions borne out of information overload through the structural imperative of a note to delimit one's responses through, on the one hand, an act of clarification or by adding information, and, on the other, the invitation to expend effort through the deictic and citational property of annotation, which specifies and points to secondary material. In a saturated cultural and literary marketplace



Eliot and Jones use the note to direct a reader to material that they wish him to see and as a pedagogical device that might inculcate and internalize the proposed narrative of what is worth reading and what is not.

However, by the 1960s, and represented in this dissertation by *Pale Fire*, the modernist strategy of combating overload through prescriptivism has failed and been replaced by the ironic absorption of these narratives into the fictional world of the text. In other words, Derrida's thinking around the nature of the supplement coincides with and constructs the late-modern and postmodern literary response to the internalization of narratives once deemed to be marginal into the centre, where the frame, of which the note is one kind, ascends to the framed. Thus, the transition from annotated poem where the note is able to retain some semblance of typographic and bibliographic autonomy to annotated novel where the note becomes part of the text, itself mirrors similar paradigmatic shifts from modernism to postmodernism. However, this is not to be confused with a failure or redundancy of annotation itself, but rather further demonstration of its versatility and ensuing significance to twentieth-century literature. Just as the figure of the note represented in the first half of the twentieth century a way for writers to consolidate and work through their anxieties and responses to the shifting literary landscape so too, in the latter half of the century, it is the note that writers turn to. That the note is used to trace the apparent epistemic failure of literary modernism as registered by writers such as Nabokov and Derrida is a celebration of the central role that it plays and an affirmation that it is of the utmost urgency that it is studied in full.

To summarize, in this introduction I have brought attention to the fact that literary annotation has been woefully neglected in scholarly discourse and made clear that my primary motivation will be to redress this. I have also highlighted information overload and the upheavals it created as the cultural and historical conditions that brought about the

reemergence of literary annotation in the twentieth century. In doing this, I have also acknowledged that it is often the wider debates and questions borne out of overload that writers engage with and not necessarily the topic of overload itself. One such wider issue that this dissertation will address will be that of labour and authority and in order to provide a theoretical framework for my subsequent discussion of this, I introduced Marx's thinking and especially the notion of self-activity. I then paused over three case studies in order to substantiate the connection between overload and annotation at three separate points in the twentieth century, arguing that the note can be used to respond to overload. Once this had been established I returned to the nature of the debates that emerged out of overload by examining an exchange between Bridson and Pound and the role that both ascribe to the note, adding that the writers I examine will not adhere to either of the competing models the two put forward, but they will rather navigate a mid-point between the two. This mid-point has to do with the expenditure of effort, as Pound required, but through the mediating structure of a note, as Bridson required. Finally, I briefly touched upon the shift in annotative practices that developed in the wake of modernism and as will be investigated in the work of Olson, Nabokov, and Wallace.

In order to substantiate the conceptual and historical scope covered in this introduction the dissertation will be divided into three central comparative chapters, with each one exploring the work of two writers who inhabit a comparable literary and historical moment. As such, Chapter One will address the historical moment occupied by T.S. Eliot and Marianne Moore through a discussion of *The Waste Land* and *Observations*. Chapter Two will explore the work of David Jones and Charles Olson along with a substantial discussion of Ezra Pound. Finally, Chapter Three will look at the work of Vladimir Nabokov and David Foster Wallace. What I hope to tease out of my analysis of these writers is both a consideration of the connection between historical moment, literary text and its use of notes,

and the various and rich connections between the texts themselves. The dissertation will therefore proceed by examining *The Waste Land* and by arguing that Eliot enacts a strategy of effort that is aimed at motivating his reader to move beyond the confines of the poem in order to consult certain specified materials. This analysis will be juxtaposed with an analysis of Eliot's later poetry and prose in which he attempts to renege on the annotative practices of *The Waste Land*. This will be read alongside Moore's *Observations* with further reference to the notion that a text might be able to incite its readers to become active participants. Whereas with Eliot the emphasis is on the physical act of removing oneself from the textual sphere, in my discussion of *Observations* the necessity of enacting labour in service of the literary text will refer to Moore's injunction for her reader to investigate discrepancies between her sources as they appear in the notes and as they appear in the poetry. Both writers sought to train the reader in the capacity of thought that they felt was lacking and for Moore this is an education through participation. Thus, the distinction is whether one ought to specify the materials to be engaged with or not. For Moore what matters is that one participates in the generation of meaning and not what kind of materials one engages with: her poetics is not the promotion of a syllabus of texts, but of a disposition.

In Chapter Two the narrative of effort as a response to the questions posed by overload will be complicated and somewhat challenged by David Jones as demonstrated in his *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata*. Here, the responsibility implied by Eliot's and Moore's desire to see the reader take on active management of his own reading experience will be negated by Jones's much more authoritarian use of annotation. Rather than inciting effort, Jones manages his crisis of reading by using the notes to instruct his reader how to approach his verse. Jones's coercive poetics will be illuminated by a detailed discussion of Pound's equally coercive writing as exemplified across various essays, some of which have already been examined, and *The Cantos*. However, I contrast this analysis with Charles

Olson's *The Maximus Poems*, arguing that this work represents the apex of reader participation. Thus, one recognises in both Jones and Olson the inheritance of certain annotative strands from Eliot and Moore. Both Jones and Olson represent a move through and then away from modernism. Jones is determined to take Eliot's annotative method to its logical end and in so doing he alters it from invitation to requisition, whilst Olson, for all of his appearance of authority, proposes a quite different approach. What ultimately matters to Olson is 'method'. The reader is encouraged to unearth his own cultural deposits and, significantly, is provided the methodological tools to do so. Olson's poetics is based around the principle of destabilizing authoritarian principles of coercion that are evident in both Jones and Pound. This strategy comes to fruition in the work of George Butterick and his annotated guide to *The Maximus Poems* and as such Butterick will be discussed at length alongside Olson.

Finally, in Chapter Three I examine *Pale Fire* and demonstrate that Nabokov attempts to dismantle the strategy of effort thus far examined and instead to simulate the epistemic strategies of modernism by inviting effort only to ridicule those who accept. Continuing on from my discussion of coercion in Olson and Jones, I argue that Nabokov does something similar to Olson, but in a very different manner. It is through his notes that Nabokov articulates a specifically political message. However, arguing that the notes lead nowhere, as I do, or that they simulate labour only to then ridicule it is not to say that they are pointless or not worth reading; one need only look to Nabokov's annotation of Pushkin to see that he thought very deeply about the practice of annotation. Yet, in suggesting there *is* an answer to be uncovered, as many do, I want to argue that one runs the risk of overlooking what is perhaps the main thrust of the novel: there is *no* single message to be uncovered, but this in itself is anti-authoritarian. Nabokov is providing a textual space in which the reader has the opportunity to reject what the novel compels him to do. My analysis will then follow through

to Wallace's *Infinite Jest* by exploring how this text maintains the necessity for reader participation, but also reasserts the modernist dependence on a hierarchy between what is valuable and non-valuable as a way to confront what is now an unprecedented level of information overload. Wallace seeks to empower his reader in much the same way that Nabokov does by transforming the act and need of selection into a significant creative enterprise. In order to co-ordinate my analysis each chapter will use the three case studies of annotation already discussed: the Mundaneum, Briet's documentation and the memex machine, and the World Wide Web, as a structural and conceptual signpost. I will continue to understand these inventions, coming as they do at the start, middle, and end of the twentieth century, as symptomatic of a wider cultural shift; a shift, as I will demonstrate, with which my chosen writers were deeply conversant, and which they registered, as this thesis shows, through their use of the note.

# I

## Writing in the Age of the Mundaneum: T.S. Eliot, Marianne Moore and the Modernist Note

First performed in 1934, these lines from T.S. Eliot's pageant play *The Rock* neatly characterise the perceived crisis of reading thus far described: 'Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? / Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?' (147). With this, Eliot captures the sense of anxiety that pervaded the work of writers such as Pound and speaks to the ostensible degradation of readers and reading, and the simultaneous desire to discover its origin and address it. In order to continue to press upon this anxiety as represented and navigated in the early twentieth century, this chapter will bring together and explore Eliot's *The Waste Land* and Marianne Moore's *Observations*. When considering the perceived crisis of reading and the attendant issues already identified, it will be demonstrated that both writers employ the figure of the note in order to index this crisis and work through a response. It is therefore by comparing and contrasting these two writers and further developing my understanding of the comparable cultural moment they inhabit that I will pursue the argument for the significance and artistic merit of literary notes. However, importantly, I will also demonstrate that Moore and Eliot use the note in order to work through contrasting responses to this crisis.

Put simply, although this position will be complicated and extended throughout the chapter, Eliot uses his notes in *The Waste Land* in order to provoke and invite the reader to move beyond the confines of his poem and to engage with a predesignated syllabus of texts. As such, his annotative strategy is deictic and citational: he is inviting the reader to expend

effort and to participate in the cultural and literary materials towards which his notes point. This might mean, for instance, reading and exploring a copy of *The Tempest* or *The White Devil*. Moore adopts a quite different approach to Eliot. She articulates through the figure of the note a methodology that revolves around the need to participate and in so doing to inspect written material of all forms, from Shakespeare to magazines to advertisements. Thus, what matters most to Moore is *how* one engages with and handles information and not, as with Eliot, *what* those materials are. Both, then, seek to train the reader in the capacity of thought that they felt was lacking and for both this is predicated on participation or, to use the Marxist term, self-activity. The fault line along which I distinguish the two writers, then, is whether or not and to what extent the poet ought to specify the materials to be engaged with. The answer to this question, indexed as it is in both through the figure of the note, characterises two of the primary ways in which modernism articulated its response to information overload. For Moore, what matters most is that one participates in the generation of meaning and not, as with Eliot, the kinds of material that one engages with: her poetics is not the promotion of a syllabus of texts, but of a disposition.

One could also frame this relationship in terms of Raymond Williams' description of residual and emergent cultural strategies, wherein an emergent mode of production or thinking challenges the hegemony of an entrenched one. In this sense, Eliot's apparent need to conserve extant forms of literary value and to act as a bulwark against the insurgence of mass print functions as residual cultural practice set against Moore's inclination to work with the emergent forms of literary production and to train her readers in how best they might be navigated. Thus, whilst both recognise that the twentieth century has undergone a systemic shift in the practices and cultural landscapes of reading, Eliot concerns himself with the apparent inundation of the marketplace and consequent inability for a reader to select what to

read, and Moore concerns herself with the need to retrain the reading public in the practices and methodologies of evaluation and analysis.

### **Annotative Installation I: The Modernist Projects of Paul Otlet**

Before directly discussing the works of these two writers, I first want to return to the thinking of Paul Otlet in order to illuminate and survey the cultural climate out of which both Eliot and Moore are writing. Famous as the progenitor of the science of information management, or ‘documentationism’ (*Monde* 3) as he labelled it, and also the creator of the Mundaneum, Otlet’s work reveals a uniquely modernist mind.<sup>15</sup> Throughout his writing, and specifically the 1925 *Monde*, I will argue that one recognises the same sense of crisis shared by writers such as Eliot and Moore, but also, significantly, that Otlet registers the competing annotative responses that will be explored at length throughout this chapter. Thus, in tracing Otlet’s thinking, conversant with and symptomatic of the modernist cultural moment, as I wish to argue that it was, I hope first to locate both Eliot and Moore within a richly suggestive wider contextual net.

Otlet devoted his career to attempting to catalogue and classify the entire field of human learning with his ultimate goal being not only to collate this material for posterity, but also to reconfigure the very ways in which knowledge was transmitted. The real-world fruition of this ambition was the Mundaneum, the vast annotated and networked collection of over twelve million index cards. Reflecting on this achievement in *Monde*, Otlet explained his initial plan: ‘Information, from which has been removed all dross and foreign elements, will be set out in a quite analytical way. It will be recorded on separate leaves or cards rather than being confined to volumes’ (84). He continues to explain that his aim is to ‘detach what

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<sup>15</sup> For a fuller discussion of Otlet and his work see Alex Wright’s *Cataloguing the World: Paul Otlet and the Birth of the Information Age*.



the book amalgamates, to reduce all that is complex to its elements and to devote a page to each' (149). Otlet further outlines the need 'to condense what has been written and to retrieve scientific information in an analytical form from which any personal interpretation has been removed' (85) and to transcribe this onto annotated index cards so that information will be 'easier to consult and easier to handle' (85). Here, then, microcosmically stipulated, are the contrary impulses of Eliot and Moore. Otlet's assertions reveal two strands of thinking, which will return in full force in my analysis of Eliot and Moore. In this sense, and perhaps without realising it, Otlet is tapping into a much deeper modernist well of anxiety that Eliot and Moore, at almost exactly the same time, were also tapping into.

On the one hand, and aligned to Moore, there is evident the desire to elucidate a repeatable methodology for the collection, classification, and subsequent accessing of information. He is seeking to articulate a particular way of handling information at a time when there was more of it than ever before. He is bibliographically reconfiguring how information ought to be stored and proposing a means of maintaining an analytical standard so as to improve one's ability to navigate and read what has been written. Like Moore, he is seeking to articulate a method and a means for confronting the burgeoning influx of new reading material. However, on the other hand, and aligned to Eliot, there is obvious in Otlet's writing a need to impose upon that information an agenda. In other words, there is evident the inescapable recognition that to collate and classify is also to edit and, as such, certain information is necessarily promoted and valued above and against other information. This is especially noticeable in Otlet's description of removing the 'dross and foreign elements' and instead setting the information out in an 'analytical way'. That some information is able to be considered 'dross' precisely betrays Otlet's almost Poundian instinct to predetermine what material one ought to spend time engaging with and what is not worth one's trouble. One wonders when reading this, for instance, when information is being 'condensed' what is also

being removed and further we might ask what alteration must be undergone to render information ostensibly without personal bias. Otlet is propagating not only a methodology for handling information, but also a distinction between materials that are worth retaining and materials that are not, according, as with Pound, to his authoritative criteria for selection. It is further interesting to see Otlet mobilizing, through the use of ‘foreign’, potentially inflammatory rhetoric in order to designate some information as worthy of its place on the index card, as opposed to it being out of place. One might recall that this is precisely the same rhetoric that was employed by Pound, but also writers such as B-RR-LL as discussed in the introduction, demonstrating further that in this mood Otlet is just as much embroiled in the act of cultural policing as either Pound or indeed Eliot.

This simultaneous desire to elucidate a methodology and to designate what ought to be classified is, as with Eliot and Moore, a reaction to the influx of information and this is made clear later in *Monde* when Otlet bemoans ‘the tremendous masses of materials’ (80) and argues that ‘there is too much to read, the times are wrong’ (79). Presumably, the latter comment refers to an anxiety that there is not *enough* time in order to construct a way of dealing with the material and hence Otlet’s urgency. He goes on to comment: ‘Everyone has the freedom to publish on any subject, in any manner, in any form, in any style, consequently to clutter up the field of documentation with vague and useless productions’ (83). His proposed solution, in addition to the Mundaneum, is to consider imposing ‘a doctrine of moral restraint in the sphere of the book where an overwhelming and truly harmful proliferation is rampant’ (83). Again, Otlet is using a lexicon highly reminiscent of writers such as Pound and conjoined to Eliot’s complaints in *The Rock*. With these comments, Otlet is capturing the response that Eliot would articulate through the figure of the note in *The Waste Land*. Both turn to notation in their attempt to control the ‘truly harmful proliferation’:

there must be articulated a way of managing information by designating what ought to be embraced and what ought to be excluded and therefore curtailing its continued growth.

Indeed, in an earlier pamphlet published in 1922, the same year that Eliot published *The Waste Land*, Otlet lamented: ‘The debasement of all kinds of publication is alarming to those who are concerned about quality rather than quantity. What is original in all of these books, brochures, and journal articles, the publication of which is announced each week in publisher’s catalogues and so adding to the quarry?’ (*The Science of Documentation* 11). The solution to the perceived crisis, this would imply, is obvious and it is the same solution adopted by Eliot: there must be uncovered or constructed a mechanism for sorting what is valuable and what is not. To continue with Otlet’s metaphor of the quarry, there must be made available the means of discovering and differentiating marble from chalk, and for both Otlet and Eliot this revolves around notation. As will be addressed further in my analysis of *The Waste Land*, the proposed solution revolves also around an act of comparison. Both Eliot and Otlet use the figure of the note in order to engage in acts of comparison whereby a sifting of materials takes place to determine the genuinely valuable. In a very similar turn of phrase, George Newnes, the founder of popular magazine *Tit-Bits*, described his magazine as performing ‘an organised system of extraction’ on the ‘large numbers of the immense variety of books and papers, [that] have gone on accumulating, until now their number is fabulous’ (qtd. in Bartholomew 21).<sup>16</sup> Arguably, Eliot and Otlet would not have been unhappy with this description of their own projects, albeit that Eliot’s project implies a seriousness to which Newnes seems not to subscribe.

However, despite these rather vitriolic attacks on the apparently debased literary and cultural landscape of the early twentieth century, elsewhere, Otlet does also, in a Moore-like turn of mind, reiterate the need to focus on a methodology so as to deal with *all* materials and

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<sup>16</sup> *Tit-Bits* presented a weekly selection of snippets from across a variety of sources and at its peak reached a circulation of 1 150 000 in 1955.

not simply those predesignated as worth indexing. Speaking about the same ‘quarry’ of material cited above, Otlet tempers his approach by conceding: ‘No one would dream of suppressing or even limiting the precious freedom to write, a necessary corollary of freedom of thought, which is, in itself, nothing more than the fundamental right of intellectual life, action, and procreation’ (12). This seems to suggest that, like Moore, Otlet’s concern is not in fact the kinds of material produced, but rather the institutional and cultural means of dealing with them, which is what Otlet hopes to provide through his *Mundaneum* and Moore hopes to cultivate through the annotative strategies encoded into *Observations*. Otlet makes this aspect of his project clear when he writes: ‘By gathering these leaves together and classifying and organizing them according to the headings of a reliable, precise and detailed classification we will create the “Universal Book” of knowledge, a book which will never be completed but will grow unceasingly’ (80). Evidently, then, ‘growth’ is not an issue for Otlet and indeed is something to be embraced as long as it can be suitably controlled and a methodology elucidated for navigating the influx. What seems to be at stake for Otlet is not the materials that will find their way into the ‘Universal Book’, but rather a way for the material to be classified and it is on this point one might differentiate his thinking from that of Eliot. Indeed, at this point in his text, Otlet seems mostly to lament the apparent debasement in *how* texts are read and not *which* texts are read. When considering the proliferation of reading matter Otlet, rather wistfully remembers how ‘once one read; today one refers to, checks through, skims, *vita brevis ars longa!*’ (79). Otlet is here imbuing the notion of reading with a particular chain of signification that relates to taking one’s time and is perhaps akin to what was concurrently developing within the realm of professional literary criticism under the heading of ‘close reading’. This is what he hopes to cultivate and so presumably this is something that could be applied to any text. If this is the case, then delineating a syllabus of

texts is not a necessary solution, albeit someone such as F.R. Leavis would continue to do both.

Interestingly, a further point of connection between Otlet and Eliot and Moore, which will be expanded upon, is Otlet's conviction that effort and participation is essential to any successful response to the crisis. At the height of the Mundaneum, Otlet employed a team of workers whose job it was to annotate index cards, create links between them, and then respond to any requests for cards from the public. He called these people 'knowledge workers' (*Monde* 19), but this was always, for Otlet, an intermediary position. Upon completion of the Universal Book, Otlet's ambition was always for everyone to become 'knowledge workers': 'There will be a time when I am not needed, when people will traverse the Universal Book for themselves and without me [...] they will be as active as I am' (*Monde* 76). As recognised in the earlier analysis of Marx, Otlet invokes labour here in relation to authority, but then also simultaneously dismantles it. He hopes that readers will 'traverse' the book, which, as already seen, is comprised of necessarily 'condensed' and edited information and as such he tacitly establishes and confers upon the reader his own agenda. At the same time, however, he wishes to instil a methodology that allows those reading to be 'active' and participate beyond the parameters he initially established. As will become increasingly evident, this is a wonderfully precise representation of the contrary pedagogical strands that motivate and underpin Eliot and Moore's annotative strategies. As with Eliot and Moore, then, Otlet recognised that any response to the perceived crisis must stem from a willingness to participate and to expend effort and to become a part of the process, whether that is by applying a methodology or engaging with materials predesignated as worthy of one's attention. However, further to this, and on the point of 'knowledge workers', one could reapply Marx's thinking and question to what extent the annotations produced by these workers were generative and creative or, as they were completed at the

behest of Otlet in service of a partly commercial enterprise, alienating. This again returns us to a central question that this dissertation will address and is here magnified through Otlet, but applicable to many of the writers elsewhere explored: to what extent does a reader of notes, or any reader for that matter, determine the direction and form of his intellectual and physical labour within the context of the literary work?

What this brief reintroduction of Otlet's thinking has hoped to do is to prefigure the debates that are so central to Eliot and Moore, shortly to be explored in much more detail, and that are clearly germane to the wider debates of modernism of which all three writers are a part. Within Otlet's writing he registers, at different points, the need for a methodology, but also the need for a syllabus of texts, and in this he is responding to the same crisis and along the same lines articulated by Moore and Eliot. He is creating a methodology for how to handle information, but he is also promoting the need for it to be filtered. This is the tightrope along which Otlet balances and also the line by which one might usefully divide the thinking of Eliot and Moore and their response to the perceived crisis. As such, Otlet will be used as a reference point throughout this chapter in my attempt to trace the competing annotative responses to the crisis negotiated by Eliot and Moore and their contrary qualitative responses to navigating and defining what might be deemed valuable and non-valuable information within a literary and cultural landscape characterised by mass print.

### **T.S. Eliot's Notes: The 'Dross' of *The Waste Land***

Cited at the beginning of this chapter, Eliot's formulation in *The Rock*, which differentiates between wisdom and information, can be reapplied to *The Waste Land's* notes as an apt way of understanding how they have been critically received since their publication. Depending on the critic being consulted the notes have been historically viewed either as analogous to

Otlet's conception of 'dross' (84), a 'foreign' (84) element within the poem and much akin to white noise, or a significant and enduring repository for poetic wisdom. In addition to the already discussed F.L. Lucas and Edgell Rickward, one might add, for instance, Hugh Kenner's warning to prospective students that 'we shall do best to discard the notes as much as possible; they have bedevilled discussion for decades' (150). Alternatively, one could point to Cleanth Brooks's view of the notes as a 'scaffold' that is 'valuable if not absolutely necessary' and without the help of which readers would be 'prevented from getting at the poem at all' (154). Thus, to enter into a discussion of Eliot's notes is to acknowledge the long and contentious critical history that is attached to them. What is the exact nature of the reading strategies that Eliot promotes in order to confront the shifting literary landscape that he bears witness to and how does he utilise the figure of the note to index and respond to this crisis? Further, and despite Kenner's and Lucas's protestations to the contrary, in what ways might it be said that Eliot elevates the practice of note taking to an art form? It is also necessary to state at the outset that the development of my argument will proceed gradually and with painstaking exposition. Thus, and perhaps aptly so, like the object of my enquiry the most significant revelation of this section of the chapter comes at its end. It is of paramount importance that I continue carefully to set out the cultural circumstances that gave rise to Eliot's notes before examining them directly. My proposed revaluation of *The Waste Land's* notes, which I take to be this section's major contribution to Eliot studies, will take place once these wider literary and cultural considerations have been addressed, before then continuing to discuss Moore in light of my analysis of *The Waste Land*.

If one were to specify the precise moment at which the critical reputation of *The Waste Land's* notes reached their lowest point, at which point they were most considered 'dross' and 'foreign' to the poem, then one would be hard pressed to find a better answer than 30 April 1956. Taking place thirty-four years after *The Waste Land* was published and eight

years before Eliot passed away, it was on this date that Eliot delivered a lecture at the University of Minnesota titled ‘The Frontiers of Criticism’. Despite being one of the pre-eminent literary events of its time and attracting a crowd of over 14 000 people (Ackroyd 317) the speech has since become synonymous with one passage:

Here I must admit that I am, on one conspicuous occasion, not guiltless of having led critics into temptation. The notes to *The Waste Land* I had at first intended to put down all the references for my quotations, with a view to spiking the guns of critics of my earlier poems who had accused me of plagiarism. Then, when it came to print *The Waste Land* as a little book – for the poem on its first appearance in the *Dial* and the *Criterion* had no notes whatever – it was discovered that the poem was inconveniently short, so I set to work to expand the notes, in order to provide a few more pages of printed matter, with the result that they became the remarkable exposition of bogus scholarship that is still on view to-day. I have sometimes thought of getting rid of these notes; but now they can never be unstuck. They have had almost greater popularity than the poem itself – anyone who bought my book of poems, and found that the notes to *The Waste Land* were not in it, would demand his money back (109-110).

The story that Eliot relays is by now a very familiar one, but it is worth recounting nonetheless. The notes were added at the behest of the poem’s first book publisher, Horace Liveright, who contacted Ezra Pound in a letter dated 11 January 1922 to ask if the text could be extended to fill a standard sixty-four page publication. The result of Liveright’s request was Eliot’s notes. Thus, rather than exhibiting poetic merit, the argument follows, the notes are nothing more than bibliographic padding and exist because of the requirements of a publisher. For the most part, critics have been more than happy to accept the narrative laid out by Eliot in 1956 and indeed, so commonplace has the story become that it seems one



cannot mention the notes without also saying something of book sizes. This critical position is neatly summarized by Bartholomew Brinkman when he writes: ‘The general critical rationale for Eliot’s strategy to add notes – which were more or less dashed off and have famously become somewhat of a red herring in the poem’s interpretation – was that he needed to get ink on enough pages to publish the poem as a book’ (*Poetic Modernism* 136). Further, in his 2007 *The Annotated Waste Land*, for instance, Lawrence Rainey concludes that ‘Eliot himself, in his very late years, was relaxed enough that he could be more candid about the notes and their status’ (37) and that though ‘his late memory garbled a few points of chronology and omitted some details, its general tenor was accurate’ (37).

Despite Rainey’s unquestioning acceptance of the story it is, in fact, highly likely that Eliot’s ostensible honesty was exaggerated and that he had already completed and planned to include the notes months before Liveright contacted Pound. In his 1990 study *Eliot, Joyce and Company*, and especially the chapter ‘*Ulysses* and *The Waste Land*’, Stanley Sultan outlines a persuasive chronology of the notes concluding that they ‘were withheld from a prior periodical publication to protect the value of the book’ (143). Sultan is referring, here, to the inclusion of *The Waste Land* in the October 1922 issue of James Watson and Scofield Thayer’s the *Dial*. The poem had been given to Thayer and Watson before Liveright on the agreement that the notes would be omitted and that they would purchase 350 copies of the book to cover lost sales. This account is given credence by the fact that in the *Dial* version of the poem the one note that was included explained that ‘an edition of *The Waste Land* with annotations by Mr Eliot will be issued by Boni and Liveright’ (qtd. in Detmar 83). Thus, in his comments from ‘The Frontiers of Criticism’, Eliot gives the false impression that *The Waste Land* as it appeared in the *Dial* was the completed and true imprint of the text and that the notes were included at the last minute to compensate for an ‘inconveniently short’ text and to provide ‘a few more pages of printed matter’. Given this, the much more significant

and interesting question to ask is why did Eliot decide, so long after their publication, to dismiss his notes?

My initial discussion of Eliot's notes, and whether they belong to the category of 'dross' or not, will proceed from the presumption that there *is* a lot more to be said for and about Eliot's notes: their inclusion and subsequent attempted excision is far more culturally and critically compelling than Rainey or, for that matter, Eliot would have us believe. Why is it that in 1956 Eliot was happy to denigrate his notes as 'a remarkable exposition of bogus scholarship', which he would rather see removed? Further, why have critics so readily accepted Eliot's explanation? These are questions that require a more nuanced and developed answer than is currently available. The purpose of my analysis of *The Waste Land* will partly be to complicate and challenge this entrenched narrative. Throughout the course of this examination, I will propose and then demonstrate that to misread, and worse still disregard, Eliot's notes is to misread the poem itself. The notes are not peripheral to *The Waste Land*, but rather and in a very real and significant way, they *are* the poem.

In order to demonstrate this, I will argue that an alternative reason for the dismissal can be found in Eliot's prose of the 1920s and 1930s, which charts a shift in thinking congruent with the subsequent rejection of the notes. In his earlier criticism, Eliot celebrates and promotes a reading strategy wherein one is required to expend effort. *The Waste Land* and its notes are the apotheosis of this trend: they provide a space through which Eliot can articulate the need for his reader to participate in the cultural and literary materials to which his notes point. As already explained, one is thus expected to follow the citational path laid out by the notes, to read the works that they specify, and to engage with them: this extranoematic undertaking is crucial to Eliot's poetic project. His notes codify and enact the by now established entreaty to shore up literary and cultural fragments against the 'plague of books' (232) that B-RR-LL bewailed. They are central, I argue, to the wider modernist

project, shared by Pound and Otlet, of reconfiguring the literary and cultural makeup of contemporary audiences. What is being discussed here is not only the intellectual exertion that is required to read the likes of Shakespeare and Baudelaire, but also the physical effort necessary to locate and obtain a copy of the text. Indeed, the apparent annotative inducement to obtain the text as well as intellectually engage with it coincides very well with Eliot's own ideas about the cultural benefit of promoting personal libraries, which he maintained throughout his life. In a speech given to the London Library in 1925, for instance, he advocated the need for so-called 'gentleman's libraries', which, he explained, is 'a library of the best editions of such books as a person of education and culture would wish to have at hand' (34). These collections, he continues, 'have great value' and enable the texts always to be available to 'those worthy to examine them' (37). One sees very clearly, here, the way in which both Eliot and Otlet are bound to the wider issue of finding ways to aid in the dissemination and collation of information, or knowledge, deemed valuable and further that possession of or engagement with such works also confers 'worth' onto the reader.

As discussed previously, Eliot is putting to work the deictic and citational capacity of annotation to specify and point to a particular text that exists beyond the verse being read. This is a centrifugal movement best characterised, following Espen Aarseth in his 1997 study *Cybertext*, as ergodic. Coined by taking the Greek words 'ergon', meaning 'work', and 'hodos', meaning 'path', ergodic literature, Espen explains, requires 'nontrivial effort [...] to allow the reader to traverse the text' (1). Aarseth continues by distinguishing between ergodic literature and nonergodic literature where a reader of the latter is akin to a passenger on a train: 'he can study and interpret the shifting landscape, he may rest his eyes wherever he pleases, even release the emergency break and stop off, but he is not free to move the tracks in a different direction' (3-4). Whilst it is certainly true that any reading of *The Waste Land* is strenuous, one should still question the precise nature of the reading experience that is most

likely to be encountered in a specific textual environment: if one were to read Eliot's poem without notes, as would have been the case in the *Dial*, then the experience that is promoted is a linear one, but to read the poem with them is to be compelled, by virtue of the notes' structural and typographic condition, to participate and move beyond its textual parameters.

Whilst Aarseth applies his observations almost exclusively to the discussion of video games and electronic literature, I will demonstrate that *The Waste Land* uses its notes to construct and enact a semiotic sequence that requires its reader to expend intellectual as well as physical effort in a manner that is more complex and participatory than, say, turning a page or moving one's eyes, and in this *The Waste Land* might be considered ergodic. Eliot is mobilising, through his notes, a reading strategy predicated on physical interaction: the act of suspending one's reading of the poem to instead consult *The Tempest* (1611) or *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606) becomes part of the text's signification and is fed back into one's reading experience. The cited fragment comes metonymically to represent the whole document with the further injunction being to read it in its entirety. Thus, the crucial act that is being registered through the note is an act of comparison and connection. What is at stake for Eliot is a thorough consideration of what it might mean to connect and compare across languages, cultures, geographical and historical distance, literature, and further the import of this for the modernist moment. If one takes the lines 'On Margate Sands / I can connect / Nothing with nothing' (*The Waste Land* 70) as more than an admission of biography, but a precise articulation of the cultural moment within which Eliot is writing then this issue of connection and comparison becomes a fundamental one. What Eliot's notes do is to disclose a method for *how* one might connect and further, through delineation, *what* ought to be connected. Effort and participation, as characterised above, takes the form of connection and comparison and it is this act of comparison, concentrated through effort and registered through the notes, that makes the cultural project of *The Waste Land* possible. In his promotion of the annotative

network, the 'reseau' (*Monde* 7), Otlet too, is very concerned with the need to facilitate connection and comparison across disparate material and in this sense one sees again that Eliot's poetics is directly borne out of an ostensibly debilitating proliferation of material. Returning to Eliot's lines from *The Rock*, the notes to *The Waste Land* are a way to navigate through information and back towards wisdom or knowledge. Further, in attempting to disclose a method Eliot shares clear similarities with Moore. Where she parts ways with him is in his inclination to disclose also what ought to be read.

However, beginning in the 1930s and fully established by 1956, Eliot has moved away from advocating effort to instead, and for reasons that will become apparent, challenging it. The notes are dismissed in 'Frontiers of Criticism' not because Eliot has finally decided to regale his audience with the truth, but rather because they no longer fit into his critical and poetic schematic. The notes represent the need for labour and reader participation, which are attributes that later in his career Eliot no longer deemed appropriate. In his 1926 *Principles of Literary Criticism* I.A. Richards posed this question: 'Is *The Waste Land* worth the trouble it entails?' (275). For the Eliot of 1922 it absolutely was, but for the Eliot of 1956 it was not.

In her 2006 article 'Heroism and the Role of the Reader', for example, Amy Hume reformulates Eliot's reader as a pilgrim who is, she writes, 'addressed, guided, encouraged, compelled, and coerced [by the voices in the poem] into the role of hero' (4). She argues that 'to be passive readers, to yawn, and be lulled to sleep, while common is still devastatingly harmful' (4) and adds that whilst a 'modern epic hero may simply be anyone who is sitting and reading attentively [...] The reader/hero [...] must take action' (6). However, Hume's argument begins to falter when she endeavours to articulate exactly how *The Waste Land* demands effort from its reader and what the nature of its co-production is. The culmination of her argument comes when she offers this example of *The Waste Land's* effort: 'The poem

provides readers with the sound of water, “drip drop drip drop drop drop drop”, but it is the reader’s imagination that makes the dripping sounds turn into real water’ (10). Hume describes this as an act of ‘collaboration’ (10) where the reader becomes a co-creator of the poem’s meaning. Yet surely, the imaginative response that Hume describes is no more active than one’s imaginative response to any piece of literature. If one were to pick up Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Treasure Island* one could certainly imagine battling pirates, or if you were reading H.P. Lovecraft it would be no surprise to find yourself checking the corners of the room you sat in. What Hume describes is in no way unique to *The Waste Land*. By pressing on Eliot’s conception of effort and the wider cultural debates being built around it at the time of *The Waste Land*’s publication, I aim to provide an alternative to Hume and to reassess how Eliot has thus far been understood.

### **Worth the Trouble: The Two Eliots**

In his 1921 ‘The Metaphysical Poets’, originally published in the October edition of the *Times Literary Supplement*, Eliot contends that Metaphysics has become ‘a term of abuse’ (59) and as such he sets himself the task of re-examining that phrase and those writers synonymous with it: John Donne, Abraham Cowley and George Herbert. From the beginning of his essay, Eliot isolates Samuel Johnson as a critic who was particularly guilty of establishing Metaphysical poetry as a pejorative label. In his essay on Abraham Cowley, written for *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets* (1779-81), Johnson coined and used the phrase Metaphysical poetry in much the same manner that, forty years later, Robert Southey would christen the Satanic School of Poetry. Yet, for Eliot the same phrase denotes writing that should be embraced and even emulated. Given, then, that Eliot’s task was to undermine Johnson’s definition of the Metaphysical Poets, and to replace that definition with one that is

more laudable, it is all the more surprising that both critics agree on the particulars of a Metaphysical poet.

There are three major points of agreement. First, both critics remark that the Metaphysical Poets composed verse that was erudite. In his essay on Cowley, for example, Johnson writes: ‘The Metaphysical Poets were men of learning, and to show their learning was their whole endeavour’ (677). Similarly, Eliot names Donne an ‘intellectual poet’ (64) as well as declaring that ‘the more intelligent [a poet] is the better’ (65). Second, both critics comment on the elaborate and inventive use of imagery, with Johnson noting that Donne’s pair of compasses in ‘A Valediction’ (1633) is a kind of ‘*discordia concors*; a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike’ (678). Speaking about the same image, Eliot writes that the figure of speech is taken ‘to the furthest stage to which ingenuity can carry it’ (60). Third, both Eliot and Johnson believe this kind of exorbitant imagery to have the same effect upon a reader. In order to comprehend a poet such as Donne the reader must be able and willing to expend a certain amount of effort: Johnson notes that ‘the mind is exercised’ (679) with Eliot arguing there is required ‘considerable agility on the part of the reader’ (60). Indeed, Eliot expresses this same sentiment when discussing Ben Jonson in an essay of 1919. Eliot contends that ‘the immediate appeal of Jonson is to the mind’ and that appreciation requires effort: ‘[N]ot many people are capable of discovering for themselves the beauty which is only found after labour’ (89). Jonson, as with Donne, Eliot remarks, is a poet who ‘requires study’ (90) and whose readers must be ‘industrious’ (89).

Thus, the difference between Johnson and Eliot comes not from the isolation of those traits, but the manner in which they are regarded. The difference between Eliot and Johnson revolves around the extent to which they believe a reader must labour. In order to read Metaphysical poetry a reader is required to do something; they must be alert to the

complexity of the verse and be willing to engage with that complexity. Take, for example, the lines in ‘A Valediction’ that both Johnson and Eliot refer to:

If they be two, they are two so  
 As stiff twin compasses are two;  
 Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show  
 To move, but doth, if th’ other do (Donne 84).

These lines are the culmination of the speaker’s attempt to persuade his lover that their imminent separation need not be a cause for sadness. The poem moves from one metaphor to the next, all of which demonstrate that separation is spiritually beneficial: the lovers’ souls, for example, may exist geographically far apart, but the connection between them, represented by the points of the compass, is able to extend and *encompass* all of the space in-between. Whilst the two souls are separate, the speaker argues, they mimic the feet of a compass: one soul is the fixed foot of the instrument and the other pivots around that foot creating a perfect circle. From its first line, the poem steadily moves away from traditional imagery of love, finally arriving at the cited compass metaphor. It is this outward movement that Eliot describes as belonging to the furthest stage of ingenuity.

A conceit such as the compass relies on a reader’s ability to follow the argument of the poem and to keep up with the logic of the poetic world as it moves further and further away from the logic of the reader’s world. This requires effort or what Eliot calls ‘considerable mental agility’. The reader must be aware and must engage with each line before moving on to the next so that the furthest point still makes sense: comprehending the ‘rapid associations’ of the poem demands effort on the part of the reader. Thus, the compass and the significance that Eliot ascribes to it is a key moment in my wider argument around effort and as such it will be returned to later: what the compass represents for Eliot is the necessity of making connections through and across physical distances and further it comes



to register the act of comparing one text to another that is in turn articulated through the annotative gesture of *The Waste Land*. As the author of *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), it is not surprising that such deliberate complexity is anathema to Johnson's thinking. For Johnson, complexity should be replaced with clarity, and effort placed upon the shoulders of the writer and not a reader, a point that he makes clear in the preface to his dictionary: 'When I took the first survey of my undertaking, I found our speech copious without order, and energetic without rules: wherever I turned my view, there was perplexity to be disentangled, and confusion to be regulated' (307). Johnson's reasons for not reading the Metaphysical Poets are Eliot's exact reasons as to why one *must* read them.<sup>17</sup>

Eliot concludes 'The Metaphysical Poets' by discussing a cultural shift that he names the 'dissociation of sensibility' (64). Taking place sometime after the Metaphysical Poets, the dissociation refers to a rupture that took place in poetry and one's ability to write poetry: a person's response to the world around them had become separated from their ability to articulate that experience intelligently. If twentieth-century culture stands any chance of revitalisation, so Eliot's argument goes, it must be complex: 'We can only say that it appears likely that poets in our civilisation, as it exists at present, must be *difficult*. Our civilisation comprehends great variety and complexity and this variety and complexity, playing upon a refined sensibility, must produce various and complex results' (65).<sup>18</sup> Metaphysical poetry, with its emphasis on density, erudition and effort, serves as a model for contemporary poetry. Coming at the end of 'The Metaphysical Poets' and given the preceding discussion and emphasis on effort, one can safely read in Eliot's characterisation of 'difficulty' the subtext of

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<sup>17</sup> It is not within the scope of this section to discuss Johnson at any great length. The Samuel Johnson evoked in this analysis is, necessarily, the same Samuel Johnson that is evoked by Eliot. In other words, Johnson is only examined to the extent that Eliot examines him in 'The Metaphysical Poets': Johnson's thinking is important only in as much as Eliot appears to agree or disagree with him. Johnson's essay on Cowley is used not in its own right, but in order to better understand Eliot's position. For a greater and more in-depth analysis of Johnson see Nicholas Hudson's *Samuel Johnson and the Making of Modern England* (2003) or JCD Clark's *Samuel Johnson: Literature, Religion and English Cultural Politics* (1994).

<sup>18</sup> This idea has its contemporary adherents. Peter McDonald, for example, has written extensively on the necessity of difficult poetry or what he often terms 'serious poetry'. His most notable work in this area is *Serious Poetry: Form and Authority from Yeats to Hill* (2007).

effort. In other words, poetry must be difficult in order to provoke and make possible the expenditure of intellectual labour. Eliot is describing a causal relationship between difficult poetry and laborious readers wherein the former is constructed so as to create a habitable and generative environment for the propagation of the latter. What is at stake for Eliot in the revitalisation of ‘complex’ and ‘difficult’ poetry *à la* the Metaphysics is the cultivation of a style of reading befitting the cultural moment within which he finds himself writing. If poetry must be difficult, then it must also compel effort and thus, for Eliot at least, the figure of the note becomes the literary device best suited to mobilising and directing the requisite energy.

Unlike Pound, who seeks to cater for those with ‘special interests’ (*The Cantos* 679), Eliot intends rather to produce and cultivate the ‘refined sensibilities’ that he feels are necessary: whilst both groups are willing and able to disburse effort in service of poetry, which is intellectually demanding, and, because of its complexity, has a high barrier to entry, those who read Eliot have had in the first instance disclosed to them the required methodological tools. When Eliot speaks of ‘great variety and complexity’ he is not talking about variety *within* his literary milieu, but rather *outside* of it: literary modernism provides an alternative and acts as a variant to the prevailing landscape of mass produced texts. Yet, unlike Pound, Eliot does not completely eschew the Bridsonian position by refusing to mediate verse that might otherwise be impenetrable: he instead delineates the texts that ought to be engaged with, as does Pound, but then divulges the procedure, contingent on the annotative motion of comparison and connection, for how to handle them. By valorising and implementing a strategy of difficulty Eliot’s brand of modernism embarks on a pedagogical project the aim of which is to build a bulwark against the ‘cheap magazines’ and ‘dreary and smeary penny weeklies’ and it is precisely this motivation that separates him from Moore. Citing the same passage from ‘The Metaphysical Poets’, Leonard Diepeveen sums this position up well:

Difficulty thus was central to people's sense that modernism was a sea change – not just in the properties of art works but in the default and most useful ways of talking about and interacting with art. Modernism's difficulty set up the terms and protocols by which readers read and gained access to modernist texts, and it became a litmus test: one could predict both a given reader's response to modernism by his or her reaction to difficulty, and a writer's place in the canon by the difficulty of his or her work (xi).

What the notes did to *The Waste Land* was to encode into the poetry these 'protocols' and to give them an embodied presence where the reader, instructed by the citational structure of a note, must enact in physical terms the intellectual effort required to read the text. It is not enough to read *The Waste Land*; one must also read those works that are cited and in this, one is both intellectually and physically exercised. Thus, *The Waste Land's* notes make textually graphic what Donne ascribed to the metaphor and in so doing they provide a deep diagnosis of the culture within which Eliot is writing, but they also begin to articulate and press upon the reading strategies that might be required to provide treatment.

Interestingly, the lexicon around labour that Eliot is building in 'The Metaphysical Poets' was fed back into *The Waste Land's* early reception and this is seen in I.A. Richards's essay on the poem in the Appendix to his *Principles of Literary Criticism*, from which the subtitle of this section is taken. Richards begins his essay by observing that a 'reader who in one short poem picks up allusions to *The Aspen Papers*, *Othello*, "A Toccata of Galuppi", Marston, *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, *Antony and Cleopatra* (twice), "The Extasie", *Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and Ruskin, feels that his wits are being unusually well exercised' (274). He further claims that '[e]ven the most careful and responsive reader must read and do hard work before the poem forms itself clearly and unambiguously in his mind' (275) and again that an 'original poem, as much as a new branch of mathematics, compels the

mind which receives it to grow, and this takes time' (275). Notice, here, that Richards employs the same imagery that Eliot does in 'The Metaphysical Poets': just as Eliot speaks of 'considerable mental agility', the need for study, and for one to be 'industrious' so too does Richards speak of one's 'wits [...] being well exercised' and needing to do 'hard work'. Richards recognises in *The Waste Land* what Eliot specified in 'The Metaphysical Poets' and it is along this same axiom that I base my understanding of Eliot's poem and its notes.

It is at this point in his essay that Richards poses the already cited question: 'The central question in all cases is whether the poem is worth the trouble it entails. For *The Waste Land* this is considerable' (275). Referencing Eliot's notes Richards goes on to explain the source of this considerable trouble:

There is Miss Weston's *From Ritual to Romance* to read [...] There is Canto Twenty-six of the *Purgatorio* to be studied [...] There is the central position of Tiresias in the poem to be puzzled out – the cryptic form of the note which Mr Eliot writes on this point is just a little tiresome [...] When all this has been done by the reader, when the materials with which the words are to clothe themselves have been collected, the poem still remains to be read. And it is easy to fail in this undertaking' (275 – 279).

In other words, the question of whether or not *The Waste Land* is 'worth the trouble it entails' (275) is intimately tied to whether or not the reader is prepared to study the poem's notes and to follow the path that they provide. Richards's conception of Eliot's notes and how they fulfil the project of modernist poetry, as articulated in 'The Metaphysical Poets', is particularly germane to my wider argument. Both Eliot and Richards share a sense of intellectual labour that is concentrated through and coagulated around physical labour. The language that is employed by both provides a specific corporeal dimension to what is otherwise conventionally conceived as disembodied: reading becomes a labour to be enacted and Eliot's notes to *The Waste Land* codify this activity into literary and bodily labour. Take,

for instance, the use of ‘collected’ in the above passage. Here, Richards is speaking of *The Waste Land*’s notes in terms of action: the reader is to collect and gather up and then read the sources that Eliot points to. Thus, the ideas expressed in ‘The Metaphysical Poets’ would find their articulation in *The Waste Land* and its notes and this is further registered in Richards’s analysis of them. The answer one gives to his question, Richards seems to suggest, not only determines one’s relationship to Eliot’s poem, but to literature more generally. It forces us to consider what kind of reader we want to be and further what kind of reader a given text expects. One is hard pressed, especially in light of Marx and Otlet’s ‘knowledge workers’, not to notice a certain dishonesty or perhaps hyperbole in Richards’ comparison between reading *The Waste Land* and other kinds of genuinely manual labour. Yet, despite the possible complications of such an assertion, Eliot and Richards were by no means the only commentators to conceptualize intellectual difficulty in terms of actual physical labour.

In an early ‘Views and Comments’ segment of *The Egoist*, Dora Marsden outlines what the magazine will be concerned with. In order to do this she introduces the image of a person climbing a mountain arguing that ‘to sacrifice oneself is to set them on enterprises where they move reluctantly and with hardship’ (‘View and Comments’ 24). She continues: ‘On occasion, the passing over a favourable tract will be undertaken and repeated solely to enjoy the ease and facility with which it can be covered [...] And on the other hand, a difficult stretch will be undertaken and repeated in order to enjoy the ultimate satisfaction of not being defeated by its rigours’ (‘Views and Comments’ 24-25). Then again in the next issue an unknown author, although we sense the hand of Marsden, bemoans the ‘increase in amenities of a progressively softened society’ (‘Men, Machines’ 42) and contends that ‘the greater part of the development wherein men have become more sensitive, aware and able has been achieved by rough and harsh experience’ (‘Men, Machines’ 42). She continues: ‘They have veritably cut their teeth on the sharp edges of difficulties. The difficult task has

been the anvil on which human strength has been forged' ('Men, Machines' 42). It was out of the culture of little magazines such as *The Egoist* and the many similar statements to those cited above that *The Waste Land* was written and it was through the poem's notes that these discussions of effort were first indexed. Significantly, these strategies find their best articulation in Eliot's annotative practices where an intellectual undertaking is met with an embodied and tactile injunction to reach out beyond the text and to *touch* and engage with the works being cited. What this appears to speak to is the conviction that the reader ought to invest in the poetic process insofar as any distinction between information and knowledge is only meaningful if the latter is actually engaged with and worked through. Pedagogically, there is little value in differentiating what ought to be read and what ought not to be if there is no surety that these suggestions will be acted upon and subsequently assimilated. Therefore, for Eliot and Weaver, the promotion of difficulty and the attendant requirement for effort helps to grant this assurance.

As already indicated, by the 1930s Eliot's thinking around reading and effort had altered significantly. In 1932 Eliot accepted the Charles Norton Professorship at Harvard University and for the next year he delivered a series of lectures speaking about writers including John Dryden and William Wordsworth. These lectures mark a turning point in Eliot's critical and creative career, a point he admitted in the 1963 preface to the published lectures, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*: 'After re-reading them twice, I found to my surprise that I was still prepared to accept them as a statement of my critical position' (10). Eliot goes one step further and, following the example he set for himself in 1956, dismisses his earlier work in favour of the Norton lectures, expressing his hope that it will be the latter that is printed by a future anthologist (9). When examining the exact nature of Eliot's shift, his conclusion to *The Use of Poetry* is particularly illuminating. Discussing the types of readership best suited to poetry Eliot declares: 'I believe that the poet naturally

prefers to write for as large and miscellaneous an audience as possible, and that it is the half-educated and ill-educated, rather than the uneducated, who stand in his way: I myself should like an audience which could neither read nor write' (152). Where once Eliot promoted the 'refining' of sensibilities, made possible by the whetstone of complex verse, there is now preferred an audience whose poetic disposition requires constructing from the ground up. This difference in Eliot's position between 1921 and 1932 is profound: Metaphysical poetry was favoured because it forced a reader to work; to leave the text with anything meaningful was an arduous task, which relied on a reader engaging with it. In other words, poetry, in the Metaphysical model, was an activity that a reader was required to take part in. Despite the almost comical undertones, by wishing for an audience who could 'neither read nor write' Eliot is revealing something quite serious: the ideal reader is now one who comes to the poem without prior knowledge. In the intervening eleven years between 'The Metaphysical Poets' and the Norton lectures Eliot has gone from celebrating the industrious reader who is capable of deciphering Donne's 'A Valediction' to the illiterate.

Eliot cements this view when, two paragraphs later, he writes: 'The ideal medium for poetry [...] and the most direct means of social usefulness for poetry is the theatre' (153). Here, Eliot is dismissing those with 'refined sensibilities' that he once courted and instead opting to address those who are most apathetic. A reader is transformed into a listener, which is to say, they become an audience patiently sitting in their seats, unmoving and silent. This is Eliot granting Johnson's wish: all effort is placed on the shoulders of the poet and not the reader. Of course, theatre need not be as described above, but Eliot's conception of theatre is. What Eliot appears to find so beneficial about the theatre is exactly that one is not required to expend effort or to engage with the poetry: 'The auditor [is not] bothered by the presence of that which he does not understand, or by the presence of that which he is not interested in' (153). If poetry is able to create a passive readership, who are content to be spectators and not

participants in meaning, then it has accomplished its aim, a point that Eliot makes clear in the conclusion to *The Use of Poetry*:

The chief use of ‘meaning’ of a poem [...] may be to satisfy one habit of the reader, to keep his mind diverted and quiet, while the poem does its work upon him: much as the imaginary burglar is always provided with a bit of meat for the house-dog (151).

This sentence sums up precisely the distinction between the Eliot of 1921 and the Eliot of 1932. What is at stake is activity, agility and complexity being replaced with writing that produces a diverted and quiet mind. This is the Bridsonian model of readership as caricatured by Pound. The reader is required to do very little and is instead to be instructed by the poet: where once the reader did work upon the poem, now, Eliot tells us, the ‘poem does its work upon him’. One might also note the contempt Eliot seems to have for his reader: the implied reverence he once held for a reader who was willing to work hard has been relegated to disdain for a reader likened to a ‘house-dog’ and satiated by ‘a bit of meat’.

There is at stake in this description a wider social commentary regarding the kind of demographic being addressed and what Eliot feels towards them. In 1921 Eliot aimed his verse at those able to understand it with very little regard to those unable to, but in 1932 he concedes that the audience must be ‘as large and miscellaneous an audience as possible’. The audience of 1922 can be trusted to work hard, but the audience of 1932 cannot. The final sentence of *Poetry and Religion*, written by Jacques Maritain and translated by Eliot in 1927, is this: ‘The demonologists know that every *passive state* in which man puts himself is a door open to the devil’ (403). Where once Eliot tried to keep those devils at bay, he is now the one holding open the door. What is at stake for Eliot in all of this, as was the case for Otlet, is the transmission of knowledge and the attempts to elucidate the mechanism of transference that is most suited to the demands of a particular cultural moment. In offering these two competing models of reader and audience engagement, from the participatory poetics of *The*



*Waste Land* or the passivity of his theatrical endeavours, Eliot continues to work through the most appropriate means of relocating knowledge in information. As such, the denigration of his own annotative practices in 1956 is the consequence of a paradigmatic shift in Eliot's thinking about how to negotiate and handle information. At this point, and now that the cultural landscape out of which *The Waste Land* was written has been traced, I will turn to *The Waste Land* and its notes to investigate exactly how these wider debates are registered in Eliot's poetry.

### **He Do the Notes in Different Voices: Look! The Fifty-Third Note**

Whilst scholarly accounts of Eliot's notes differ wildly from one another on both their perceived worth and also their historical conception, one point on which they naturally agree is that there exist fifty-two notes. This apparent textual fact notwithstanding, I would like to entertain the suggestion in this section of the chapter that the poem contains a fifty-third note. *The Waste Land* is composed of a multitude of voices and characters from French 'Co co rico co co rico' (74) and the many other examples of Italian, German and Latin to the impatient pub landlord and his patron Lil. One such voice belongs to the clairvoyant Madame Sosostris as introduced in the below passage:

Madame Sosostris, famous clairvoyante,  
 Had a bad cold, nevertheless  
 Is known to be the wisest woman in Europe,  
 With a wicked pack of cards. Here, said she,  
 Is your card, the drowned Phoenician Sailor,  
 (Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)  
 Here is Belladonna, the Lady of the Rocks,

The lady of situations.

Here is the man with three staves, and here the Wheel,

And here is the one-eyed merchant, and this card,

Which is blank, is something he carries on his back,

Which I am forbidden to see [...] (62).

In this passage there are two narrative voices at work. The first is that of the third person speaker who begins the passage by introducing Madame Sosostris as ‘the wisest woman in Europe’.<sup>19</sup> The second voice, whose beginning is marked by ‘Here, said she’, is the reported speech of Sosostris herself. Given that the parenthetical line ‘Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!’ comes after ‘Here, said she’ it would seem to indicate that the line is spoken by Sosostris and directed to a client whose future she is reading. She is demanding that her client look at the Phoenician Sailor card and to observe that it appears to have ‘pearls that were his eyes’. There are, however, certain features of the passage that indicate the line is *not* spoken by Sosostris. For example, the line is parenthetically closed off from the stanza and as such disrupts Sosostris’s otherwise brisk description of her Tarot cards. This is particularly noticeable in the manner that the line interrupts the anaphora of ‘here’. In this sense, the line is reminiscent of the pub scene in ‘A Game of Chess’ in which the staccato ‘HURRY UP PLEASE IT’S TIME’ (65) intrudes upon the convivial patrons. In other words, the line does not fit, in both tone and syntax, with those lines that are known to be spoken by Sosostris.

This division is supported by Eliot’s own interpretation of the passage. In his life Eliot publically performed and recorded *The Waste Land* twice, once in 1933 and once in 1947. In both of these recordings there is a faint, but distinct difference between those lines spoken by Sosostris and those spoken by the narrative voice. Eliot subtly alters his tone when he reads the ‘Look!’ line so that it is more akin to ‘here, said she’ than, for example, ‘If you see dear

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<sup>19</sup> This is not to suggest, by any means, that this narrative voice is the same narrative voice apparent elsewhere in the poem. For a detailed examination of *The Waste Land*’s many voices and speakers see Tony Pinkney’s ‘*The Waste Land*, Dialogism and Poetic Discourse’ in Nigel Wood’s 1994 *The Waste Land*.

Mrs. Equitone' (Eliot, *Reading The Waste Land, Four Quartets, and Other Poems*). British actress Fiona Shaw's performance of the section offers an even more pronounced distinction. She begins the passage in a solemn and even lugubrious tone only to then switch, when Sosostris is speaking, to a typically lilting Irish accent. When she comes to read the 'Look!' line, however, she momentarily slips back into the solemn tone before completing the passage in the Irish accent.

The reason why the speaker of this line is important and worth pondering over is because if it is said by Sosostris then it would be safe to assume that the line is directed to her client. Yet, if it is spoken by the narrative persona then an altogether more fascinating question is raised: to whom is the line directed and what exactly are they being asked to look at? One possible answer is that the narrative persona is speaking directly to the reader and what the imperative 'look' is demanding of him is that he inspects the line 'those are pearls that were his eyes'. A task such as this involves the reader seeking out a copy of *The Tempest*, turning to Act Two Scene Two and locating that particular line. This is exactly the deictic procedure of *The Waste Land* outlined above: the reader is expected to expend nontrivial effort in locating and reading the cited line, which, by way of synecdoche, stands in for the whole text. In fact, if one were to accept the invitation to go and look at 'those are pearls that were his eyes' then *The Tempest's* surrounding lines become all the more interesting. 'Those are pearls that were his eyes' is sung by Ariel at the request of Prospero so that the latter can entice Ferdinand. Upon hearing the sirenian song Ferdinand is at once captivated and he thus pledges to follow the song to its source: 'This music crept by me upon the waters, [...] With its sweet air: thence I have follow'd it' (1140). For the reader who is sent to these lines from *The Waste Land*, the connection between their hunting and Ferdinand's would not be overlooked. Both the reader of Eliot's poem and Ferdinand embark upon the exact same quest: they both seek the line 'those are pearls that were his eyes'. *The*

*Waste Land's* reader seeks the line in a copy of *The Tempest* whilst Ferdinand seeks the line as it exists in Ariel's song.

The early development of the line in Eliot's drafts of *The Waste Land* is furthermore revealing. In January 1922, upon his return to London, Eliot presented the manuscript of *The Waste Land* to Pound. Pound would lose little time in mercilessly editing the poem so that by the time of its publication it was almost half its original length. It was Pound's advice, for example, that led Eliot to remove *The Rape of the Lock* imitation at the beginning of 'The Fire Sermon' and to excise a number of shorter poems that Eliot planned to intersperse between sections. It is for good reason that in a 1921 letter to Eliot, Pound described himself as having performed a 'Caesarean Operation' (Eliot *Letters* 498) on the poem and that Eliot dedicated the poem to Pound *il miglior fabbro*. Eliot would later send this manuscript to his lawyer, John Quinn, as a mark of gratitude and it would stay with Quinn's estate until acquired by Vivien Eliot in 1968 and published by Faber and Faber in 1971. The manuscript reveals that the 'look!' line had been crossed out by Pound (Eliot *Facsimile* 7). Given Pound's rigorous cuts to the poem this is by no means unusual, but what is unusual is that, despite Pound's instruction, Eliot refused to delete the line from *The Waste Land's* final draft. It is safe to assume, given his actions, that Eliot held the line in high regard and felt it indispensable to the poem.

Whilst of course not a note itself, the line serves a very similar function: the notes supply the reader with textual information, often no more than a snippet, and then bid the reader to go to the source of that information. As such, similar to an inline citation number, the use of 'look' and the following Shakespearean line combined function as if it were a note embedded within the verse. In other words, it might be considered the poem's fifty-third note. One reads the Sosostriis scene, comes to the invitation to look and then does one of two things. First, the reader ignores the look and continues on to 'Here is Belladonna, the Lady of

the Rocks'. Second, the reader puts the poem aside and goes to acquire a copy of *The Tempest*. Indeed, it is worth noting that *The Tempest* is referred to twice more in *The Waste Land*, once on line 192 and again on line 257. Both of these allusions are cited in the notes whilst 'those are pearls that were his eyes' is not. One possible explanation is that the line's 'look!' is doing the job of the note and as such a note would have been redundant.

In order to develop this point further, imagine for a moment, and maintaining the assumption that Sosostris did *not* speak the line, that the word 'look' is not used by Eliot and so instead it simply reads: 'Those were pearls that were his eyes'. On its own, to the careful and erudite reader, this is now one of many intertextual gestures within the poem that is not cited just as the opening lines famously allude to Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* without any annotative signpost. Yet, this is not the case. Eliot's decision to include 'look' transforms the otherwise purely allusive and intertextual gesture into also a notational one, which comes to signal the deictic procedure of the poem that will come to full fruition in its notes. Unlike, for instance, 'April is the cruellest month', the addition of 'look' to 'those were pearls that were his eyes' alerts the reader to the fact that there *is* something to inspect had they not already realised and as such, following Otlet, it impedes the inclination to 'skim' (79). Yet, it does still retain the need for participation as what ought to be looked at, in this case *The Tempest*, is left to the reader to decode. As such, it provides an opportunity for the reader to expend effort and, as in the quotation from Eliot's London Library address and also Richards' summation of the text, prove his worth. By disclosing the deictic procedure of the poem in this fashion Eliot appears to coincide with Otlet's desire, as Moore would, for the reader to 'become as active as I' (*Monde* 76) whilst still directing him to a specific text, which Moore does also inevitably do, but, unlike Eliot, without according it privileged status. Whilst this line of reasoning could be applied to any deeply allusive text, by which I mean, the opportunity to track potentially obscure references and expend effort in doing so, one cannot

ignore or overlook the significance of the fact that Eliot *did* choose to include 'look' and *did* supply notes to his poem. That he chose to divulge the need for one to look in the first instance, where other writers, such as Pound or Joyce, perhaps do not, makes all the difference.

This further helps to explain why Pound suggested that Eliot delete the line. As already outlined in the introduction, Pound made no secret of the fact that he disliked annotation and if indeed 'look' is a kind of embedded note then it stands to reason that he would want to see it removed. Thus, that Pound petitioned Eliot to delete the line and that Eliot refused is of great significance to my wider argument. Coming at the centre of *The Waste Land*, the ostensible note registers a clear friction between Eliot and Pound and specifically their competing ideas around not only annotation, but also the kind of reader that ought to be engaged. It is a site of tension between the different epistemic directions that the two writers were pulling in and as such Eliot's refusal to acquiesce to Pound's suggestion becomes a battleground not only over the artistic direction of *The Waste Land*, but of literary modernism more generally and what it means to be writing and reading poetry at the beginning of the twentieth century.

At this point in the chapter it will now be appropriate to turn to the notes directly insofar to demonstrate unequivocally why they are not only significant but also indispensable to any reading of *The Waste Land*. In order to do this, the analysis of the notes will branch off into two separate but closely related discussions, with the ultimate aim being to bring these discussions together so that we might gain a better understanding of exactly how the notes function. The first branch continues along the analytical path already laid out by the above examination of the 'look!' line. As with 'Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!' the notes invite the reader to examine certain texts and in so doing transform the reader into an active participant. One of the more obvious but nonetheless interesting ways that this is achieved is

through the use of the scholarly abbreviation Cf. Out of *The Waste Land's* fifty-two endnotes there are a total of twenty that use Cf. Cf. is the abbreviated form of the Latin 'to confer' meaning, the *Oxford English Dictionary* explains, 'to bring together, collect, contribute, connect, compare'. Whilst the primary and contemporary definition of the term is 'to bring into comparison, compare, collate', there are other archaic or obsolete meanings that are particularly illuminative in the context of *The Waste Land*. The sense of contribution originates from the idea of conferring notes, which is defined as 'comparing each other's observations or impressions, hence to exchange views, confer, discuss' (*OED*). This general meaning of the word was narrowed in legalese to denote the bringing together of legal documents for joint examination.

There are three different ways that Cf. is used in the notes. First, the note contains the title and a particular passage of the work that is being compared. Second, the note contains the title and also specific line numbers or chapters, but those lines are not written in the note. Third, the note contains little or no information other than the title of the work that the verse is being compared to: the note does not contain any specific page or line numbers. The following table lists, in order, an example of each category:

Verse	Note
‘A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many, I had not thought death had undone so many’ (62).	‘Cf. Dante's <i>Inferno</i> , iii. 55-7: si lunga tratta di gente, ch'io non avrei mai creduto che morte tanta n'avesse disfatta’ (76 – 77).
‘As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king’ (64).	‘Cf. Sylvan scene. V. Milton, <i>Paradise Lost</i> , IV. 140’ (77).
‘Oh keep the Dog far hence, that’s friend to men, Or with his nails he’ll dig it up again!’ (63).	‘Cf. the Dirge in Webster’s <i>White Devil</i> ’ (77).

The use of Cf. in *The Waste Land* not only invites the reader to go beyond the verse and to compare the poem with another text, but it also invites discussion. It will be fruitful, here, to pause and consider what such a discussion might look like. Take, for instance, the first example in the above table. If one were to accept the intellectual challenge implied by the use of Cf. then one might see fit to translate Dante’s Italian and then compare it to Eliot’s verse and should this be the case one would discover that the lines translate to mean ‘So long a train of people, that I should never have believed death had undone so many’. Eliot is providing the opportunity within his text for such an act of connection to be made and it is this procedure that lies at the heart of Eliot’s project and which is disclosed, through the figure of the note, to his reader.

The comparison becomes even more significant when one further considers its original locus in Dante: the lines are spoken by Dante himself when he first sees the neutrals (those who failed to choose either good or evil and are thus condemned to a life in Limbo) and he is staggered not only by their sheer number, but also the ennui that they exhibit. By



referencing these lines, Eliot is subtly aligning the cultural standards that he sees in his time to the moral degradation and *anomie* that Dante described. By providing only the original Italian and through the annotative gesture of Cf. he is inviting his reader *not* to make the same mistake that those on London Bridge have done. Of course, this connection is only made available to the reader who has followed the annotative chain and engaged with the lines from Dante. As such, one might argue, Eliot's caution against slipping into ennui does not so much provoke self-activity in the first instance, but rather confer tacit approval on an action already taken. The desired behaviour, necessarily enacted for the reader to appreciate the connection between Dante and Eliot's line, is thus celebrated as the reader has been able to demonstrate that the text is indeed 'worth the trouble'.

In addition to specifying certain materials to be engaged with, these lines also introduce into the notes and poem the impressionistic and the personal: by using Cf. Eliot is asking his readers to compare his verse with another text, but also to enter a discussion. Eliot outlines a certain way of looking at a line and then with the Cf. he invites the reader to go and read the text and to decide for themselves if they too see the connection. Similar to Cf. the notes also use V, which is the abbreviated form of *vide*, coming from the Latin *vidēre* meaning 'to see'. The *OED* defines the term as such: 'See, refer to, consult; a direction to the reader to refer to some other heading, passage, or work (or to a table, diagram, etc.) for fuller or further information'. The fact that the notes use V in this way and that V means 'to see' is further evidence that the 'look!' in 'Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!' is being used as a type of note. In an early version of the line, before Pound was given the manuscript and attempted to cross the line out, Eliot used instead of 'look' a different word, a word that he would then use time and time again in the notes: 'Those are pearls that were his eyes. See!' (Eliot, Facsimile 123). This further goes to demonstrate my argument that Eliot felt the line to be essential and that it is an embedded note: not only did he refuse to remove the line, but

also he clearly considered its precise wording very carefully. One might also reflect on the lexical differences between ‘seeing’ and ‘looking’, perhaps concluding that the latter indicates a far more active and participatory gesture and as such, given my analysis, this might explain Eliot’s alteration. Further, that Pound wanted to delete the line and Eliot went to such great lengths to retain it indicates that Pound either did not understand the significance that Eliot ascribed to it or, more likely, he did not agree with it. Eliot is using the figure of the note, internalised here by the use of ‘look’, to train the reader in the capacity of thought that he felt to be lacking in the twentieth century and this thinking has precisely to do with connecting and comparing across disparate materials.

Using different examples from the ones given in the table, the following is an example of how Cf. and V would be used in practice. Lines 77 – 79, the beginning of ‘A Game of Chess’, are ‘The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne, / Glowed on the marble [...]’ (64). Attached to these lines is this note: ‘Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, II., ii. 1. 190’ (77). If we were to pick up a copy of *Antony and Cleopatra* and go to the specified line then we would find these lines spoken by Enobarbus: ‘I will tell you. / The barge she sat in, like a burnish’d throne, / Burn’d on the water: the poop was beaten gold’ (934). By using the notes to go to the specified text the reader is able to see how Eliot used *Antony and Cleopatra*’s ‘burnish’d throne’ in *The Waste Land*. Another example is line 196, which reads: ‘But at my back from time to time I hear’ (67). The note to this line points the reader towards Andrew Marvell’s ‘To His Coy Mistress’, but unlike the previous example no line number is given and thus the reader is required to read the whole text in order to appreciate the comparison. The most obvious candidate for the connection made by Eliot are lines 20 – 21, which read: ‘But at my back I always hear / Time’s winged chariot hurrying near’ (Marvell 51). These notes point the reader beyond *The Waste Land*’s verse, as the ‘look!’ and use of V do, but they also encourage the reader to compare and to enter into a dialogue with the notes. Rather

than prescribing a definitive link, the use of Cf., by its definition, affords the reader an opportunity to read the link made by Eliot and perhaps make one of their own.

Bearing this in mind, the second branch looks at the notes in the context of interpretative order. As discussed previously in this chapter, Eliot's notes have had, for the most part, an unfavourable critical reception. Critics such as Rainey and Kenner have followed in the footsteps of the 1956 Eliot by trying to have discussion about the notes sidelined or even expunged. When the notes are examined it is often done so with a view that they are trivial parody or the result of publishing logistics. In the rare case that the notes are looked at seriously they are viewed as imposing upon the otherwise disordered and fragmentary poem an analytical order: the notes represent, in this reading, an attempt to bring together the disparate elements of *The Waste Land* and to offer the reader a sense of security; that order in the face of disorder is achievable. This is a view discussed at length in Jo Kaiser's 1998 article 'Disciplining *The Waste Land*, or How to Lead Critics into Temptation'. Kaiser's paper begins by discussing Edmund Wilson's 'The Poetry of Drouth', a review of *The Waste Land* published in the December 1922 edition of the *Dial*. Despite the fact that Wilson does not explicitly mention Eliot's notes, Kaiser convincingly argues that Wilson used the notes in order to construct an ordered reading of Eliot's poem. Kaiser draws a distinction between 'The Poetry of Drouth' and an earlier review written by Wilson. In the latter Wilson describes *The Waste Land* as 'chaotic, irregular, fragmentary' (Wilson, *Letter* 247) and he also comments that the poem is 'nothing more or less than a most distressingly moving account of Eliot's own agonized state of mind' (94). In 'The Poetry of Drouth', however, the notes have transformed Wilson's view of the poem into something that is 'intelligible at first reading' and that is 'speaking not only for a personal distress, but for the starvation of a whole civilisation' (616).

Kaiser's thesis, that Wilson used the notes to interpret the verse, is further bolstered by the fact that Wilson's analysis of the poem makes constant reference to Jessie Weston's *From Ritual to Romance*. What Wilson's review demonstrates, as far as Kaiser is concerned, is that the notes operate as a plan to the verse: they supplant onto the disordered verse the possibility of order and this order is reducible to knights, the Fisher King and Holy Grails. Weston's version of the Grail Quest becomes the analytical key to *The Waste Land* and in so doing the notes fulfil their role as the supplier of that order. Kaiser comments, for example: '[Wilson] uses the notes at the start of his review to make the case for the existence of the poem's unified sensibility' (85). Despite beginning her essay with Wilson and as such keeping the above ideas at a certain critical distance, Kaiser struggles to maintain this distance, resulting in the conflation of her argument and Wilson's. This is to say that Kaiser at first uses Wilson to demonstrate the shortcomings of seeing the notes as promoting order, but ends by advocating, albeit in language that is couched in poststructuralism, these exact same ideas. She claims that 'the notes assume that order not only can be achieved but already exists' (85) and elsewhere 'while at least one speaker of the poem knows only "a heap of broken images," the author of the notes knows that the poem has a "purpose" and a "plan"' (87). The position being adopted by Kaiser is quite clear: the notes were intended by Eliot to superimpose order onto a disordered poem. She writes, for example, it is 'the notes that insist that the poem has a "plan"; it is the notes that assert that the plan is based on the grail legend' (86).

An idea related to the notes providing a plan and offering order is that of the notes limiting the capacity for analysis. In his 1939 essay on *The Waste Land*, 'Critique of the Myth', Cleanth Brooks described the notes as 'scaffolding' that enables the reader to 'get at the poem' (154). Brooks negotiates the notes in a manner typical of the New Critical movement to which he belonged. The notes are not there to point beyond the text but instead

are refracted back onto the text: one must not put the poem aside when confronted with the notes, but rather bury one's head even deeper into the verse. In fact, Brooks's essay reads much like a glossary of the notes: he takes, in order, more or less each note and then uses that note to explain the verse to which it is attached. By advocating such a strategy Brooks is able to maintain the notion of poetry as an autotelic and self-enclosed verbal artefact. Brooks's reading of the poem stresses that the notes supply the reader with certain connections and then force the reader to analyse *The Waste Land* along these predetermined interpretative lines. Similarly, Calvin Bedient in his 1986 *He Do the Police in Different Voices: The Waste Land and its Protagonist* argues that the many voices of the poem are united by one nameless protagonist and one of the ways that he demonstrates this is by using the notes, especially the Tiresias note, to suggest that the poem embraces unity despite its disordered surface (12).

What unites all of these critics is the belief that the notes do not point beyond the poem, but are instead there to illuminate and order the verse itself. Yet, this is simply not the case and to say that it is to misread the notes and therefore, crucially, the poem. The notes do not attempt to impose upon the poetry an order as Wilson and Kaiser suggest and nor do they limit analysis in the manner described by Brooks. Rather, the notes do exactly the opposite: as with the 'look!' the notes promote reader participation and invite the reader to examine certain texts and in so doing they expect of the reader nontrivial effort. This is aptly demonstrated in Eliot's preamble to the notes in which the works of James Frazer and Jessie Weston are first introduced:

Not only the title, but the plan and a good deal of the incidental symbolism of the poem were suggested by Miss Jessie L. Weston's book on the Grail legend: *From Ritual to Romance* (Cambridge). Indeed, so deeply am I indebted, Miss Weston's book will elucidate the difficulties of the poem much better than my notes can do; and I recommend it (apart from the great interest of the book itself) to any who think such

elucidation of the poem worth the trouble. To another work of anthropology I am indebted in general, one which has influenced our generation profoundly; I mean *The Golden Bough*; I have used especially the two volumes *Attis Adonis Osiris*. Anyone who is acquainted with these works will immediately recognise in the poem certain references to vegetation ceremonies (76).

The tone of this passage is not one of requisition, but invitation. Eliot freely admits that he is indebted to *From Ritual to Romance* (1920) and *The Golden Bough* (1890) and that these studies generated ‘a good deal of the incidental symbolism of the poem’. Yet, this position is not forced upon the reader: Eliot might ‘recommend’ the books, but nowhere does he demand that one must read them.

This sense of invitation is heightened by the fact that Eliot includes in his preamble publication data for both Weston and Frazer: the reader is told that Cambridge University Press published *From Ritual to Romance* and that when referring to *The Golden Bough* the two volumes *Attis Adonis Osiris* were used. In fact, Eliot’s use of Cambridge has an interesting publication history. In both the Boni and Liveright edition of 1922 and the Hogarth Press edition of 1923 the headnote mistakenly reported that *From Ritual to Romance* was published by Macmillan. This error was one of the few corrections that Eliot made to the 1925 Faber *Poems, 1909 – 1925* (Woodward 262). As with Eliot’s refusal to delete the ‘look’ line, one is only in a position to speculate, but it seems clear that the reader’s ability to locate the books was important, albeit not requisite. Similarly, a phrase that Eliot uses often throughout the passage is ‘I am indebted’; there is in the repetition of the personal pronoun an indication that these works might be important to Eliot, but that is not to say they need to be important to any other reader. Finally, Eliot informs his reader that the two studies might be useful ‘to any who think such elucidation of the poem worth the trouble’: reading these books, Eliot concedes, will not be an easy task. Significantly, this is the exact same phrase

used by Richards. Eliot is working through what it means to write and to read at the turn of the century and his response, registered through the note, is one of labour and engagement. Richards is then, perhaps even without realising it, able to translate and reconfigure into an essay what Eliot articulated in his poem. What we have, then, in this introductory headnote is the procedure that governs the whole poem: there is offered an invitation to read a text and should that invitation be accepted then the reader must be expected to expend effort. Eliot might offer the connection, but it is up to the reader to decide if they want to follow that connection or not and this is exactly what is registered through Donne's compass image.

This same pattern is repeated time and time again in individual notes. A particularly interesting example is the note to the Sosostris scene:

I am not familiar with the exact constitution of the Tarot pack of cards, from which I have obviously departed to suit my own convenience. The Hanged Man, a member of the traditional pack, fits my purpose in two ways: because he is associated in my mind with the Hanged God of Frazer, and because I associate him with the hooded figure in the passage of the disciples to Emmaus in Part V. The Phoenician Sailor and the Merchant appear later; also the "crowds of people," and Death by Water is executed in Part IV. The Man with Three Staves (an authentic member of the Tarot pack) I associate, quite arbitrarily, with the Fisher King himself (76).

The language that Eliot uses in this passage is completely antithetical to the idea of the notes providing a plan or limiting analysis. Whilst Eliot does offer one way of reading *The Waste Land* he does not insist that everyone must read the poem in that manner. The Sosostris note freely admits, for example, that in choosing the Tarot cards Eliot 'obviously departed to suit [his] own convenience' and that The Man with Three Staves is associated 'quite arbitrarily with the Fisher King himself'. This is not the language of someone imposing a plan but the language of someone inviting participation. Eliot offers his 'arbitrary' and personal view, a

view that only exists in his mind, so that the reader is free to offer their own reading. Kaiser's reading of this particular note is, not surprisingly, very different: 'Rather than focusing on the larger questions Sosostris's horoscope raises, however, this note, like the note on Tiresias, deflects our attention by suggesting that an ordered reading of the cards is, indeed, possible' (89). She concentrates on the fact that Eliot is offering a way of reading the text, but she overlooks the language in which that reading is couched: the reading is particular to Eliot, it is not exhaustive and nor does it attempt to order the verse along specific interpretative lines. One need only take a cursory glance of Eliot's notes to identify many other, similar notes. For example, attached to the lines 'To where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours / With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine' (62) is the note 'A phenomenon which I have often noticed' (77). To line 221 Eliot notes: 'This may not appear as exact as Sappho's lines, but I had in mind the "longshore" or "dory" fisherman, who returns at nightfall' (78). Line 264 has this note: 'The interior of St. Magnus Martyr is to my mind one of the finest among Wren's interiors. See *The Proposed Demolition of Nineteen City Churches*. (P. S. King & Son, Ltd.)' (78). Again, we might notice that Eliot offers his view and then offers a book, along with publication data, so that the reader is able to understand Eliot's view, but without any coercion to think the same themselves. The use of this equivocating language, such as, 'I had in mind' and 'to my mind', exemplifies the same tone that is then extended to the various other cultural and literary snippets that Eliot provides.

These latter examples aptly demonstrate what it is that unites the two branches. Eliot reveals his sources so that, as the Cf. indicates, the reader is able to see the connection that Eliot made in his writing and to then have the option of going to that text and comparing it for himself. By revealing his sources in this manner, Eliot invites the reader to interrogate the links that have been made. In turn, this is completely oppositional to the notes being viewed as imposing order onto the verse or limiting analysis. What the notes do is to invite the reader



to participate with the reading process, and should they be willing to go to the text itself, the notes then also invite the reader to evaluate Eliot's poetic sources. Whilst Eliot is thus promoting one's participation in the production of meaning, he is, significantly, also directing our attention to what ought to be compared and discussed. Returning to Otlet's metaphor of the quarry, used in order to describe the emergent mass print culture, Eliot figures himself as the stonemason: the marble, those texts that Eliot deems worthy of cultural preservation, have already been excavated and are now waiting for the eager reader to continue work upon them. To continue to press upon the metaphor, undoubtedly to its limit, Moore allows her reader to discover for himself what he considers marble and she provides the methodological tools, but not the material, to do so. In this sense, Eliot establishes himself as firmly involved in a process of cultural condensing and removal of the 'dross' that Otlet so emphatically called for, which should come to no surprise given Eliot's editorial career.<sup>20</sup> This is the procedure that Eliot adopted in order to navigate the emergent mass print culture of the early twentieth century. His aim was to inculcate a disposition predicated on a willingness to expend effort and to differentiate the ostensibly valuable from the non-valuable and in so doing conserve literary and cultural materials.

Returning to the theoretical framework for understanding annotative labour, provided by Marx, one sees in Eliot's promotion of directed participation both the capacity for labour to be alienating, but also generative. On the one hand, then, Eliot's motivation to direct his reader to a particular text, as part of the deictic and citational procedure discussed at length, establishes a textual hierarchy between poet and reader: Eliot is the one determining the textual site of the reader's physical and intellectual labour. As with Otlet and his knowledge workers, an analysis of the connection between, say, Dante and a passage in *The Waste Land*, mobilised with Cf., is dependent upon Eliot initially supplying that link. However, given that

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<sup>20</sup> For a more detailed discussion of Eliot's time at Faber and Faber see Bartholomew Brinkman's *Poetic Modernism* and especially Chapter Four, titled Selecting Modernism: Eliot, Faber, and Poetic Modernism.

his procedure relies on invitation and not requisition and that it is contingent on and a promotion of discussion and comparison, it also demands labour that is willingly given with the resultant connection being generative. Interestingly, it is precisely this latter variety of labour that is superseded by Eliot's shift in the 1930s onwards as he forecloses the possibility of active participation in favour of passivity.

By analysing Eliot's notes I have endeavoured to develop a much more specific sense of what effort means to Eliot and what role it has to play in literature at the beginning of the twentieth century, specifically in the wider context of a perceived crisis of reading. Richards's question as to whether or not '*The Waste Land* is worth the trouble it entails' taps into a deep anxiety as to the state of literature at the turn of the century. It is not only a question that Richards asks of *The Waste Land*, but also, significantly, a question that *The Waste Land* asks of its reader. Interestingly, the Appendix essay on *The Waste Land* was not the only time that Richards employed the phrase. Introducing the aim of his project Richards writes: 'What is the value of the arts, why are they *worth* the devotion of the keenest hours of the best minds, and what is their place in the system of human endeavours' (my italics: 3). He then goes on to list the possible benefits of a study of literature and concludes that 'these and similar results have been well *worth the trouble* expended' (my italics: 5). Through his notes Eliot is addressing not only whether *his* poem is worth the trouble, but also whether *any* literature is worth the trouble. The crisis of reading, as Eliot sees it, is that the question is asked in the first instance: it is a crisis wherein there is a failure to connect, to compare, and to discriminate. Thus, his notes represent an attempt to encode into his poetry a physical corollary to the intellectual labour already required to read a poem such as *The Waste Land*. Eliot is thus attempting to create a poetic environment that both constructs and is conducive to a strategy of reading predicated on evaluating and engaging with certain specified texts so that he might, in the mode of writers such as Pound, Bridson, and Lowell discussed in the

introduction, promote those texts he designates as culturally significant. However, and unlike his prose of the 1930s, Eliot advocates the reading of these texts not as Bridson would have done, ‘by giving people what they need and not what they want’, but by instead providing an opportunity to engage without the necessity of doing so. The question posed by Richards and also by Eliot only makes sense if one is given the opportunity to answer ‘no’ and it is only through opening up the possibility of his project failing that Eliot would ever be able to claim that it had succeeded. The chapter will now turn to the work of Marianne Moore in order to trace her competing annotative response to these same issues, whilst continuing to develop my understanding of the relationship between poetic modernism and mass print.

### **Moore and Eliot: The Wide Spread of Association**

In the introduction, I outlined, following Nabokov, that one of my aims for this dissertation would be to ‘express structural affinities and divergences, suggest certain phylogenetic lines, [and] relate local developments to global ones’. If one were to move along the annotative phylogenetic line headed by Eliot then it would not be long before one arrived at the poetry of Marianne Moore. In addition to both poets being note-makers – with Moore’s 1924 *Observations* containing 124 endnotes – the two also shared a lifelong friendship and Eliot played an instrumental role in her early poetic endeavours. In the wake of Moore’s moderately successful 1921 volume *Poems*, for instance, Eliot wrote a letter dated 4 October 1923 offering to publish another collection: ‘When you are ready to publish another book here let me know [...] I think I could “float” it better than the last which never got a fair show’ (*Letters of T.S. Eliot* 233).<sup>21</sup> This came directly after Eliot had written a highly celebratory review of Moore’s poetry in the December 1923 issue of the *Dial*. Eliot’s

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<sup>21</sup> Despite publishing in little magazines such as *The Egoist* and *Poetry* Moore’s first volume of poetry, *Poems* (1921), was in fact printed by HD and Bryher without her permission.

assistance did not go unnoticed by contemporary reviewers. In a 1925 review of *Observations* Louis Gilmore highlights the perception that without Eliot there would be no Moore: ‘If Miss Marianne Moore is not grateful to Mr T.S. Eliot, or whoever it was first efficiently acclaimed her [...] she is an ungrateful woman. For her “Observations”, unaided, would with difficulty, if at all, have found a publisher’ (qtd. in Miller 200). Despite Moore not taking Eliot up on his offer in any official capacity, he continued to pursue her for over a decade. In January 1934 he wrote to her: ‘I have thought for some time that your poems ought to be collected, or at any rate selected, and put upon the London market again’ (qtd. in Goodridge 107). On this occasion Moore acquiesced and Eliot began negotiations to have Faber and Faber publish a volume of selected verse that would become the 1935 *Selected Poems* for which Eliot wrote the introduction.<sup>22</sup>

Eliot’s introduction to *Selected Poems* provides a useful starting point when considering the ‘structural affinities and divergences’ that exist between the two poets. Whilst, as I will continue to demonstrate, there are key pedagogical and methodological differences between Moore and Eliot, which is in turn indexed by their contrary styles of notation, they shared many important similarities. Fundamentally, both poets created a poetics centred on reader participation that was framed and informed by the advent of mass print culture. Thus, any difference must be seen within the wider context of two poets who shared an understanding of their historical, cultural and literary moment. In my discussion of Eliot, I argued that *The Waste Land* was the culmination of his early thinking around what it means to read poetry in a continually shifting literary landscape. The annotative strategies that he employed in *The Waste Land* are, I contended, central to understanding and

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<sup>22</sup> When asked by a guest at a dinner party about the upcoming ‘Selected Poems by Marianne Moore with Introduction by T.S. Eliot’ Moore corrected the guest by omitting her name from the title: ‘Selected Poems with Introduction by T.S. Eliot’. Discussing the same letter Sheila Kineke writes: ‘But what particularly strikes me about Moore’s description of the evening is that her friends could not seem to separate her poems from Eliot’s introduction, as if procuring the introduction were itself as much an accomplishment as publishing the poems’ (137).

appreciating these wider debates and in their invitation for the reader to expend intellectual and physical effort they index Eliot's attempted solution to the crisis.

In Moore's poetry Eliot found a corresponding poetic expression of the criteria he delineated in 'The Metaphysical Poets' and put to work in *The Waste Land*. In his introduction, Eliot writes this of Moore's poetry, for instance:

Some of Miss Moore's poems – for instance with animal or bird subjects – have a very wide spread of association [...] For a mind of such agility, and for a sensibility so reticent, the minor subject, such as a pleasant little sand-coloured skipping animal, may be the best release for the major emotions (7).

Elsewhere he describes Moore's poetry as forming 'part of a small body of durable poetry written in our time [...] in which an original sensibility and alert intelligence and deep feeling have been engaged in maintaining the life of the English language' (12). In both the above quotation and the latter comment, one notices the obvious similarity between Eliot's characterisation of Moore's verse and his description of the Metaphysical Poets. Moore's poetry has 'a very wide spread of association' and she possesses 'a mind of such agility' whilst writers such as Donne take language 'to the furthest stage to which ingenuity can carry it' (60) and to read him there is required 'considerable agility on the part of the reader' (60). Later in the introduction, Eliot makes this link explicit. He begins by describing Moore's 'gift for detailed observation, for finding the exact words for some experience of the eye' (12) which, he argues, 'is liable to disperse the attention of the relaxed reader' (11). Eliot concludes: 'The bewilderment consequent upon trying to follow so alert an eye, so quick a process of association may produce the effect of some "metaphysical" poetry' (12). Eliot so persistently sought to aid Moore, one might speculate, because he recognised in her poetry the continuation and development of a project that he himself had embarked upon: like *The*

*Waste Land* and like ‘A Valediction’ Moore too is able to make the ‘relaxed reader’ work.<sup>23</sup> By Eliot’s characterisation, Moore’s poetry admirably instigates and cultivates the need for self-activity, thus enabling a creative and gratifying relation to labour.

That Eliot’s remarks were written three years after the Norton lectures, by which point he had dismissed the strategies that were advocated in ‘The Metaphysical Poets’ and enacted in *The Waste Land*, is of further interest. For Eliot, Moore represents the possible fulfilment of a project that he no longer felt able to advance. Eliot abandons the cultivation of effort and replaces it with passivity not out of choice, but rather perceived necessity. Thus, Moore’s continued insistence on what Eliot describes as intellectual ‘agility’ becomes something to celebrate and foster, even if Eliot feels such an approach no longer suits his own poetic style. For Moore, as with Eliot, Pound and Bridson, this demand for intellectual effort is tied to a sense of crisis. In a review of *Prufrock and Other Observations*, for example, Moore offers Eliot advice that is eerily similar to Bridson’s advice to Pound:

It might be advisable for Mr Eliot to publish a fangless edition of *Prufrock and Other Observations* for the gentle reader who likes his literature, like breakfast coffee or grapefruit, sweetened. A mere change in the arrangement of the poems would help a little. It might begin with *La Figlia che Piange*, followed perhaps by the *Portrait of a Lady*; for the gentle reader, in his eagerness for the customary bit of sweets, can be trusted to overlook the ungallantry, the youthful cruelty while reading the poem; and just when he was ready to find extenuating circumstances – the usual excuses about

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<sup>23</sup> Interestingly, critics have read Moore along similar analytical lines to Eliot. For example, in her analysis of Moore’s ‘The Labors of Hercules’ Jennifer Leader describes the way in which readers are forced to ‘leap across the poem’s implied syntactical connections’ (8). Similarly, Lina Steinman argues that the ‘mental agility’ (217) required by Moore’s poetry ‘demonstrates an attractive example of rapidity, accuracy, and possessiveness’ (217). She also claims that ‘the playfulness with which Moore examines and reclaims language is [...] part of a mental dexterity’ (217) and that Moore’s poem ‘The Student’ demands that ‘readers follow the mental turns of the poem and so experience a kind of education in the process of reading’ (217). Steinman concludes her analysis of ‘The Student’ by again reinforcing this idea that the poem ‘insists upon the mental agility of [...] students (as well as poets and readers)’ (220). David Kadlec characterises Moore’s poetry in terms of ‘wayard semantic leaps’ that the reader must follow (in *Mosaic Modernism* 155). Commenting on Kadlec’s idea Cristanne Miller claims that ‘Moore celebrates a nonhierarchical, intensely inquisitive engagement as key to the language and energy of poetry’ (*Cultures of Modernism* 49).

realism – out came this “drunken helot” (one can hardly blame the good English reviewer whom Ezra Pound quotes!) with the ending. It is hard to get over this ending with a few moments of thought; it wrenches a piece of life at the roots (‘A Note on T.S. Eliot’s Book’, 36).

The difference between Bridson’s and Moore’s comments, though, is that Moore is being anything but sincere. In her characterisation of the ‘gentle reader’ preferring a ‘fangless edition’, which is ‘sweetened’ like ‘breakfast coffee or grapefruit’ Moore provides a perfectly condescending and acerbic retort to those readers who may well struggle with the intentional difficulty of Eliot’s verse. One gets the distinct impression that, unlike Bridson, Moore would dislike nothing more than to see Eliot’s verse altered to accommodate those without ‘refined sensibilities’ and ‘special interests’.

Whilst Eliot and Moore both refuse to mitigate the necessity of their readers expending intellectual effort I will demonstrate, in the spirit of isolating ‘structural divergences’ as well as affinities, that a major methodological distinction between the two is where one’s attention and energies ought to be directed. Whereas Eliot articulates through his notes a deictic and centrifugal movement away from the margins of his poem and towards certain specified texts, Moore advocates a centripetal structure where her notes refract interest back onto the poetry itself. In other words, Eliot encodes into *The Waste Land* through the figure of the note a prescriptive delineation of those texts that he wants his reader to engage with and in this the actual procedure of analysis is superseded by the text to be analysed, but for Moore the opposite is true. One needs only to glance through her cited sources in *Observations* to see the same kinds of material that Pound so vehemently ridiculed in ‘Studies in Contemporary Mentality’: advertisements, *Horay Astrology*, tour guides, *An Easy Modern Reader’s Bible*, fashion magazines, and *The Compleat Angler*.

What matters to Moore is not the cited text, but rather how she is able to use that text in order to invite her reader to engage with and reconfigure her own poetry in light of what has been quoted. By focusing attention back onto the poem itself Moore is teaching, through her notes, how to read her work, with the hope that her reader will then apply what has been taught to texts of his choosing. In Eliot, what takes priority is the promotion of texts that have perceived value whilst disregarding those with none, but in Moore it is the expenditure of intellectual effort as a methodological position in and of itself and as a way to negotiate the influx of textual matter that is prioritised. By encouraging effort, Eliot seeks to reshape the literary landscape in an image befitting his own cultural and literary predilections, whilst Moore encourages effort as a prerequisite to understanding what it has since become. Or, to put it another way, whereas Eliot makes poetry *in spite of* the materials overload has brought with it, Moore makes poetry *out of them*, and this is a poetry, like Eliot's, that demands effort of its reader. In this, Moore coincides quite clearly with Otlet's recognition that he ought not to delimit entry to his desired 'Universal Book', but rather find a way of accounting for and responding to what actually exists in the new mass print culture and not, as with Eliot, what one would like to exist. In order to explain this distinction further and to demonstrate its significance for understanding Moore and her annotative practices, I want to begin by tracing the current critical models for dealing with Moore's use of notes, or rather the lack thereof.

### **Wiping Soiled Words Clean: The Displaced Image in Moore's Poetry**

The word 'displaced' holds a particular significance for the study of Marianne Moore. In her 2010 *Marianne Moore and the Cultures of Modernity* Victoria Bazin employs the imagery of displacement to describe Moore's verse: 'The process of collecting is a form of "assembly", a means of constructing the past that is not reliant upon narrative sequence but upon the



fractured and displaced image' (25). Linda Leavell uses the term in a similar manner in her 1995 study *Marianne Moore and the Visual Arts* when she argues that Moore is 'like a collector who detaches objects from their time and place, she constructed her poems out of a miscellany of displaced materials in an effort to redeem the "cultural clutter or debris of modernity"' (18). If one were to open a copy of Moore's 1924 *Observations* and turn to, for example, the poem 'Marriage' then it becomes apparent what Bazin and Leavell mean by 'displaced materials'. 'Marriage' contains a total of thirty-seven direct quotations taken from sources as varied as *The Tempest*, *Scientific American*, and an advertisement from *The English Review*. These quotations are ostensibly suspended in the poem, detached from their original textual location and then appropriated by Moore. Thus, displacement describes the central structural conceit of a poem such as 'Marriage': its quotations have been lifted from one textual context and then pasted into another to be held in juxtaposition within the space of the poem. Moore would use this technique throughout her career. In her 1995 study *Questions of Authority*, Cristanne Miller argues that the use of direct quotation in Moore is 'probably the most frequently discussed aspect of Moore's verse, and certainly one of its most prominent' (177). Margaret Holley goes one step further by counting how many poems include marked quotation, discovering that it is used in half of her poems published prior to 1918; two-thirds of the poems published from the twenties to the forties, and then three-fourths written after the war years (39). Holley is thus able to describe Moore's method of quotation as a 'reliable, even habitual strategy' (39). In *Observations* alone, there are 179 separate instances of marked quotation.

Around this idea of the displaced image, there has coalesced a body of Moore scholarship, which is united by the common critical thread that Moore's verse operates through a persistent strategy of lifting an image or phrase from one context and placing it into another. One such strand that operates exactly on this premise is aligned to artistic and poetic

collage, with critics understanding her work in reference to this repeatedly (see, for example, Leavell 1995; Brinkman 2012; Ladino 2005; Falcetta 2006; Reddy 2005; Bazin 2010). The word ‘collage’ comes from the French *coller* meaning ‘to paste’ or ‘to glue’ and is defined by the *OED* as ‘an abstract form of art in which photographs, pieces of paper, newspaper cuttings, string, etc., are placed in juxtaposition and glued to the pictorial surface’. In conversation with Francoise Gilot, Pablo Picasso explains the art form specifically with reference to displacement:

If a piece of newspaper can become a bottle that gives us something to think about in connection with both newspapers and bottles, too. This displaced object has entered a new universe for which it was not made and it retains, in a sense, its strangeness’ (qtd. in Gilot and Lake 70).

What Picasso attributes to his own artistic endeavours, scholars of Moore attribute to her verse: her poetry, as with works of collage, operates through the interaction between once disparate, but now contiguous elements.

Focusing on the biographical explanation for Moore’s collage, Elisabeth Joyce investigates Moore’s use of scrapbooking and in particular the cutting and pasting of articles about the New York Armory Show. Prompted by archival research, Joyce claims that ‘Moore expresses her affinity to collage not only by this simple collection of articles about the cubist artists but also by her reshaping of these articles, her cutting out, rearranging, and altering them’ (65). Quoting this same passage, Bartholomew Brinkman begins his 2012 essay on Moore’s use of scrapbooks, ‘Scrapping Modernism’, by arguing that scrapping is a productive practice that ‘would find one of its greatest expressions in the modern collage poem and especially in the collage poems of Marianne Moore’ (47). Through examining Moore’s actual scrapbooks, Brinkman establishes, like Joyce, a material basis for the ‘physical acts of importation, juxtaposition, assemblage, pasting-over, anchoring, and

enjambment that would be translated into her later collage poetry' ('Scrapping Modernism' 63). Further, in his 2016 book *Poetic Modernism*, which includes a modified version of the above essay, Brinkman explains that Moore's quotations are 'simply imported from another source and placed in the poem, like a pasted scrap' (120). Indeed, like me, Brinkman understands these tendencies in relation to the advent of mass print arguing that 'Moore's poetry invoked a long history of scrapbooking as a feminized negotiation of mass print culture' (*Poetic Modernism* 40) and elsewhere that 'Moore's scrappy poetics can help us better understand the role of mass print culture in the formation of the modern collage poem more generally' (*Poetic Modernism* 135). Brinkman and Joyce pursue an analytical path that begins with the unchallenged assumption that because Moore incorporates into her poetry a multitude of borrowed phrases and images she therefore must be writing poetic collage.

The critical tendency to understand Moore's verse in terms of displacement and collage can be traced back to at least William Carlos Williams's 1925 review of Moore's *Observations*. In this review Williams speaks of Moore getting 'great pleasure from wiping soiled words or cutting them clean out' (541) and 'removing the aureoles that have been pasted about them or taking them bodily from greasy contexts' (541). He argues that in Moore's work 'each word should stand crystal clear with no attachments' and that 'a word is a word most when it is separated out by science, treated with acid to remove the smudges, washed, dried, and placed right side up on a surface' (541). Williams presents a vision of Moore's poetry where the words are cut out from one context and pasted into another and arranged together on a now clean surface like the painter who cuts out images and places them onto a canvas. Quoting this same passage Susan McCabe summarises Williams's thinking by concluding: 'Words, then, are handled bodily: stripped of their referents (making the reader aware of the material, chemical process, as it were), cut, counted, and set against a white "ground" or rectangle (the page becoming a kind of film strip or screen fabric)'

(*Cinematic Modernism* 197). Notice, for example, the same focus on language being taken out of a context and by so doing, in McCabe's words, being 'stripped of their referents'.<sup>24</sup> Brinkman shares this view also when he claims of Moore's scrapbooks, with the intention of mapping these views onto her poetry, that the pasted snippets and excerpts are 'free-floating [and] completely cut off from both their old and new contexts' (*Poetic Modernism* 124). It is this sense of extirpation and re-contextualisation that is at stake when critics such as Bazin and Leavell claim that Moore's poetry is predicated on displacement.<sup>25</sup>

In what follows I propose a different understanding of Moore's use of quotations and in so doing I also aim to continue pressing upon the methodological differences between Eliot and Moore. This chapter is a corrective to what I take to be the unsatisfactory critical models of collage and displacement outlined above. Thus, whilst I certainly agree with Brinkman that Moore's poetry, like Eliot's, registers the wider concerns of a newly invigorated mass print

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<sup>24</sup> What is presented here is only a small selection of available scholarship on the general topic of collage and displacement in Moore's poetry. Jennifer Ladino's 2005 analysis of 'An Octopus', for example, focuses on the integration of travel literature into the poem, specifically the National Park Service (NPS) Rules and Regulations brochure. Ladino traces the ways in which Moore's poem assimilates this brochure, which is, Ladino explains, 'a 52-page pamphlet with information on safety, accommodations, and activities in the park [...], which visitors received free at the entrance' (1). Ladino uses this interaction between 'An Octopus' and its integrated elements in order to 'suggest new connections between collage poetry and environmental discourse' (2). Ladino's reading has at its crux the idea that 'collage resists seeing Mount Rainer as a ready-made image to be appropriated by the NPS' (3). Another example of the collage and displacement vocabulary at work in contemporary Moore criticism can be found in Jenni-Rebecca Falcetta's 2006 article 'Acts of Containment: Marianne Moore, Joseph Cornell, and the Poetics of Enclosure'. In this essay Falcetta compares Moore's poetry to the artwork of Joseph Cornell arguing that 'Moore parallels Cornell's acts of assembling and preserving objects of diverse origin through her unique poetic practices' (125) such as 'borrowing phrases from many sources, verbally cataloguing collections of objects or animals, and containing it all through syllabification inside the "box" of the stanza' (125). Falcetta's focus on Moore's poetry as an act of 'rigorous poetic containment' betrays a view of the poem as a surface onto which literary snippets are pasted and arranged. There exists, Falcetta claims, 'defined but transparent boundaries around the material contained within, allowing for the collected set of objects to be put on display' (132). Susan McCabe adopts a similar position in her comparison between Charles Darwin and Moore (2009) when she makes the point that Moore collects her literary snippets and then uses the poem itself as a kind of storage jar where the specimens are then kept.

<sup>25</sup> The word 'extirpation' has been chosen very carefully and it is worth explaining why. Despite now having cultural, political and religious connotations, the word has an interesting etymological origin. It comes from the verb 'to extirpate', which originates from the Latin combination of the prefix 'ex' meaning to expel or remove and the Latin 'stirp' meaning the stem or stock of a tree. Thus, the word, in early usages, referred to the literal clearing of stumps and the uprooting of trees. This is useful when thinking about displacement in Moore because it is the contextual roots of the images that have ostensibly been removed although, as will become clear as the chapter progresses, these roots do in fact remain, as is only proper of roots, below the text. Given the overarching preoccupation of this dissertation it is perhaps not difficult to surmise what these roots might be.

culture, I very much disagree with his view of Moore as a collage poet. It is true that there are 179 instances of direct quotations in *Observations*, but it is also true that attached to those quotations are 124 endnotes. To say that Moore's poetry is organized around displacement is a methodological error: her quotations cannot be displaced if they are attached to a set of specific contextual markers. If one were to read Moore's poetry without her notes, which is to say, if one were to buy a copy of *Observations* with them torn out, then it might make sense to say her quotations are displaced, without context, ripped out. One can only assume, however, that Bazin and Leavell do not own such a copy. The existence of Moore's notes complicates and undermines the validity of an analysis that is predicated on the idea that her poetry is comprised of displaced phrases, images and quotations. Her quotations are not 'taken bodily from greasy contexts' as Williams would have it and nor are they 'stripped of their referents' as McCabe would have it. The opposite is, in fact, more accurate.

This chapter provides an alternative reading of Moore's poetry and her use of quotation that is attentive also to her use of notes. I argue against the entrenched critical position that Moore's poetry, through recourse to displacement, resembles poetic collage by considering the interaction not between the contiguous elements of quotation and quotation but the conterminous elements of quotation and note. It is in this way, and unlike Eliot, that Moore concentrates her notes back onto her poetry. It is often the case in Moore that she uses a quotation in her poem in a very different way to how it was used in its original source. Moore addresses the ways in which material can be manipulated and altered in the short essay 'Abraham Lincoln and the Art of the Word' published in 1960. The essay begins by citing Lincoln's Baltimore Sanitary Fair speech of 1864 in which Lincoln bemoans the inability for the word 'liberty' to mean just one thing. He then argues that at all times he must be as clear and plain as possible so that 'no honest man can misunderstand me, and no dishonest one can successfully misrepresent me' (*Reader* 201), thus guarding against the

possibility of ‘a specious and fantastic arrangement of words, by which a man can prove a horse-chestnut to be a chestnut horse’ (*Reader* 201).

What Moore does, then, is to encourage her reader to interrogate the potential dissonance between the way a quotation is appropriated by her and how it is used in its original context, as indexed by the note. The point is not that the quotation has been ripped out of a context, but that it still has a context. Without directly addressing her annotative strategies, Muriel Rukeyser drew attention to this fundamental creative tension within Moore’s work when, in a 1966 review, she described Moore’s drive to allow her borrowed material to ‘walk among its origins’ (81). As Rukeyser gestures towards, but Williams or McCabe or Leavell appear to overlook, what is at stake in Moore is the interplay between the quoted snippet and its ‘origin’. This involves the act of reading the quotation, turning to the back of the book and examining how it has been assimilated by Moore and, as is so often the case, what the ensuing (mis)appropriation might suggest. In ‘Note on the Notes’ Moore defends her use of quotations and notes by first of all acknowledging that ‘some readers suggest that quotation marks are disruptive of pleasant progress; others, that notes to what should be complete are a pedantry or evidence of an insufficiently realised task’ (*Collected* 262). Her response to these imagined readers is this: ‘Perhaps those who are annoyed by provisos, detainments, and postscripts could be persuaded to take probity on faith and disregard the notes’ (*Collected* 262). One gets the feeling that to disregard the notes is the last thing that Moore wants her reader to do and yet this is exactly what many of her most sophisticated readers have done.

Prompted by Patrick Redding’s 2012 article ‘Marianne Moore and Democratic Taste’, in which he traces the influences of John Dewey on Moore’s early work, I argue, like Redding, that Moore adopts in her poetry Dewey’s pedagogical model of self-directed study. The kind of reading strategies that Moore encourages are the same kind of extranoematic

reading strategies already examined in Eliot: the notes become a space in which a reader is encouraged to handle material and to examine the ways in which quotations have been manipulated. However, it is the procedure of turning to the back of the book and interrogating the manner in which Moore handles quotations, which is significant, and not the texts to which the quotations belong as would have been the case for Eliot. Moore still invites and requires intellectual effort and so Eliot's characterization of her in his introduction is not unfair, but such an act is not tied to a prescriptive sense of what is worth reading and what is not. What matters to Moore is not what one reads, but the concentration and the attentiveness with which one reads it. As such, and much more than with Eliot, I understand the intellectual demands that Moore places upon her reader as belonging to what Marx described as self-activity, as outlined in the Introduction. By working with and through the materials of mass print alongside canonical sources, Moore encourages her reader to participate in its creative reconfiguration. Unlike Eliot, Moore does not position herself in the role of cultural arbitrator, but rather creates an open poetic system that does encourage effort, but in such a way as to allow the reader, quoting Marx, to 'develop freely his physical and mental energy' (*Economic Manuscripts* 52). In a letter to Bryher dated August 31 1921 Moore recollects her time as a student at Bryn Mawr College:

The net result of my experiences at Bryn Mawr was to make me feel that intellectual wealth can't be superimposed, that it is to be appropriated; my experience there gave me security in my determination to have what I want [...] At Bryn Mawr the students are allowed to develop with as little interference as is compatible with any kind of academic order and the more I see of other women's colleges, the more I feel that Bryn Mawr was peculiarly adapted to my special requirements (*Selected Letters* 178).

Quoting this same passage Patrick Redding quite rightly comments that it reveals Moore's 'commitment to an exploratory and experiential approach to education, one that relies on acts

of personal appropriation and self-cultivation rather than a regimented program of instruction [...] It must begin with the student rather than the teacher' (4).

Twenty-two years later, in a 1943 letter to Lloyd Frankenberg, Moore would repeat this same sentiment when discussing what defines a poem. She writes: 'A poem is not a poem, surely, unless there is a margin of undidactic implication, – an area which the reader can make his own' (*Selected Letters* 443). This 'margin of undidactic implication' is the literal margin of her poetry and it is in this image one finds the clearest refutation of Eliot's annotative model of delineation. What is at stake for Moore is the necessity of expending effort in service of materials chosen by the reader and not, as with Eliot, chosen by the author. There remains the necessity of effort, but it is to be exercised at the reader's discretion and it is on this point the two poets differ. In this, and as Redding indicates, Moore's annotative model of the transmission of knowledge is intimately bound to a political act, as indeed any transmission of knowledge is. Her poetics of participation becomes a way of destabilizing authority and hierarchy within the text and between reader and poet also. Further, her choice of material, in addition to the methodology she encourages her reader to apply to it, becomes a democratizing gesture that reminds us of Otlet at his most liberal when he asserts that the 'freedom to write' is a 'necessary corollary of the freedom of thought'. When it comes to *what* to read in Moore, unlike in Eliot and Pound, there is very little evidence of cultural policing. Whilst it would be incorrect to say that Moore does not register an anxiety about the advent of mass print, hence why she seeks to elucidate a methodology that will enable readers to handle the material better in the first instance, she does also recognise its creative potential. What follows is an analysis of how exactly Moore encourages the reader to use the note as a space in which these pedagogical impulses can be played out. I will first of all examine some of the early poems that appear in *Observations*, before moving through the volume and examining 'An Octopus' and 'Sea Unicorns and Land Unicorns'.



This will involve first of all establishing the reading practices that Moore encourages at the beginning of *Observations* and then examining how these are put to the test in later poems.

### **Lessons Taught: The Early Poems of *Observations***

Published in 1924 by Dial Press, *Observations* begins with the short poem ‘To an Intra-Mural Rat’:

You make me think of many men  
 Once met, to be forgot again  
 Or merely resurrected  
 In a parenthesis of wit  
 That found them hastening through it  
 Too brisk to be inspected (*Becoming* 51).

Originally published in the May 1915 edition of Harriet Monroe’s *Poetry*, ‘To an Intra-Mural Rat’ is one of the few poems published in *Observations* to have garnered next to no critical attention. A look over the relevant literature reveals only a handful of usually sentence long examinations of the poem and indeed one is more likely to find essays on laboratory rats and their ventricular systems than Moore’s poem.<sup>26</sup> Yet, as the opening poem to the volume that arguably began Moore’s career, ‘To an Intra-Mural Rat’ occupies a privileged position in Moore’s oeuvre and so it is, for that fact alone, deserving of at least some attention. The poem is a prime example of the idiosyncrasy for which Moore’s early poetry was known: it addresses a wall dwelling rat who reminds the speaker of long forgotten men who have been guilty of being brisk and ‘hastening through it’, the ‘it’ referring to a ‘parenthesis of wit’. The key to understanding what lies behind the idiosyncrasy, if indeed anything does, is deciding

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<sup>26</sup> Apparently, ‘intramural’ designates in anatomical parlance the space between the walls of a cavity or organ and usually refers to the heart. Thus, to speak of an intramural rat to a vet is to speak of the space between the cavities in its heart.

what exactly this ‘parenthesis of wit’ refers to and so what the men have hastened through and been too brisk to inspect.

One of the few critics to analyse the poem is Jeredith Merrin in her 1993 essay ‘Marianne Moore and Elizabeth Bishop’. Merrin’s response to this question, perhaps predictably so, is that the ‘parenthesis of wit’ refers to one’s life, with the first parenthesis being birth and the second, death. Merrin points to the words ‘hastening’ and ‘brisk’ to suggest that the subject has spent his time ‘scrambling about with a mindless ambition, not taking the time to look into his own soul, to inspect himself’ (345). A similar reading of the poem is found in Catherine Paul’s 2006 ‘Marianne Moore: *Observations*’. Here, Paul argues that the poem is concerned with ‘people with whom one’s experience is fleeting’ (423) and as such the poem becomes a kind of warning about ‘the need to take such observations seriously’ (423). In both of these readings the phrase ‘parenthesis of wit’ refers to one’s life and thus the poem concerns itself with how one has lived and how one should live, whether it be ‘scrambling about’ or not taking the time to appreciate those around you. This situates the poem as an early example of Moore’s later poetic fables, such as those found in her translation of Jean de La Fontaine’s fables, which intend to impart some sort of moral or message to the reader.

An alternative understanding of the poem might be to see ‘parenthesis of wit’ as not referring to life, but rather to Moore’s volume of poetry itself: the image of a parenthesis marks the front and back cover, whilst ‘wit’ refers to the verse contained within. It is interesting to note that the understanding of Moore’s poetry as advocated by Eliot and also critics such as Jennifer Leader and Lina Steinman corroborates this view. The *OED* defines ‘wit’ as ‘good or great mental capacity; intellectual ability; genius, talent, cleverness; mental quickness or sharpness, acumen’ and again ‘quickness of intellect or liveliness of fancy, with capacity of apt expression; talent for saying brilliant or sparkling things’. One might assume,

then, that Eliot and the other mentioned critics would be more than comfortable describing a volume such as *Observations* as a ‘parenthesis of wit’. This interpretation is further reinforced when one looks at the description of the rat as ‘intra-mural’. Again according to the *OED*, the term comes from the Latin combination of ‘intra-’ and ‘mural’ translated literally to ‘between or situated within walls’. However, as both Merrin and Paul point out, it also refers figuratively to an academic institution or an activity of some description that takes place within the walls of such an institution. Traditionally, this referred to collegiate sport, but it could describe any academic activity. Despite only being added to the *OED* in 1993, the first recorded use of the word in this sense was in a 1912 edition of a University of Chicago magazine, and thus it is completely plausible that Moore was aware of this secondary meaning and indeed this would explain why she chose to describe the rat in such an unusual manner: Moore wanted to situate her poem in reference to the university or even education more generally. Bearing this in mind, ‘To an Intra-Mural Rat’ could, like ‘parenthesis of wit’, refer to the papery walls that surround Moore’s volume of poetry in which case the rat might describe Moore’s reader: the figure who dwells within the walls of her book. Despite the change in focus, both Merrin and Paul’s suggestions do still hold true: Moore is chastising those readers who scurry through her volume, as opposed to life, and as such the poem still functions as a kind of warning to take those observations seriously, which in this case refers to the poetry of *Observations* and not, as Paul meant it, observations in general.

In this way, ‘To an Intra-Mural Rat’ sets the tone for the whole volume and it introduces into *Observations* those exact same concerns described in the above examination of Dewey and Moore: the need for self-direction, the need to pay attention and to examine the material for oneself and not to take things on faith and probity. Most importantly, the poem introduces how exactly one might go about handling textual matter, which in this case refers to Moore’s poetry: the reader must not ‘hasten through it’ and must not be brisk, but rather he

should be willing to take the time to inspect what he finds within the ‘parenthesis of wit’. The poem, from the outset, establishes how one is expected to approach Moore’s volume. It is involved in the act of encouraging a reading strategy not dissimilar to the one promoted by Eliot in *The Waste Land*: the reader must be willing to take his time with the poems, to expend effort, to inspect, and to not scurry through its pages. However, in this one also sees clearly the distinction between Eliot and Moore: what ‘To an Intra-Mural Rat’ is inscribing is not the intended object of one’s attention, but rather the methodology with which one ought to approach any text. In subsequent poems, as will very soon be demonstrated, these initial concerns about inspection take on a very specific meaning in the context of *Observations*, which has to do with turning to Moore’s notes and interrogating how quotations are assimilated into the verse and how this might be different to the way the quotation was used in its original source. What Moore is doing, then, is building her volume around a set of practices which are encoded into the verse itself and which, as the volume progresses, take on more and more significance. She is at once constructing a reading practice that is both applicable to any text and also one that might be refracted back onto her own poetry. One is perhaps reminded in this of Otlet’s lamentation that ‘once one read; today one refers to, checks through, skims’ (79). This is precisely the crux for Moore also and, as with Otlet, her poetry is a coming to terms with a cultural landscape besieged by the advent of mass print. Still further, Moore’s response to this is not, unlike Eliot’s, one of cultural conservation, but rather a concerted poetic effort, through the figure of the note, to inculcate within her reader a disposition not to ‘skim’. Thus, Moore does not shy away from recruiting for her poetry the very materials she seeks to guard against, but rather she trains the reader methodologically how to live with and to handle it as indeed Otlet would do through his *Mundaneum*.

Whilst not appearing until mid-way through *Observations*, the poem ‘Critics and Connoisseurs’ employs a similar lexicon and as such it is worth mentioning here. The poem

begins by claiming that there exists a ‘great amount of poetry in unconscious / fastidiousness’ (*Becoming* 77) before then citing as an example the ‘mere childish attempt to make an imperfectly / ballasted animal stand up’ (*Becoming* 77) and the ‘similar determination to make a pup / eat his meat on the plate’ (*Becoming* 77). Like in ‘To an Intra-Mural Rat’ Moore is building a poetics out of and ascribing it to acts that demonstrate fortitude and hard work. The child’s attempt to make the animal stand up and the requirement not to hasten or be brisk in order to do so is poetic because of the determination and labour that the child injects into it. She concludes the poem by describing a ‘fastidious ant carry a stick north, / south, east, west’ (*Becoming* 78) before ‘abandoning the stick as / useless and overtaxing’ (*Becoming* 78) and then, after a moment’s rest, continuing with ‘the same course of procedure’ (*Becoming* 78). Moore concludes the poem by deliberating on the significance of the ant’s continued efforts: ‘What is / there in being able / to say that one has dominated the stream in an / attitude of self defense, / in proving that one has had the experience / of carrying a stick’ (*Becoming* 78). One might notice in Moore’s description of the ant as ‘fastidious’ that there is omitted the word ‘unconscious’, which was previously applied to the child. Moore is celebrating in this poem the same virtues that Eliot ascribed to her poetry and that she seems to cultivate in ‘To an Intra-Mural Rat’. However, this attitude of perseverance and hard work, which is commended in and of itself (it is the experience of carrying the stick and not the eventual utility of that stick with which the poem ends) is only to be acclaimed when it is done so consciously.

How exactly the practices outlined in ‘To an Intra-Mural Rat’ and ‘Critics and Connoisseurs’ take on more significance as the volume progresses will now be examined in relation to three early poems in *Observations*: ‘To a Prize Bird’, ‘To a Strategist’, and ‘Injudicious Gardening’. For example, attached to the title of ‘To a Prize Bird’, which is also the first poem in the volume to include endnotes, is a single note, which reads ‘Bernard

Shaw' (*Becoming* 138). One can presume, then, that the prize bird referenced in the title refers to Shaw and that Shaw is also the person that the speaker addresses in the poem: Shaw is the 'you' of the opening line and it is Shaw who is able to make the speaker laugh. What is interesting about this note is that, as is the case with all the volume's previously published poems, there is no note included in its original published form. 'To a Prize Bird' was first published in the August 1915 edition of Harriet Weaver's *The Egoist* with the title of 'To Bernard Shaw: A Prize Bird'. For some reason, then, when publishing *Observations*, Moore chose to move the explanation of whom the poem is addressed to from the title to an endnote. Moore uses exactly the same strategy in 'To a Strategist'. As with 'To a Prize Bird', this poem begins by establishing that it is being addressed to a specific 'you' who is described in the poem as a 'brilliant Jew' and a 'chameleon' (*Becoming* 58). Again, whom exactly the strategist refers to is explained in the single endnote, which reads 'Disraeli' (*Becoming* 137). This information was supplied in the title of the poem's original publication. 'To a Strategist' was first published in the Spring 1915 issue of Moore's alumni periodical, the *Bryn Mawr Lantern* with the title 'To Disraeli on Conservatism'.

One final poem that employs a similar strategy, but, as will be examined, to a different effect, is 'Injudicious Gardening'. This poem was originally published alongside 'To a Prize Bird' in *The Egoist* with the title 'To Browning'. Attached to the title of the poem is a more substantial note than either of the notes in 'To a Prize Bird' or 'To a Strategist', which explains the inspiration behind the poem. The note reads: 'Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett; Harper. Vol. 1, p. 513; "the yellow rose? 'Infidelity,' says the dictionary of flowers." Vol II, p. 38: "I planted a full dozen more rose-trees, all white – to take away the yellow rose reproach!"' (*Becoming* 137). Moore is referring to an exchange between Browning and Barrett. The exchange itself constitutes Barrett's thinking about the first flower that Browning gave her. She writes to Browning in a letter written in February:

‘The first you ever gave me was a yellow rose sent in a letter, and shall I tell you what *that* means – the yellow rose? “Infidelity,” says the dictionary of flowers. You see what an omen [...] to begin with!’ Browning responded in April by telling Barrett that he had ‘planted a full dozen more rose-trees, all white – to take away the yellow-rose reproach!’ (qtd. in *Becoming* 175). Thus, the poem functions as a poetic reinvention of that exchange. What we have in these three early poems, then, is a pattern in which key information has been moved from the title to the endnotes, and in the case of ‘Injudicious Gardening’, new information is introduced.

One of the only critics to acknowledge this alteration between the different publications of the three poems is Robin Schulze in her study of Moore’s early poetry *Becoming Marianne Moore*. Schulze offers this explanation as to why Moore changed her poems in this manner for *Observations*:

Her decision to obscure her sources may have sprung from a need to distance her art from a literary past that at least some of her modernist peers found oppressive. Moore, however, like Ezra Pound, believed that she had much to learn from her precursors, even if she did not always agree with the figures she found intriguing (176).

This is by no means a satisfactory response and indeed it is contradictory. In one sentence, Schulze claims that Moore removed the source from the title in order to distance herself from a literary past and in the next, she claims that Moore had much to learn from those same precursors. Even if Moore did want to distance her sources, as Schulze suggests, then an endnote is hardly the best way to do this. Schulze’s position works because she sees the notes as ‘obscuring’ (176) the sources. This is a revealing choice of language in which to describe the notes and it betrays Schulze’s thinking that Moore’s endnotes are there to be ignored, or at the very least pushed to one side. Elsewhere in *Becoming Marianne Moore*, Schulze also refers to Shaw and Disraeli’s identity as being ‘buried’ (175) and ‘consigned’ (175) to the

notes. Schulze is not alone in describing the notes in this way. In *Questions of Authority* Cristanne Miller speaks of information being 'relegated to the notes' (200). However, this position is untenable: the endnotes are still there for all to see and if it were Moore's aim to remove her literary precursors, as Schulze claims, then it would surely make sense not to include them at all. Moore is under no obligation to reveal her sources in endnotes, as a work such as *The Cantos* can testify, and it is in this way that Schulze's response to why Moore might have moved information to the endnotes in these three poems is not satisfactory. There is, however, an alternative answer that hinges not on Moore obscuring or burying her sources, but rather on the idea that she was actively inviting her reader to engage with them.

When considering this possibility it is important to remember that both 'To a Prize Bird' and 'To a Strategist' remain unchanged between editions other than the title. In the original publication, the reader entered the poem knowing exactly whom the poem was addressed to and as such, the use of direct address and specific descriptions make complete sense. The reader would read the poem knowing that it was Shaw who made the speaker laugh or that it was Disraeli who was a 'brilliant Jew'. However, removing the name from the title created a problem for the reader of *Observations*. He knows that the poem is addressed to a specific individual and that discovering his identity is of paramount importance to understanding the poem. However, the reader of *Observations*, unlike the reader of *The Egoist* or *Lantern*, does not, on the face of it, have access to this information. The note in both poems, containing as it does only a name, provides a solution to the reader's problem. What the poem compels the reader to do, then, is to turn to the notes in order to find out the identity of the person being addressed. If one wishes fully to understand the poem and to appreciate its imagery then the reader surely has no other option but to consult the note, and given that the note itself contains only that information, and further that the name was previously supplied in the title, it seems reasonable to suggest that this was a calculated



strategy on Moore's behalf. Thus, the notes are not obscuring or burying the sources as Schulze argues, but rather the poem actively encourages the reader to interact with the annotation. Moore *wanted* her reader to turn to her notes and she altered her poetry to ensure that her reader did just that. The consequence of this is that Moore is transforming the very act of turning to the notes into a significant aspect of one's reading experience. Through the simple act of removing the subject from the title, Moore constructs her poem in such a way that her reader needs to use the note: if you want to know who the prize bird is or who the strategist is, then you must turn to the notes.

Unlike 'To a Prize Bird' and 'To a Strategist', 'Injudicious Gardening' contains no obvious compulsion for the reader to go to the notes. There is no specific subject that the reader might want to seek out, the poem is not addressed 'to' someone, and nor is there any direct quotation that the reader might want to identify. To all intents and purposes, there is no way to know when reading 'Injudicious Gardening' that there is attached to it a note. However, if one considers the order of poems in the volume then it might shed light on why this might be. When originally published together in *The Egoist*, 'Injudicious Gardening' was printed first and then on the same page 'To a Prize Bird' was printed. This order was reversed for *Observations* and so Moore not only altered the titles of the poems, but she also changed their order. This is significant, since when reading *Observations* one begins 'Injudicious Gardening' having just completed 'To a Prize Bird' and as such having just gone through the procedure of turning to the notes in order to identify the prize bird. If, after reading 'To a Prize Bird', one turned to the notes again then one would discover information essential to understanding the poem. Thus, 'To a Prize Bird' establishes the necessity of turning to the notes and then 'Injudicious Gardening' reinforces this act and tests to see which of Moore's readers have absorbed the lesson.

By providing information essential to the poem and locating it in the endnotes, Moore is establishing a pattern of reading where certain behaviours are cultivated and then, if acted out, rewarded. These early poems assess first of all whether or not the reader has understood the virtues of paying heed, inspecting, and expending effort as outlined in 'To an Intra-Mural Rat' and then further appreciated the textual mechanism, introduced in 'To a Prize Bird', which provides a vehicle through which these strategies can be implemented. If the reader has understood both of these things then by the time he arrives at 'Injudicious' he would turn to the notes, even though there is no manifest reason to do so, and upon arriving there he would soon discover that his actions have been both validated and rewarded. The reader is met with the same archival materials that inspired Moore to write the poem and as such the perplexing language and imagery around which the text is built, such as, 'I could not bear a yellow rose ill will' (*Becoming* 56), begins to make sense.

One might even go so far as to say, then, that 'Injudicious Gardening' functions as a kind of poetic Easter Egg. This is a term taken from the video gaming community that refers to a hidden message or image, which is encoded into the game. Easter Eggs are often not easily accessible and would not be encountered through normal play: they would usually be found, for instance, by accessing a hidden area or pressing buttons in an unusual but predetermined sequence or for completing an optional and more difficult level. Therefore, Easter Eggs are often considered to be a reward for doing something that is not required to complete the game and they also tend to provide the user with an advantage that otherwise would not be gained. The slightly later poem, 'To a Strategist', then, serves to reinforce the behaviour established in 'Prize Bird' and 'Injudicious' by repeating the pattern of relocating information to the endnotes and in doing so the reader become even further convinced of the continuing necessity of consulting the notes when reading Moore's poetry. The figure of the

note and the strategy of consulting the notes becomes a way for Moore to instil in her reader the traits that are celebrated in both 'To an Intra-Mural Rat' and 'Critics and Connoisseurs'.

One way in which to consider what is happening in these early poems is through Speech Act Theory, a theory of language put forward by JL Austin in his book *How to Do Things with Words* (1962). Put simply, Austin's study describes a kind of utterance that he labelled performative utterances. These utterances are characterised by two features. First, performatives do not describe something or what Austin calls 'constate' and as such, Austin argues, they do not hold any truth-value (5). Instead, when uttered in a particular set of circumstances these utterances perform a certain action (6-7). If the action is unsuccessful it is not deemed false, but instead infelicitous (7). The action which is performed when the utterance is not infelicitous is what Austin labels a speech act: the utterance does not describe something or make a claim about the nature of something, but rather it is used actually to do it. An example that Austin uses is if one were to say 'I now pronounce you man and wife' and the circumstances were correct (the person uttering the statement was legally in a position to make such a pronouncement and it was in the course of a marriage ceremony) then the phrase has the performative consequence of marrying two people as opposed to describing or evaluating that marriage. In the course of his study, Austin delineates three kinds of speech act: locutionary, which is the act *of* saying something; illocutionary, which is the act performed *in* saying something; and perlocutionary, which is what one does *by* saying something. Thus, in its most straightforward format, a speech act is expressed through a certain set of words that when uttered in the correct circumstances communicate to the listener that the utterance is intended to and able to make something happen. However, speech acts are rarely as explicit as the example of marriage given above and very often they operate through inference: in the marriage example the listener is in the first instance expecting the utterance to do something and he is alerted to this fact through the use of 'I now

pronounce you', but often the listener is required to infer what is being asked of him since the speech act itself is communicated obliquely.

For the purposes of this chapter, the idea that often speech acts are oblique is an important one. A particularly influential essay, which addresses the topic of speech acts and obliqueness, is Quentin Skinner's 1970 'Conventions and Understandings of Speech Acts'. Skinner begins his article in much the same manner as the above: he points out that Austin's speech act theory depends on what Austin labelled 'uptake', which refers to the listener understanding that the speaker is attempting to impart something in order for any given illocutionary act to have its intended effect (121). Skinner goes on to point out, however, that 'there is no doubt that there may be circumstances [...] in which S performs an illocutionary act in uttering some utterance to A and yet performs the necessary act of communication in some oblique way' (121). Skinner provides an example of this in which, as he states, 'some advice, or warning, or direction has to be issued by S to A, but in which there is a premium on achieving this "exercitive" communication (in Austinian parlance) with as much finesse as possible' (121). The point here is that rather than diminishing the force of the speech act being oblique in fact increases its effectiveness: certain utterances that incite an action are more efficient when communicated covertly rather than overtly. This is important when considering Moore because it provides a framework in which to understand how exactly she encourages the reader to examine her notes and to examine the relationship between the quotations as used in the poem and in the original source. In order to avoid instructing the reader what to do, Moore instead constructs a poetic model whereby the reader is encouraged to go to the notes and to inspect what he finds there: Moore establishes in *Observations*, by removing key information and putting it into the endnote, a complex and oblique poetic structure that has encoded into it the very act of turning to the notes.

In his 2001 study *Material Modernism: The Politics of the Page* George Bornstein addresses this same idea of the specifically literary speech act. Prompted by Peter Shillingsburg's 1991 article 'Text as Matter, Concept and Action', in which Shillingsburg argues that a text includes a physical form, concept and a specified act to be performed by a reader, Bornstein corresponds this idea to Jerome McGann's notion of the bibliographic code. Bornstein explains: '[T]he bibliographic code is the textual form taken by speech acts. The physical features of the text correspond to the physical features of delivery of a speech act, to the factors that make it an utterance rather than merely a sentence' (8). This idea provides a theoretical vocabulary in which to understand how Moore encourages her reader to handle the book and to inspect how quotations have been manipulated: her notes become the bibliographic and physical embodiment of a poetic speech act, which requires her reader to act out a specific semiotic sequence. Further leaning on the lexicon provided by speech act theory and specifically Kent Back and Michael Hamish's distinction between four categories of illocutionary act, which are constatives, directives, commissives and acknowledgements, one might thus describe Moore and Eliot as exhibiting commissive tendencies. Commissives refer to illocutionary acts of invitation, promising and offering and in this way they are the kind of acts employed by Moore and also Eliot: both writers invite their readers to do something and in both cases this is tied to the act of turning to and engaging with the notes. Manuel Portela provides an updated rendition of Skinner's and Bornstein's argument in his 2013 *Scripting Reading Motions: The Codex and the Computer as Self-Reflexive Machines*. This study, as its title suggests, is concerned with the ways in which specifically electronic texts are able to encourage their reader to adopt certain strategies; or, as the title has it, how a text is able to script one's reading motions. Following Portela, then, one might further add that the relationship between a poem such as 'To a Strategist' and its note is one where

‘typographic and bibliographic marks are described as choreographic notations for reading movements’ (Portela 11).

What Moore is doing in these examples and as understood through the prism of speech act theory is using the figure of the note to encode into her verse at its very outset the parameters and procedures for *how* to handle material. The early poems discussed here reinforce and put into practice the ideas expressed in ‘To an Intra-Mural Rat’. Moore is cultivating a pedagogy that shares and propagates the virtue of physical and intellectual effort as promoted by Eliot along with emphasising the need to demonstrate acuity and attentiveness to what has been written. Yet, at the same time, she also attempts to divorce this methodology from Eliot’s prescriptive delineation of what is worth one’s commitment. In other words, Moore uses her notes to inculcate a set of reading practices predicated on those same attributes that Eliot recognised in her poetry and performed in his own, but she does so without the cultural adjudication that typifies *The Waste Land*. Moore is, like Eliot, inviting participation with her notes: the omission of essential information from the title and its relocation to the endnotes functions much like Eliot’s use of ‘look’ in *The Waste Land*. Just as Eliot invited his reader to ‘look’ so too does Moore invite hers to inspect and not to be brisk. Further, both poets are promoting a strategy of effort that is registered through the figure of the note and to be performed by the reader, but whilst Moore’s aim is to cultivate a transferable style of reading that involves paying close attention to what is written, Eliot’s aim was to delimit the scope of one’s attention. Moore’s pedagogical role is to instil in her reader the same curiosity that Bryn Mawr instilled in her and in so doing to turn the ‘gentle reader’ into the ‘hardened’ reader described by Marsden and discussed in Chapter One.

**Lessons Learnt: ‘Sea Unicorns and Land Unicorns’ and ‘An Octopus’**

In the early poems of *Observations*, Moore is establishing a narrative arc, which suggests one way of reading the volume. The volume, from the very beginning, is establishing the rules of the poetic game that Moore is playing and those rules revolve around turning to the notes, and inspecting and interrogating what is found there as a mechanism for cultivating within her reader a way of navigating and handling the saturation of mass print. If the early poems propose a strategy for approaching the text then the later poems encourage the reader to put into practice what has been learned. Reading *Observations* in this radial fashion, where the volume accrues more and more internal meaning as it progresses, is an idea Pound was only too attuned to. In a letter to Elkin Matthews from 1916 Pound explains: ‘Think of the book as a whole, not of individual words in it. Even certain smaller poems, unimportant in themselves, have a function in the book-as-a-whole. The shaping of a book is very important. It is as important as the construction of a play or a novel’ (qtd. in Wilson *Letter* 63). Here, the encoded strategy of going to the notes and paying attention to what is there sheds new analytical light on some of Moore’s more discussed poems. It is in this way the annotative strategy Moore so carefully planted in her early poems begins to take on more significance as her volume progresses.

An interesting example of this can be found in the final poem of the volume ‘Sea Unicorns and Land Unicorns’, which begins with these lines:

With their respective lions –  
 “mighty monoceroses with immeasured tayles” –  
 these are those very animals  
 described by the cartographers of 1539,  
 defiantly revolving  
 in such a way that the hard steel  
 in the long keel of white exhibited in tumbling,

disperses giant weeds

and those sea snakes whose forms looped in the foam, “dis-

quiet shippers” (*Becoming* 91).

In a note attached to the final line of this opening, Moore explains that the phrase ‘disquiet shippers’ is quoted in Violet Wilson’s *Queen Elizabeth’s Maids of Honour* and attributed to Olaus Magnus’s *History of the Goths and Swedes*. Moore then provides this description, taken from Magnus, of the sea serpents which she is describing: ‘The sea serpent: he hath commonly hair hanging from his neck a cubit long, and sharp scales and is black, and he hath flaming eyes. This snake disquiets shippers and he puts up his head like a pillar, and catcheth away men’ (*Becoming* 107). The quote then describes a monstrous sea serpent and it is, at first glance, this same sea serpent that is being described in the opening of Moore’s poem. Like Magnus, Moore is describing ‘mighty monoceroses with immeasured tayles’ who are ‘defiantly revolving’ and dispersing ‘giant weeds’.

However, on closer inspection, this appears not to be the case. The fact that Moore cites 1539 in relation to cartographers is revealing. This is the year that Magnus published what is his most famous work: the *Carta marina*, which is the earliest map of the Nordic countries. Upon inspection of this map, it appears that much of the imagery in the opening lines is not taken from the quotation provided by Moore, but rather the map itself. The map depicts, for example, ships in weeds, serpents and what can only be described as a sea unicorn. What is also interesting about this map is that along with its mythical figures it depicts warring armies. When examining these armies the phrase ‘with their respective lions’ takes on new meaning. At first glance, the phrase appears to refer to the monsters that Moore is describing and to the monsters described in the note. However, the imagery of lions is famous in Nordic history for being the traditional heraldic symbol. Next to the number eighty-six on the map, for example, there is a cluster of armoured knights who are holding



blue and gold shields with red lions painted onto them. Thus, when Moore begins her poem with ‘their respective lions’ she is not referring to sea serpents, but rather to the knights. This realisation also alters the tone and meaning of the poem’s other opening lines: when Moore writes ‘those are the very animals / described by cartographers of 1539’ she is not referring to the sea serpents, but rather to the armies. It is the knights, then, and not the sea serpents, who are ‘defiantly revolving’ and dispersing giant weeds and also disquieting shippers. This also explains the imagery of ‘hard steel’ and ‘long keel’.

This transforms the poetry from a commentary on monstrous sea creatures destroying innocent shippers, to a commentary on war and conflict. This is clarified in the following lines in which images of subjugation and colonialisation are abundant: the reader is told of a voyager who ‘obtained the horn of a sea / unicorn / to give Queen Elizabeth / who thought it worth a hundred thousand pounds’ (*Becoming* 134). What this shift of perception also provides is an example of exactly how Moore assimilates and manipulates her sources and thus what she is encouraging her reader to interrogate. In the source in which she quotes from the sea serpents are feared creatures, but in the poem she uses this quotation and Magnus’s work in order to make the point that it is man who should be feared. There is a second example of this same tactic being used towards the end of the poem. The final section of the poem describes the unicorn, which is ‘impossible to take alive’ and is ‘wild and gentle’ (*Becoming* 135). So ‘miraculous’ (*Becoming* 135) is the creature that it is able to be thrown from a cliff only to walk away unharmed. However, in the final lines, this creature is described as being ‘tamed’ (*Becoming* 135) and how pictures have been taken of it and a written record made of it. The poem then returns to its opening imagery of Magnus’s map to describe the creature being ‘etched like an equine monster on an old celestial map’ (*Becoming* 135). Thus, this seems to speak to the increasingly obvious point that Moore’s poem is dealing with the ways in which humanity has been able to colonize both nature and

also each other. Such a propensity for colonization is symbolized, in this instance, by the reduction of the unicorn from 'wild and gentle' to 'tame' and its subsequent written internment. However, this thematic revelation is only possible when one pays careful attention to Moore's notes and the interplay between poem and source, and it is through embedding covert yet highly significant information in this manner that Moore continues to press upon the methodologies and intellectual temperament required to reconfigure one's relationship to a culture of mass print.

One sees in 'An Octopus' this same concern with how narratives are constructed and the same use of the figure of the note to unpick and challenge the poem's often artificial and specious arrangement. The poem functions as a kind of ode written to Mount Rainer, which Moore visited with her mother and brother, Warner, once in 1922 and then again in 1923. It was on the first visit that Moore began formulating and composing the poem that would eventually become 'An Octopus'. As often pointed out, these early notes were written on the back of the *National Parks Service Rules and Regulations Brochure*, a fact that Moore alludes to in the poem's final endnote: 'Quoted descriptions of scenery and of animals, of which the source is not given, have been taken from government pamphlets on our national parks' (*Becoming* 149). By focusing on Moore's endnotes to 'An Octopus' and, as with 'Sea Unicorns and Land Unicorns', the slippages that exist between quotation and note, I aim to demonstrate that Moore interrogates the tension between the mountain as a natural object and the commodified and packaged version of it that is represented and promoted by the NPR. As Stacey Carson Hubbard has commented: 'Moore levels her sights on the mountain through the lens of the pamphlet itself, treating the visitor's guide as one piece of necessary equipment [...] which makes it possible to view the potentially blinding splendour of the peak' (21). However, as Jennifer Ladino points out, 'Hubbard doesn't analyze just what kind of "view" the pamphlet promotes' (288) and it is a view, I contend, that is predicated not on

‘serious regard’, as Elizabeth Joyce claims, but destabilization and, further, for such an analysis to make sense it is incumbent on the reader not only to read the quotations, but to examine the notes that are attached to them.

Despite the poem beginning by asserting the mountain is one ‘of ice’ and that it ‘lies “in grandeur” and in mass’ (*Becoming* 125) it quickly transpires that it is far less solid than it at first might appear. Throughout the early sections of the poem there is presented a series of oxymoronic images where ‘Big Snow’ is depicted as at once formidable and indomitable, but then also malleable and fragile. Take, for instance, the description of the mountain as ‘made of glass that will bend’ (*Becoming* 125): it is both made of glass, which is brittle and liable to shatter, but it also bends, which indicates resilience and as such seems to undermine the initial connotations of the image. This continues in the following lines: ‘comprising twenty-eight ice fields from fifty to five hundred feet thick, / of unimagined delicacy’ (*Becoming* 125). No sooner has the reader conjured in his mind an image of a vast and unyielding entity than it is undercut through the juxtaposition of the subsequent line announcing the mountain’s ‘unimagined delicacy’ (*Becoming* 125). The choice of ‘unimagined’, here, is of particular interest. Moore is almost pre-empting the reader’s potential denial of the mountain’s delicacy after learning of its thickness by asserting that whilst it is ‘unimaginable’ it is still accurate. Further, Moore describes the mountain as capable of ‘killing prey with the concentric crushing rigor of the / python’ (*Becoming* 126), but in the next breath concedes that it also ‘hovers forward “spider fashion / on its arms” misleading like lace’ (*Becoming* 126). After these initial lines of uncertainty the imagery quickly settles on the side of the mountain’s seeming malleability: it has a ‘ghostly pallor’, and ‘the rock seems frail compared with [the tree root’s] dark energy of life’, and it is ‘left at the mercy of the weather’ (*Becoming* 126). The poem describes not a towering or resilient object, but one that is

‘delicate’ and transfigured; not the hard outer shell of the octopus that it is named after, but its soft underbelly.

After establishing the mountain’s perhaps unexpected character, Moore arrives at the poem’s central consideration: if the mountain is malleable then in whose image has it been moulded? In other words, who or what is able to call the mountain home and further what has been lost or added in order to make habitation or occupation possible? Moore then moves through varying kinds of habitation and inhabitants beginning with this question: ‘What spot could have merits of equal importance / for bears, elk, deer, wolves, goats, and ducks?’ (*Becoming* 130). In these following lines, Moore begins to work through the possible responses to this question:

Preempted by their ancestors,  
 This is the property of the exacting porcupine,  
 And of the rat “slipping along its burrow in the swamp  
 Or pausing on high ground to smell the heather;”  
 Of “thoughtful beavers”  
 Making drains which seem the work of careful men with  
 Shovels,  
 And of the bears inspecting unexpectedly  
 Ant hills and berry bushes (*Becoming* 130).

Of particular interest is the anthropomorphisation of ‘thoughtful beavers’ who produce the work of ‘careful men’ and the ‘bears inspecting unexpectedly / Ant hills and berry bushes’. Moore is splicing into the natural imagery human characteristics and this pattern continues for the remainder of the poem as the imagery becomes ever more inflected and registered through human activity. For instance, Moore writes how the mountain ‘is the home of a diversity of creatures’ but then seems to subsume, as with the previous lines, this variety

within the confines of specifically human behaviours and customs. As a case in point, she speaks of ‘business men’ who ‘require for recreation, / three hundred and sixty-five holidays in the year’ (*Becoming* 128). Here, the year has been partitioned not according to the natural process of sunrise and sunset, but rather to the amount of holidays one might take in a given year: each day provides an opportunity for the mountain to play host to managed escapism as one’s vocation becomes another vacation.

What is being described is an industry being built around the mountain and in this its natural inhabitants, in a manner not dissimilar to ‘Sea Unicorns’, are being coerced to adapt to a changing landscape so that grasshoppers must become ‘practised in adapting their intelligence / to eagle traps and snowshoes, / to alpenstocks and other toys contrived by those / “alive to the advantage of invigorating pleasures”’ (*Becoming* 128). Further, the trees, whilst robust compared to the ‘frail’ rock, are still able to be manipulated to provide ‘bows, arrows, oars, and paddles’ with the forest existing only as a resource to provide ‘wood for dwellings and by its beauty / stimulates / the moral vigour of its citizens’ (*Becoming* 130). In the final images of the poem Moore continues her attack on how the mountain has been appropriated by quoting extensively from the NPR pamphlet and in so doing ridiculing the attitude that ‘one must do as one is told / and eat “rice, prunes, dates, raisins, hardtack, and tomatoes” / if one would “conquer the main peak” of Mount Tacoma’ (*Becoming* 131).

The poem is a probing of what it means to appropriate a natural resource, but this point is strengthened by a thorough consideration of the notes that are attached to the poem. It is interesting to point out, for instance, that the majority of the quotations that comprise ‘An Octopus’ are taken from contemporary tour guides, such as W.D. Wilcox’s *The Rockies in Canada*, Clifton Johnson’s *What to See in America*, and Ruskin’s *Fronde Agrestes*, which is an anthology that examines art from various geographical settings such as mountains, streams, and the sky. Moore’s use of the latter is especially interesting. Moore takes her

description of the frailty of the rock when compared to the tree's 'dark energy of life' from section seven of Ruskin's text. However, three paragraphs before the quoted description and still on the same page, and as such almost certainly read by Moore, Ruskin writes this:

Wonderful, in universal adaptation to man's need for desire and discipline, God's daily preparation of the earth for him, with beautiful means of life. First, a carpet, to make it soft for him; then a coloured fantasy of embroidery thereon; then, tall spreading of foliage to shade him from sun-heat, and shade also the fallen rain, that it may not dry quickly back into the clouds, but stay to nourish the springs among the moss (89).

The passage continues along these lines with Ruskin further describing how wood is 'easily to be cut, yet tough and light, to make houses for him or instruments' and how when winter comes 'the shade of leafage falls away to let the sun warm the earth' (89). Whilst easily missed by those readers who do not take the time to consider her notes, this provides a significant articulation of exactly the attitude that Moore is confronting within her poem: those who see the natural world as a resource to be exploited and as important only in as much as it aids humanity. Further, Moore makes this point and organises her critique by in turn appropriating sources and specifically tour guides, which are the instruments of the message of encampment and demarcation that Moore seeks to destabilise. Moore is able to put to work quotations from disparate sources and in so doing create a poem that is beautiful in its ability to capture and recreate the mountain it describes, but when reading the notes conterminously with the quotations and the poem one sees an attempt to describe not only the mountain, but the cultural and social mechanisms that surround and seek to intern it. The poem is a dishonest amalgamation of quotations, as 'Unicorns' is, just as the supposed

protection and conservational ethos of the NPR is a dishonest attempt to market and profit from a natural resource and in this one might recall Lincoln's Sanitary Fair speech.

In other words, Moore is able to turn the narrative of enclosure that is promoted by her sources against itself by reapplying it within the context of 'An Octopus', but without an appreciation and understanding of her notes the power of her critique is weakened. Just as the notes are the textual apparatus around the figurative mountain, so too are their sources the apparatus that surrounds and defines the literal mountain, and this ought not to be lost on an audience who has learned from 'To a Strategist' and 'Injudicious Gardening' to consult and inspect Moore's endnotes. Bearing this final point in mind one might even argue that 'An Octopus' functions as an allegory for how to read a Moore poem. Moore is attempting to instil into her reader the necessity of paying attention to and inspecting the textual material that they encounter, and in the world of *Observations* this takes on a specific inflection in regards to the volume's endnotes. In 'An Octopus' Moore chastises those people who similarly do not pay heed to the habitat of the mountain: her poem works as an affront to someone like Ruskin who might see a tree as an ingredient for making bows as opposed to it being part of a wider environmental network that has significance in and of itself. In other words, she is articulating the criticism that people do not take the time to inspect and appreciate the wider conditions within which something exists just as Moore critics have neglected the wider annotative habitat of her poetry. When one keeps this in mind it becomes clear, I think, that meaning is produced not by the interaction between quotation and its new context, as is the case in the collage model of Moore's work, but rather in the friction between the quotation as it is used in the poem and the quotation as it exists in its original context.

What I have hoped to achieve in this chapter, and through my comparison of Eliot and Moore, is the recalibration of the role that notes played in literary modernism and further its

function of indexing a cultural moment conditioned by the advent of mass print. Whilst Eliot and Moore undoubtedly share key characteristics, there are also fundamental differences that are registered through their competing modes of annotation. Both are reacting to a perceived crisis of reading brought about by information overload in the form of a saturated literary marketplace, both articulate their response to this through the figure of the note, and both use this textual strategy in order to mobilise the expenditure of effort in order to provoke what Marx labelled self-activity. For both, this promotion of a participatory disposition was essential in navigating the burgeoning world of printed matter. However, and fundamentally, the two writers parted ways on the pedagogical issue of whether or not one ought to delimit and prescribe the literary focus of this effort. For Eliot, the answer to the perceived crisis, registered through the note, was to construct a bulwark against mass print and in so doing conserve those texts he deemed worthy of cultural preservation. Moore's response, also concentrated through the figure of the note, was to elucidate a methodology for dealing with all textual matter that celebrated and cultivated the transferable skills of inspecting and evaluating what one reads. With these two annotative models in mind, this dissertation will now move away from the moment of high literary modernism and compare the works of David Jones and Charles Olson. In so doing it will continue to press upon the effects of mass print at the middle of the twentieth century and on the continued development of the literary note for negotiating it.



## III

### **Writing in the Age of the Documentalist and the Memex: David Jones, Charles Olson and the Late-Modernist Note**

When one continues to move along the phylogenetic lines thus far described one comes to recognise in the work of David Jones and Charles Olson the inheritance, conscious or otherwise, of certain annotative strands. In this chapter, I aim to trace Eliot and Moore's competing responses to the shifting literary landscape of the early twentieth century as they are registered in the equally competing strategies of Jones's *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata* and Olson's *The Maximus Poems*. Taking Eliot's use of the note to its logical end, one sees in Jones a poet whose primary concern is the delineation of what he labels 'cultural deposits' ('Preface' *Epoch* 20). Thus, Jones might usefully be aligned to Eliot's project of utilising the citational capacity of the note in order to demarcate those texts deemed worthy of a reader's time and energy. However, as will soon become clear, whereas Eliot promotes a procedure of participation, albeit towards the materials he specified, Jones instead enacts a highly coercive and authoritarian poetics that replaces invitation with requisition.

For Jones, poetry functions as a cultural repository for that which ought to be conserved and the poet thus becomes, to use his term, a 'rememberer' ('Preface' *Epoch* 21). What is worth remembering, and as such enshrined within his poetry and indexed through the figure of the note, includes writers such as Shakespeare, Spenser and Malory, but also Anglo-Saxon history, Biblical symbolism and the Welsh language itself. In this, Jones's impulses do not differ significantly from those of Eliot. However, Jones also goes to far more painstaking lengths to supply hundreds of detailed notes, which not only, in his words, 'open up unshared

backgrounds' ('Preface' *Anathemata* 21) by specifying the texts from which he has borrowed, but also explains and evaluates the various allusions and as such outlines what he deems to be the appropriate response to them. His response to the advent of mass print, then, is, like Pound, an invocation of cultural authority. My analysis of Jones within this chapter will proceed first by tracing his wider thinking and the related work of some of his contemporaries, including Pound and William Empson, before then providing a detailed analysis of the notes themselves once I have located them within this wider literary context.

Yet, if Jones develops Eliot's phylogenetic line, Olson emphatically progresses the project instigated by Moore. For Olson, what matters most is the elucidation of a methodology that can be applied to all textual material. As such, one recognises in his poetry and writing a determined effort to cultivate within his reader a certain predisposition and not, as with Jones, a predetermined syllabus of texts. In his complete cultural, historical and literary excavation of Gloucester, Olson provides a template for how the reader might pursue a similar path, but he also makes it quite clear that one's site of engagement need not be the same as his. The reader is encouraged to uncover his own 'cultural deposits' and most significantly, as with Moore, is bequeathed the methodological tools to do so as calcified through the figure of the note.

As such, Olson seems to embody the Marxian view of self-activity as participatory, generative and creative and in this he can be seen to destabilize the alienating and authoritarian principles of coercion evident in Jones and, as will be developed further, Pound. One might even understand the distinction between the two poets as being that between an open and closed system of signification where Jones impresses upon his reader not only what to read, but also how to do it. Thus, both Jones and Olson present very different methods of navigating the continuing influx of mass print and as such they continue to illuminate the debates established in Chapter One. However, as will become apparent, they do so in such a

way as to represent a movement through and away from the modernism of Eliot and Moore. In this way, as well as exploring the relationships between Jones, Olson, mass print and literary annotation, this chapter will also map the cultural and literary territory of what might be labelled late-modernism.

### **Annotative Installation II: The Late-Modernist Projects of Suzanne Briet and Vannevar Bush**

As with Chapter One, before moving directly to the work of Jones and Olson I would like to reintroduce the thinking of Briet and Bush. In the same way that I argued at the start of Chapter One that Otlet can be read as indexing both Eliot and Moore's annotative response to mass print, I would like to demonstrate here that Briet and Bush can be used to frame and illuminate the work of Jones and Olson, respectively. Thus, Briet's essay, *What is a Document?*, published one year before *The Anathemata*, will be set alongside Jones and, contrastingly, 'As We May Think' will be read alongside Olson. One might recall, here, Briet's proposed solution to the advent of mass print as outlined in the introduction: to employ a team of knowledge workers in order to annotate various documents with evaluative comments and then disseminate them to certain designated academics. Thus, her procedure is one predicated on selection and mediation, with the aim being to shape the textual landscape in an image befitting her own cultural proclivities. She uses the figure of the note as a textual mechanism through which to determine not only which materials are worthy of one's attention, but also how to approach them and what to think about them. As I will demonstrate, this is the precise corollary to Jones's poetic method and it is anathema to the respective projects of Moore and Olson.

What Briet proposes, like Jones, is a policy of cultural policing in the same vein of Otlet's demand for 'moral restraint' (*Monde* 83), in order to aid, in her words, literary 'conservation' (11) in the face of the 'abundance of written documents' (10). For Briet, the 'problem may be, rather, one of selecting the best works. It is upon this problem that a competency is necessary' (14). Briet's notion of 'competency', here, speaks very much to the kind of gesturing towards authority that, as we will see, Jones and Pound would rely upon. Whilst a similar gesture is evident in *The Waste Land*, what Briet and Jones add is a deep sense of urgency, which further prefigures the wider transition from modernism to late-modernism. For Eliot, his poetry was still able to promote participation whilst in Briet this has been replaced by a system in which she selects and then evaluates on the behalf of another. Eliot, unlike Moore, might have selected for his reader, but, significantly, he did not then determine the shape of subsequent evaluation and this, one might argue, is one consequence of the continuing 'acceleration' (Briet 17) of textual matter, which prompts ever more authoritative responses, as with Jones and Pound. The reliance on participation evident in Moore and Eliot and then reinvigorated by Olson tacitly confers a certain level of trust or perhaps authority onto the reader. They are invited to engage with certain materials or to cultivate a method and, as such, expend effort, with the implication being that the development of such agency goes some way to tempering the detrimental consequences of mass print.

Briet would further uphold her position in her so-called subject specific 'orientation guides' (15) that provided footnoted copies of essays and annotated reading lists, which she used in order to comment on which texts would be most useful for a given topic. These would then, like the other annotated essays her knowledge workers produced, be disseminated through the library to relevant researchers. For Briet, the upshot of this and her wider 'cultural technique' (17) of annotative mediation is that the 'documentalist freed the

individual labour of the scientists from pondering servitude' (15). Of course, what this means, somewhat worryingly, is that the scientist no longer needs to think because Briet will do it for him. The need to exert oneself intellectually is here recast as a servitude that is best inflicted upon someone else. Not only does this again underline her commitment to policing, but also, significantly, it reintroduces the central concept of labour. By mediating the material in the manner that she does and by providing a fully annotated and evaluated document, Briet in fact strips the reader of the potential to expend effort. So strong is her coercive impulse that it pervades the selection of material and also its interpretation. Significantly, and as will become clear, this is strikingly true of Jones also and it is what most separates him from Olson. Jones and Briet, then, occupy the same cultural moment and for both this involves the conscious rejection of the participatory projects that typified modernist writers such as Moore, and, if to a lesser extent, Eliot.

One need only glance at Briet's essay in order to find further evidence of this particular stance. After detailing the labour enacted by her knowledge workers, Briet asks her reader this: 'Is the scholar confident of having the power to locate the entirety of that documentation that interests him? The centres and office of documentation can read it for him' (16). Elsewhere she speaks of how the 'researcher needs to be guided through the frontier of his particular domain' (17). By doing this, Briet establishes the need for mediation as a response to mass print and rather shrewdly positions herself as the appropriate person to provide this guidance. She subsumes under the banner of reading, here, not only the act of synthesising and absorbing information, but also the whole spectrum of interpretative gestures that go along with it. Indeed, the interrogative and accusatory tone augments the sense of urgency referenced earlier: she is clearly playing upon already existing anxieties that mass print is becoming so expansive that it needs a third party simply to aid navigation. With reference to which, there is something further to be said about Marxian alienation. By 'reading' the text

for them, Briet in fact produces a document and a strategy of interpretation that no longer belongs to the reader, but is impressed upon him by someone else. In light of this, it is significant that Briet frames the work that she does as being ‘organized as factories, with their documentary chain of production’ (35) and with knowledge workers being divided into ranks such as ‘officer’ (35) and ‘apprentice’ (35). Thus, she utterly diminishes the opportunity for self-activity, a point that will be developed in much more detail in relation to Jones’s poetry.

Given that her response is predicated on cultural policing, as is Jones’s, it is not difficult to understand what leads Briet to make a claim such as ‘documentation is to culture as the machine is to industry’ (17). When one unpicks this statement, the implications are telling indeed. The relationship between machine and industry is one where the former shapes the latter. The machine is the technological foundation and handmaiden to industry; it shapes and facilitates its progress. In this, Briet sees the potential for her brand of information science to shape the direction of culture. However, one also recognises that without industry, the necessity of the machine would be curtailed if not non-existent and thus burgeoning industry provides the material rationale for the machine in the first instance. In this same way, culture, and specifically the dramatic shifts brought about by information overload, give rise to the need for Briet’s documentation and its attendant practices of selection, annotation and evaluation and, in turn, through these strategies she seeks to shape it. As such, Briet speaks of the job of the documentalist as being the ‘preservation and conservation of culture’ (17).

Whilst working within the field of scientific research she is also significantly elucidating, as she labels it, a ‘cultural technique’ that provides a template for how to deal with the wider issue of information overload and Jones is very much conversant with the same brand of cultural policing and mediation, articulated through annotative selection and evaluation. Thus, Briet is expanding her remit and seeking to apply her textual practices not

only within the scientific community, but beyond it, explaining how ‘documents are drawn into vast reservoirs with the centres of preservation inevitably collecting all that constitutes national heritage’ (37). What Briet labels national heritage, here, Jones would describe as ‘cultural deposits’. Both writers are deeply invested in mitigating the advent of mass print and as such the subsequent perceived dilution of this national heritage through a procedure of annotative mediation and evaluation. Briet continues at her most obviously authoritarian when she claims: ‘Indeed, the more innumerable and uncultured masses arise from freed areas, the more it is necessarily to instruct, enlighten, and culturally assist them’ (43). This notion of cultural assistance is precisely, as will become very clear, what occupies Jones’s poetry and in both it is delivered through the figure of the note, which, unlike with Moore and even Eliot, becomes increasingly coercive in nature.

However, mirroring Olson’s own ‘cultural technique’ and in direct opposition to both Briet and Jones, is Vannevar Bush. Like Olson, Bush does not attempt to demarcate what textual materials ought to be engaged with and instead focusses almost entirely on a methodology for how to navigate the burgeoning literary landscape. Gone from Bush is the desire to mediate and culturally assist. This is a point Bush makes clear in his groundbreaking essay ‘As We May Think’: ‘My single goal is to provide an apparatus that will allow the user to navigate and consult whatsoever material he desires and deems useful’ (115). Like Moore and Olson, Bush concedes the impact of mass print, but his stated aim is to work within and through it and not in opposition to it. Bush further makes this clear when he writes: ‘The difficulty seems to be, not so much that we publish unduly in view of the extent and variety of present interests, but rather that publication has been extended far beyond our present ability to make real use of the record’ (112). The point, here, is not the quality of material, but rather the coping mechanisms for dealing with it. Bush seems quite content to record whatever is produced as Otlet proposed in his ‘Universal Book’ and in this one recognises the

same attitude adopted by Moore and Olson: the response for all three must be to elucidate a methodology and mechanism through which one might navigate, rather than delimiting or demarcating the field. This provides a fundamental difference between Bush and Briet that is mirrored in the different aesthetic practices of Jones and Olson.

Indeed, when describing the material to be navigated and annotated through the proposed invention of the memex Bush lists the following: ‘magazines, newspapers, books, tracts, advertisements, correspondence, and literature’ (113). One notices how this rather looks like an index from a Moore poem and how Bush makes no attempt to differentiate between advertisements on the one hand and literature on the other. He continues by arguing that with machines such as the memex ‘we can enormously extend the record, yet even in its present bulk we can hardly consult it’ (118). Again, there is no suggestion of curtailing what is deemed worthy of ‘preservation and conservation’, but rather a desire to extend and then facilitate more efficient navigation. One also ought not to overlook the excitement that these technological advances brought with them for people such as Bush. For him, the advent of mass production brought with it great possibilities and he celebrates and is galvanised by an ‘age of cheap, complex devices of great reliability’, claiming that ‘something is bound to come of it’ (113). Indeed one sees this same kind of enthusiasm in Moore’s willingness to embrace all manner of literary materials and the sheer energy with which Olson unearths Gloucester.

In the following comparative analysis of Jones and Olson, I aim to continue the debates established here in relation to Briet and Bush. In so doing, I will continue to press upon the oppositional annotative strategies of the two poets in relation to their shared cultural moment, whilst also further tracing the distinctions instigated by Eliot and Moore. Of course, this is not to ignore the fact that Bush and to a lesser extent Briet concern themselves with



scientific and not literary discourse, but I will argue that their ideas are symptomatic of wider cultural tendencies and as such can be used to illuminate Jones and Olson's poetics.

### **A Galaxy of Poets: Jones, Eliot and the Elusive Allusion**

As with Moore, Eliot and Jones shared a lifelong friendship and Eliot played a pivotal role in Jones's transition from engraver and artist, for which he was already well known, to poet.<sup>27</sup> After first meeting one another in 1931 at the flat of *Sheed and Ward* editor Tom Burns, Eliot would go on to publish Jones's first book of poetry, *In Parenthesis*, in June 1937, with Faber commissioning an initial print run of 1500 copies. Twenty-four years later, and again as was the case with Moore, Eliot wrote a laudatory introduction to the latest imprint of *In Parenthesis* in which he described it as 'a work of genius' (vii), which he was 'deeply moved' by (vii). Yet, the highest praise of all came when Eliot counted Jones as part of his own poetic milieu: 'David Jones is a representative of the same literary generation as Joyce and Pound and myself, if four men born between 1882 and 1895 can be regarded as of the same literary generation' (viii).<sup>28</sup> Eliot is not the only one to have made this observation. Basil Bunting places Jones next to Eliot and Pound, describing them as a 'galaxy of poets as splendid as any century can show' (qtd. in Nord 411). Others, however, have used the apparent similarity between Jones, Eliot, Pound, and Joyce as a source of mockery. In the final issue of *Scrutiny* J.C.F. Littlewood mocks *The Anathemata* for being 'a new (Roman

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<sup>27</sup> For a discussion of Jones's career as an engraver see David Blamires's *David Jones: Artist and Writer*.

<sup>28</sup> Despite *In parenthesis* not being published until 1937 it was, in fact, completed in 1932. Despite this accomplishment, or perhaps because of it, 1932 was also the year that Jones suffered the first of many nervous breakdowns. He would not work on the poem again until he had partially recovered in 1934. Around this time, Jim Ede set up a meeting between Jones and Faber and Faber's Richard de la Mare to discuss the possibility of publishing *In Parenthesis*. Recognising the poem's potential, de la Mare passed the typescript onto Eliot, at which point he took control of its publication. The two would remain close friends until Eliot's death in 1965 and were it not for Eliot Jones's second book of poetry, *The Anathemata*, would not have been published at all, a point that Jones conceded in an interview to William Blissett (Blissett 1981). Jones also designed the frontispiece for Eliot's seventieth birthday symposium, which comprised a collection of quotations from *The Waste Land*.

Catholic) *Waste Land* by a new (London-Welsh) T.S. Eliot' (336). Likewise, in a review of *The Anathmata* for *The New York Times Book Review* John Berryman claims: 'Take away many of Ezra Pound's interests, make him a Welshman and a Catholic, soak him in *Finnegans Wake* [...] and he could have written this work instead of [...] *The Cantos*' (4 – 5). Jones himself was not opposed to these comparisons. In a letter to Herman Grisewood dated May 1962 Jones admitted his indebtedness to Eliot's poem: 'Certainly the impact on me of reading *The Waste Land* circa 1926 or 1927 was considerable' (qtd. in Hague 188). In the same letter, he also acknowledged 'I can quite see why chaps think *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathmata* are based stylistically on Joyce or Pound' (qtd. in Hague 189).

However, comments such as these are rare with Jones remaining virtually unheard of beyond the confines of modernist studies and even within it he more often than not attracts only a conciliatory nod or passing remark. W.H. Auden might have found *In Parenthesis* to be 'the greatest book about the First World War' (12) and a 'masterpiece' (13), but for most Jones's poetry exists firmly outside of the modernist literary pantheon. As such, it has become almost an obsession for Jones scholars to see him placed alongside his contemporaries in both the wider critical and popular imagination. As Elizabeth Judge points out: 'The requisite preface to writing on David Jones is to lament that he is "known but not assimilated" before invoking a parade of canonicals to testify on his behalf. This technique is used to proclaim his right to canonization and to rant about his academic neglect' (179). One tactic that is used by critics to advocate for Jones's rightful literary standing is by propagating the view that Jones shares with poets such as Eliot certain stylistic characteristics and, as such, this justifies his place beside them. In the above cited letter to Grisewood, Jones acknowledges this trend, but one senses in his tone perhaps also its refutation: by asserting that he 'can quite see why chaps think *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathmata* are based stylistically on Joyce or Pound' Jones only concedes that he can understand the position, but

he does not condone its premise. It is with this notion of refutation that I would like to begin my analysis of Jones. Unlike other critics, and as already motioned towards in my examination of Briet, I will not attempt to argue that Jones belongs alongside Eliot under the banner of modernism. Rather, I will demonstrate that Jones represents a significant move through and then away from modernism and it is only by recognising this that Jones might gain the appreciation he rightly deserves. Furthermore, as already mentioned, I will make the case that whilst Jones is distinct from the Eliot of *The Waste Land* he does indeed share clear similarities with the work Pound was producing throughout the mid-1930s and 1940s.

Significantly for this dissertation, critics have read Jones in a very similar manner to how Moore's poetry has been read as outlined in Chapter One. Critics attempt to justify Jones's inclusion into literary modernism through recourse to key watchwords and traits that are often aligned to that movement such as allusive, fragmentary, and elliptical. A text such as *In Parenthesis* or *The Anathemata* is persistently, and, as I will demonstrate, erroneously tied to these labels just as Moore's verse has been understood in terms of displacement. In order to validate his assertion that Jones's verse is allusive, for instance, William Blissett turns to the example set by Pound and Joyce:

The texture of *The Anathemata* is highly condensed and allusive, and a feeling analogous to jet-lag sets in if one goes at it too hard. The same is true of other major modern works, especially of the *Cantos* and *Finnegans Wake*, but every allowance has been made for Pound and Joyce and none for David Jones (2).

Further, in his 1990 study *Backgrounds to David Jones* Jonathan Miles claims that 'Jones could no longer retell old tales in anything like an uninterrupted manner if he was to make a valid or vital statement for his time' (1). One page later Miles qualifies this statement by claiming: 'Jones salvages fragments of his beloved tradition, presenting them in a broken and discontinuous manner' (2). Similarly, Thomas Dilworth claims of *In Parenthesis*: 'If the

slipperiness of the poem is difficult and disorientating for you as a reader, then you are reading well [...] You are imaginatively becoming an infantry man by approximating his confusion about where he is and where he is going and why' (*Reading* 24). John Matthias makes the same point when he writes 'We certainly feel ourselves to be in such a situation in the third part [...] slipping from one trench to another, one road to another, stumbling at the edge of things, carried along by a prose modulating into verse modulating back into prose' (20). Charles Andrews begins his 2007 article 'War Trauma and Religious Cityscape in David Jones's *In Parenthesis*' by labelling the poem 'densely allusive' and pointing out, quite rightly, that 'much critical activity has centred on untangling its intertextuality' (1).

In order to contextualise these comments take this passage from *The Anathemata* as a case in point:

All the efficacious asylums

In *Wallia vel in Marchia Walliae*,

*Ogofau* of, that cavern for

Cronos, Owain, Arthur.

*Terra Walliae!*

Buarth Meibion Arthur!

Enclosure of the Children of Troy

Nine-strata'd Hissarlik

A but forty-metre height

Yet archetype of sung-heights.

Crux-mound at the node grammadion'd castle

Within the laughless Megaron

The margaron

Beyond echelon'd Skaian

The stone

The fonted water

The froned wood (55 – 56).

In this passage there are included examples of both the Welsh language and Welsh historical and mythological figures. Yet, without knowledge of these figures and their various connotations the passage is barely readable. To a reader unacquainted with Welsh mythology the passage is particularly infuriating since it does include objects that would be familiar, but they are almost always modified and localised with reference to the unknown. The highly allusive nature of the passage is only compounded by the elliptical and fragmentary style.

However, and as tempting as it might be when confronted with a passage such as the above, by reading Jones in this way critics are making the same mistake that was made by Moore scholars. They wilfully overlook the impact of Jones's 372 notes to *In Parenthesis* and 573 notes to *The Anathemata*, and how Jones's annotation alters his verse and the manner in which one reads it. To clarify this further, take the definition of 'allusion' as offered by the *OED*. 'To allude' comes from the Latin *alludere* meaning 'to play with', 'joke or jest at' and also 'to touch lightly upon a subject'. It was the latter meaning that developed into today's words 'allusion' and 'allusive', both of which mean 'a covert, implied, or indirect reference; a passing or incidental reference [...] having or abounding in indirect references'. Thus, it is simply definitionally incorrect to describe Jones's annotated texts as allusive when there is supplied a set of detailed and explicit references. Take, for instance, note one to part one of *In Parenthesis* in which Jones discloses that the title comes from Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* before then giving the verse and line number, or notes three, four, and five which all give the definition of certain slang terms or again note thirty-six to part three in which Jones spends an entire page describing exactly what he had in mind when writing a passage of only a few lines. Or, one might even revisit the above cited passage. There is

attached to these few lines over a page of footnotes all written in font two point sizes smaller. In these notes the reader is told who Owain and Arthur are and that *ogofau* is Welsh for ‘cave’ and is pronounced og-ou-ei (54). We are also informed that Hissarlik means ‘place of forts’ and is located ‘some three to four miles from the Dardanelles’ (54). Further, Jones explains that stone, water, and wood are symbols taken from Virgil’s *Aeneid* and specifically volume two, lines 512 to 514 (55).

Crucially, however, and as already suggested in the introduction to this chapter, by using such annotations to police and mediate the boundaries of interpretation in a manner reminiscent of Briet, Jones is precisely *not* adopting the strategies encouraged by Eliot. Indeed, as with Moore’s critics, by misreading the relation between the text and its notes so too do Jones’s critics commit a category error. Thus, just as Moore’s verse is not predicated on a strategy of displacement so too is Jones’s verse not predicated on the fragmentary or allusive and in both cases scholars commit this methodological error simply because of an inability to view the poet’s notes as significant. Claims such as those made by Dilworth or Blissett can only be made once one chooses to ignore Jones’s use of annotation. Errors such as these are made when one conflates the verse and the poem in its entirety. Certainly, Jones’s verse when taken on its own is allusive, elliptical and disjointed, in much the same way that *The Waste Land* is. However, once one re-examines the verse in light of the notes this can no longer be true. That critics have not done this is made all the more surprising given that Jones made the necessity of paying attention to his notes explicit in his preface to *In Parenthesis*: ‘I would ask the reader to consult the notes with the text, as I regard some of them as integral to it’ (xiv). Then again, Eliot, in his introduction, makes a similar case for the importance of Jones’s notes by arguing that ‘author’s notes (as illustrated by *The Waste Land*) are no prophylactic against interpretation and dissection: they merely provide the serious researcher with more material to interpret and dissect’ (vii). Perhaps then, Jones’s

critics ought to have taken lessons from Moore's 'To an Intra-Mural Rat' and not hastened through, but rather inspected more carefully what they have read.

As a final example of this critical negligence take Tom Goldpaugh's 1999 article 'Mapping the Labyrinth: The ur-Anathemata of David Jones'. Goldpaugh examines the figure of the labyrinth in *The Anathemata* and *The Roman Quarry*, which is a collection of manuscripts published posthumously in 1974, as both a physical structure and a means of poetic organisation. Goldpaugh is not the only critic to employ the imagery of the labyrinth. Thomas Whitaker puts Jones alongside Eliot with the proviso that they both create labyrinths out of their poetry (472). Even Judge, who otherwise writes exceptionally about Jones and his use of notes, slips into this trap: she describes *The Anathemata* as being a 'labyrinthine text' (186) with 'intricate allusions' (186). Goldpaugh does, however, take the argument to its analytical conclusion. He claims, for example: 'An evocative cultural allusion, the labyrinth dominated Jones's imagination between 1940 and 1946. Steeped in the labyrinth's complex of symbolic associations, he was acutely conscious of its dual uses as *temenos*, the sacred enclosure, and Daedalian labyrinth, the maze-prison' (255). Jones's verse operates, as Goldpaugh sees it, by enclosing those fragments that he fears are being eroded by mass print within a textual labyrinth that is so intertwined and so complex that one is not able to find his way out. Thus, *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata* mobilise fragmentation and allusiveness in order to construct a textual space that renders its reader unable to parse those cultural deposits that Jones held in such high regard as vital to the continuation of Western civilisation from the surrounding and shifting poetic sediment. In other words, and as Goldpaugh argues, the densely allusive nature of Jones's verse becomes a conscious attempt to entangle its images within an intellectually impenetrable textual labyrinth. Whilst I very much subscribe to Goldpaugh's understanding of Jones's cultural aims, I disagree that he achieves this through labyrinthine allusion. Like Briet, Jones *is*, as Goldpaugh claims, deeply

invested in the ‘preservation and conservation of culture’ (Briet 12). How he achieves this, however, as this chapter argues, is through annotative selection and evaluative mediation.

Goldpaugh further clarifies his understanding of Jones’s poetic project when he writes:

In 1943, as he became increasingly concerned with the future of Western civilisation, Jones started to include narratively unrelated material with the Roman poem. In the process, the text became more allusive, associational and linguistically dense, as Jones started to construct a poem that would literally enclose within the endangered signa of the West, that would be “*the thing signified*”: a protective labyrinth (260).

Goldpaugh’s argument, then, rests upon the assertion that Jones responds to crisis through labyrinth and fragmentation. However, towards the end of his essay Goldpaugh slips in, without further acknowledgement or proper consideration, a concession that may well undermine the interpretative foundation of his argument. He writes: ‘Jones’s notational system offers a history of his compositional process. More than that, though, his system provides a blueprint to the way the *temenos* was constructed and a map for the reader to the labyrinth’ (276). If the notes provide a ‘map for the reader to the labyrinth’ then how is it possible that his poetry functions as a protective and enclosed space? The two positions are irreconcilable: either Jones’s verse is allusive, fragmentary, and labyrinthine *or* there is provided an annotative blueprint that, by virtue of definition, negates the previous claims.

Thus, both prompted by Goldpaugh’s final revelation regarding the notational ‘blueprint’ Jones provides and in an effort to complicate and disprove his previous analysis alongside those critics who employ similar imagery, this chapter will demonstrate that Jones’s copious and bibliographically dense literary notes function as a map to his verse. In doing so, I wish to continue to develop the argument that, like in *The Waste Land*, Jones delineates a set of texts that one ought to know, but, unlike Eliot, in doing so he also



demarcates an interpretative path for his reader to follow. Eliot's notes invite effort with the caveat that one can, if he so chooses, dispute the comparisons they propose, but for Jones the moment for such equivocation has passed and he instead uses his notes to instruct explicitly what should be read and the interpretative paths to follow. Significantly, this coincides with Briet's impulse to 'guide' and her conviction that centres of documentation ought to mediate text on behalf of scientists in the same way that Jones mediates his allusive verse on behalf of his reader, with both using the figure of the note to enact this strategy. In this, Jones represents a continuation of late-Eliot and Bridson in addition to Briet, connections which can be measured through a clustering of texts: Eliot's Norton lectures, for instance, were delivered in 1932; a year later, Bridson published his review of *The Cantos*; four years after that *In Parenthesis* was published. The cultivation of effort that both early Eliot and Moore advocated has given way, here, to a more urgent necessity of instruction wherein the reader can no longer be trusted to do the work through invitation alone and Jones's poetry is the culmination of this tendency.

As such, mapping becomes an apt metaphor through which to understand the cultural shift that is represented by Jones and evident in the concluding moments of modernism. It becomes a way in which to navigate and better appreciate the different annotative practices of, say, *In Parenthesis* and *The Waste Land*, and it further provides a clear epistemic distinction between how I read Jones and how someone like Goldpaugh, with his focus on the labyrinth, reads him. Significantly, though, the map is not an artificial lens through which to examine Jones's verse, but already exists within the poetry. This first edition of *In Parenthesis*, published by Faber and Faber and overseen by Eliot, included, alongside the verse and endnotes, a preface written by Jones in March 1937, a frontispiece, endpiece, and a map. The map, hand-drawn by Jones in pencil and titled the 'Richebourg Sector', depicts trench boundaries as they existed in Richebourg-l'Avoué in September 1916. The map is that

of a skilled cartographer: there are over forty trench lines, each one drawn to a scale of 1:10 000 and painstakingly labelled. Jones also added track marks that show the fictitious route taken by Company 'A' on Christmas Eve as described in Part 2 of *In Parenthesis*, 'Chambers Go Off, Corporals Stay'. Thus, the notes are transformed, here, into a literal map.

That Jones decided, and indeed was able, to include such a map would come as no surprise to those readers familiar with his military career. After being shot in the leg during the attack on Mametz Wood (10 – 11 July 1916), Jones returned to service in November of that year not on the Western Front, but at Battalion HQ. His job was to sketch large scale trench maps. Later that same month, Jones was again transferred. He was moved from Battalion HQ to the Field Survey Company, specifically 'B' Observation Group, which was a sub-unit of the Second FSC based just south of the Ypres Salient at Ploegsteert Wood. The FSC were responsible for battlefield topography and, as such, Jones was tasked with drawing trench maps not too dissimilar from the 'Richebourg Sector'. Jones would serve with the FSC until February 1917, at which point he would return to the Front Line until he was evacuated to Ireland one year later because of trench fever. Jones's time at the FSC has, for the most part, gone unnoticed by critics, with the exception of World War One map historian Peter Chasseud. In the 1997 essay 'David Jones and the Survey' Chasseud argues convincingly that '[Jones's] survey initiation had a profound effect on his imagination, and his knowledge and understanding of survey concepts and processes is always apparent in his writing' (27).<sup>29</sup> As a way of framing these considerations, the chapter will proceed by first looking at Jones's concept of 'The Break', in order to situate his poetry within his own cultural framework and to show how his thinking intersected with that of his contemporaries.

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<sup>29</sup> This claim is substantiated by the fact that Jones drew other maps for *In Parenthesis*. Spread across multiple manuscripts, dated between 1928 and 1935, and collected in the David Jones archive at the National Library of Wales, are several other maps, which all depict sections of the Somme battlefield and vary from the meticulous full-page style of the 'Richebourg Sector' to ones that are hurriedly sketched.

### **‘The Break’: The Cultural Justification for Literary Notes**

David Jones, perhaps more so than any other writer discussed in this dissertation, is very clear as to what he defines the crisis of reading to be and further the role that annotation has to play in indexing and responding to it. In his preface to *The Anathemata*, dated July 1951, Jones recounts that in the ‘late nineteen-twenties and early ’thirties among my most immediate friends there used to be discussed something that we christened “The Break”” (15). Jones goes on to explain that what they labelled ‘The Break’ represented a ‘dilemma’ (16) in the arts and that it was ‘affecting the entire world of sacrament and sign’ (16), which, for Jones, constitutes the whole spectrum of artistic endeavour. The Break refers to a cultural phenomenon that Jones dates to the end of the nineteenth century in which there has been lost a once readily available set of common reference points. These reference points might include, for example, religious symbolism, a line from *Hamlet*, or the artistic and historical connotations of an oak tree. Jones’s conception of The Break and his response to it is of great significance to this dissertation and the wider debates that I trace and as such, it will be well worth proceeding carefully and extensively.

Elsewhere in his preface Jones further explains what he believes the precise nature of these reference points to be and their relationship to art: ‘I believe that there is, in the principle that informs the poetic art, a something which cannot be disengaged from the mythus, deposits, *matiere*, ethos, whole *res* of which the poet is himself a product’ (20). For Jones the entire cultural and social matrix within which one exists, of which poetry is the most apt and richest articulation, is comprised of the cultural deposits of one’s, to use Briet’s term, ‘national heritage’ (37). The crisis of the Break, then, is that this material is no longer readily accessible to a reader: the connection between the reader and his cultural deposits has been severed. It is of further interest that Jones traces the beginning of The Break to the end

of the nineteenth century given that, as discussed in the introduction, this is also the historical origin of information overload, as we know it today. The Linotype and Monotype machines, for instance, were invented in the late-1800s and with them and similar technological advancements came the unprecedented bourgeoning of textual matter that George Soule would later declare to be his moment's greatest adversary. Whilst Jones does not connect the two explicitly, unlike Briet, the loss of certain commonly known reference points can be explained in relation to the influx of new materials. The historical consequence of information overload as it existed at the beginning of the twentieth century was to introduce a vast amount of new material into the cultural and literary ecosystem and then to widen the amount of readers that might be eligible for admission into the newly formed textual habitat. In other words, the loss of certain readily available common reference points and the 'common readers' who would have access to this knowledge, is congruent with the effect of mass print, which is precisely what Briet and Otlet register in their annotative installations and what Jones labels *The Break*.

In order to clarify his position, Jones points to the example of water. He begins by drawing a comparison between water as it pertains to the Sacrament of Baptism and the chemical expression of water as 'two of hydrogen and one of oxygen' (17). If water is the 'matter' (17) of the Baptist sacrament, he asks, is the chemical composition also a true expression of that 'matter'? For Jones it is not. He writes: 'A knowledge of the chemical components of this material water should, normally, or if you prefer it, ideally, provide us with further, deeper, and more exciting significances *vis-à-vis* the sacrament of water' (17). This includes, Jones explains, the ability for a poet 'to juxtapose and condition within a context the formula H<sub>2</sub>O as to evoke "fonts, "that innocent creature", [and] "the womb of this divine font"' (16 – 17). Elsewhere in the preface to *The Anathemata* Jones further substantiates this point with reference to wood:

If he writes ‘wood’ what are the chances that the Wood of the Cross will be evoked? Should the answer be ‘None’, then it would seem that an impoverishment of some sort would have to be admitted. It would mean that that particular word could no longer be used with confidence to implement, to call up or to set in motion a whole world of content belonging in a special sense to the mythus of a particular culture and of concepts and realities belonging to mankind as such’ (23 – 24).

That water or wood no longer conjures in the mind of the reader these cultural connotations is, for Jones, exactly the nature and problem of The Break or what he elsewhere labels ‘a lesion’ (18). Thus, the crisis of the Break forces a poet to ask, as styled by Jones, this question: ‘What is available, what *is* valid as material for our effective signs’ (25) and similarly ‘this validity and availability that constitutes the greatest problem in the present culture-situation’ (23). Jones makes this same point three years later in the preface to his collection of essays *Epoch and Artist*: ‘The future of [this island’s heritage] is causing anxiety. These things that connect us all with the world of Theodosius and in certain important respects at least echo a world far anterior to that, look like coming to a term’ (13). What is at stake for Jones, then, and above all else, is the reconstitution of certain designated materials and it is in this way that one might place his poetic project alongside that of *The Waste Land*. Jones frames himself and the poet more generally as ‘the custodian, rememberer, embodier and voice of the mythus’ (*Epoch* 21) and the act itself is, Jones claims, a ‘kind of *anamnesis* of, ie is an effective recalling of, something loved’ (*Epoch* 21). Like Eliot, Jones seeks to keep alive through his poetry a cultural tradition that he fears would otherwise be eroded.

However, as already touched upon, it is Jones’s chosen annotative strategy for the promotion of these materials that distinguishes him from Eliot and aligns him to Briet. This

distinction is further calcified in the following explanation of his citational practices from the preface to *The Anathemata*:

For many readers these notes may appear to be an elucidation of the obvious, but, on the other hand, we are not all equally familiar with the deposits. It is sometimes objected that annotation is pedantic; all things considered in the present instance, the reverse would, I think, be the more true. There have been culture-phases when the maker and the society in which he lived shared an enclosed and common background, where the terms of reference were common to all. It would be an affectation to pretend that such was our situation today. Certainly it would be an absurd affectation in me to suppose that many of the themes I have employed are familiar to all readers, even though they are, without exception, themes derived from our own deposits [...] I have, therefore, glossed the text in order to open up “unshared backgrounds” (14).

Here, Jones’s motivation for using notes comes from a compulsion to promulgate his chosen materials to all who would read his text and doing so with the intention of revitalising a failing sign system. His project is one of cultural enfranchisement where the so-called Common Reader might be reinstated. Interestingly, Briet addressed this same compulsion in her own bibliographic projects. Writing about the central reserves of the various national libraries, Briet suggests her role ought to be to ‘dominate, or we would gladly say, tame these riches and place them at the disposal of a wider and wider public’ (11). As with Jones, there is on the one hand an ostensibly egalitarian gesture to ‘open up unshared backgrounds’, but also the rather more authoritarian implication of ‘dominating’ or ‘taming’ these works prior to their dissemination. Such ‘taming’ would presumably constitute the kind of mediation and evaluation that both Jones and Briet display so frequently as part of the wider ‘cultural technique’ of policing how texts are to be engaged with. Thus, for Jones, if *The Break* threatens to make impossible the recognition and use of certain indispensable cultural

deposits then Jones's notes will simply spell out as clearly as possible what those materials are, as it pertains to his verse. In this, there also exists a direct refutation of the critical models that have been transplanted onto Jones's work: he is claiming that in the twentieth century one *must not* be allusive, but rather as precise and unambiguous as is possible. Jones thus frames his act of annotation as that of drawing a map for his reader to follow so that he might be guided through the verse, but also through what comprises that verse: one's literary and cultural deposits.

Here, one might also return to Bridson as inhabiting the same cultural moment as Jones and Briet. In the same way that Briet seeks to 'instruct, enlighten and culturally assist' (43) so too does Bridson want Pound to 'meet his audience halfway' (594). Further, recalling my introduction, just as Bridson suggests to Pound notes are needed because of a deficiency in human nature Jones similarly asserts that 'it would be an absurd affectation in me to suppose that many of the themes I have employed are familiar to all readers'. Significantly then all three seem to fulfil Pound's view that 'commemoration' is 'contemptuous': there is being articulated a sense that annotation is necessary because readers are unable to understand what was once common knowledge. Thus, Jones is tapping into a rich debate that sits at the crux of this dissertation and the wider debates surrounding literary annotation that it traces. For Jones and for Bridson the cultural moment demands explicit and detailed instruction: the project embarked upon by Eliot and Moore in which a reader's participation might be counted upon through invitation has failed. Whether it is through Briet's 'cultural technique' of documentation or Bridson's role at the BBC or Jones's exhaustive and authoritarian notes all three respond to the advent of mass print with a system of cultural policing and mediation. This might also help to explain the movement away from enlisting and cultivating a narrow audience with, to use Eliot's phrase, 'refined sensibilities' that was typical of high modernism to the ostensibly more inclusive projects of Briet's documentarism

and Jones's 'opening up of unshared backgrounds'. If one seeks to pursue a process of cultural policing, one can properly aim to recruit a far broader audience, given that they will be instructed in such a way as to recalibrate all preconceptions that do not align to the dominant idea. The starting point is of far less importance because all will arrive at the same finish line regardless. As such, the shifts I describe from the participatory annotative models of Eliot and Moore in the 1920s to the likes of Jones and Briet in the 1930s are symptomatic of far wider changes towards authoritarian politics evident well beyond the realm of literature and mass print.

In order to press further on the cultural moment within which Jones is operating and how it is different to that of *The Waste Land*, I wish briefly to consider one of Jones's contemporaries and an equally assiduous note taker. Known primarily as a literary critic and author of the 1930 study *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, William Empson was also an accomplished poet.<sup>30</sup> Despite most of his early verse being written between 1925 and 1929, his first volume, titled *Poems*, was not published until May 1935 and as such only two years before *In Parenthesis*. Like Jones, Empson had a particular affinity for the note and *Poems* was published with a lengthy annotative apparatus. Published alongside these notes was an explanation of why Empson felt the need to include them, which is worth quoting at length:

There is a feeling, often justified, that it is annoying when an author writes his own notes, so I shall give a note about these notes. It is impertinent to expect hard work from the reader merely because you have failed to show what you were comparing to what, and though to write notes on such a point is a confession of failure it seems an inoffensive one [...] It is impertinent to suggest that the reader ought to possess already any odd bit of information one may have picked up in a field where one is oneself ignorant; such a point may be explained in a note without trouble to anybody;

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<sup>30</sup> Empson had published in several Cambridge periodicals whilst reading English including *Cambridge Review* and *Experiment*. He was also included, in 1929, in Hogarth Press's *Cambridge Poetry* alongside twenty-two other Cambridge undergraduates.



and it does not require much fortitude to endure seeing what you already know in a note [...] But it seems to me that there has been an unfortunate suggestion of writing for a clique about a good deal of recent poetry, and that very much of it might be avoided by a mere willingness to explain incidental difficulties (*Complete* 111).

One notices in this the same positioning between an apparently equalizing poetic gesture and a potentially authoritarian one that is found in Jones, Bridson and Briet, as described above. Working from the assumption that it would be ‘impertinent to suggest that the reader ought to possess already any odd bit of information’ Empson, like Jones, uses his notes to ‘open up unshared backgrounds’. For Empson, this becomes an antidote to the same issue that Bridson recognised in Pound’s poetry and sought to correct: the ‘good deal of recent poetry’ that, he explains, ‘is written for a clique’. By supplying copious notes, Empson hopes to ‘explain incidental difficulties’ and therefore remove any cultural or intellectual barrier to the poetry that might otherwise exist.

On the other hand, there is also evident the same requirement for readers to be ‘culturally assisted’ and, as with Briet, this naturally results in Empson’s argument that it is ‘impertinent to expect hard work from the reader’. In such a statement one discerns the same coercive impulse that both Briet and Jones exhibit and the same negation of self-activity: Empson concedes that the majority of his readers will not be up to the task of comprehending his verse and so he will take it upon himself exhaustively to spell out its complexities on the reader’s behalf. One senses in Empson’s comments, despite them being couched in terms of altruism and generosity, something of Briet’s argument for mediation: ‘Is the scholar confident of having the power to locate the entirety of that document that interests him?’ (16). In all cases, the writers concede it would be a mistake to assume knowledge on the part of the reader. This is true also of Empson’s description of his notes as a ‘confession of failure’. The most obvious interpretation of this sentiment is that the reader is a failure for needing to see

the notes in the first instance. This is emphasized when Empson clarifies the statement by suggesting that the comment is ‘an inoffensive one’ since, one can presume, it is the reader who should not be offended. Again, then, Empson is articulating the need for readers to be ‘met halfway’ because they are not capable of reading the poetry without this help. Thus, as with Bridson, Briet and Jones, Empson supplies notes to his poetry out of a sense that without them readers would either not read the verse or, if they read it, would simply not understand and appreciate it. The reader requires guidance and it is through the note that this guidance is offered.

Empson makes this same point time and time again when discussing his use of notes. For example, he explained his use of annotation in a ‘Note on Notes’ in the 1940 volume *The Gathering Storm* in this way:

But partly [the notes] are meant to be like answers to a crossword puzzle; a sort of puzzle of interest is part of the pleasure that you are meant to get from the verse, and that I get myself when I go back to it. It is clear that you try to guess the puzzle before you turn to the answer; but you aren’t offended with the newspaper for publishing the whole answer, even when you had guessed it (*Complete* 112).

The implication is that a reader would not know the answer without Empson’s help. In other words, to quote Bridson’s review of Pound, a poem that is difficult and without notes ‘expects too much from its readers’ (593). An extreme and for that reason interesting example of Empson’s commitment to the note comes from his poem ‘Two Cantos’. Putting his notes to this poem aside, it reads much like Bridson’s description of *The Cantos*. The poem leaps seemingly arbitrarily from line to line using imagery that does not seem to fit or seems to be written by different people. The reason it reads like this is because it is entirely composed of quotations from other poems: each sentence in the poem, whilst not always a

direct quotation, is taken from another work and is annotated as such. Take, for example, the first stanza:

At Algezir,\* and will in overplus,\*  
 Their herdsman,\* well content to think thee page,\* divided.\*  
 Tell Isabel the queen, I looked not\* thus  
 Leander, Mr Ekenhead and I did.\* (*Complete* 8).

For reasons of clarity, I have not included the substance of the notes, but each asterisk represents a note that directs the reader to a particular passage in a text. Notice how Empson includes notes to words that are in no way unique to a particular text such as ‘divided’, which is attributed to Genesis, Chapter Three or ‘their herdsman’, which is attributed to the same passage. Whilst this is a hyperbolic and even parodic sample of Empson’s poetic method, it does outline an otherwise serious intention. In fact, because of the title, it is clear that Empson is poking fun at *The Cantos* with its obvious obscurity and, like Bridson, suggesting through a parodic use of the notes that in order for his poetry to make sense Pound would need to supply a note to every other word.

When Empson writes poetry such as this he envisages, as Jones does, a reader who opens his book, turns to a poem such as ‘Two Cantos’ and, without the aid of notes, would shut it again. That such a reader exists in the first place and that notes are needed to correct this is exactly what I argue is at stake in the outlined crisis of reading. That Pound either refuses to or begrudgingly provides annotation does not mean he does not recognise the need for them, which Pound concedes he does in *ABC*, but rather that Pound attempts to remove the kind of cultural micromanagement that he accuses Eliot of and that reaches its logical conclusion at the hands of Briet, Bridson, Jones and Empson. Thus, both Empson and Jones are registering through their use of annotation a cultural shift away from uncompromising poetic difficulty and towards instruction. Now that the cultural climate within which Jones’s

is writing has been substantiated, the remainder of this section of the chapter will provide a detailed examination of how exactly Jones's own notes to *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata* fulfil the criteria he laid out and further how his poetry intersects with Briet's work.

### **Map Maker, Note Taker: The Literary Notes of David Jones**

Like *The Waste Land* and Pound's *The Cantos*, Jones's *The Anathemata* employs multiple languages including instances of Welsh, Latin, French, Old English and Middle-English. In addition to a potential problem with comprehension, the polyphony also poses an issue with pronunciation. However, unlike Eliot and Pound, Jones confronts this issue directly. In his preface to *The Anathemata* Jones offers his reader a solution:

The notes, because they so often concern the *sounds* of the words used in the text, and are this immediately relevant to its *form*, are printed along with it, rather than at the back of the book. But this easy availability would be a disadvantage if it detracted attention from the work itself. So I ask the reader, *when actually engaged upon the text*, to consult these glosses mainly or only on points of pronunciation. For other purposes they should be read separately (43).

Jones thus uses the figure of the note to offer his reader specific and direct instruction as to how to read certain difficult words. However, one might also question how sincere he is being in his request for the reader to consult *only* those notes concerned with pronunciation. The notes are so typographically dominant in *The Anathemata* that it is nearly impossible simply to ignore them and even if one wanted to only to use them for pronunciation there would be no prior way to know which notes deal with pronunciation and which do not. In fact, one would need first to consult the note in order to then ascertain whether or not it deals

with pronunciation by which time one's attention has already been distracted and as such one might as well continue. Nevertheless, the point is the same: Jones is requesting of his reader, just as he did in the preface to *In Parenthesis* cited quoted earlier, that his refer to his notes whilst reading the text.

However, the manner in which he prompts his reader to do this demonstrates a clear difference between Eliot, Moore and Jones. All three poets have the same goal in mind: for their readers to move from the verse to the note in order to elicit additional information. Taking the example of Moore, she conceals this request within the oblique structure of her poetry: one must be engaged and willing to investigate in order to decode her suggestion and so, she builds her poetry, like Eliot, around intellectual and physical labour. What Jones does, though, is to circumvent the obliqueness of Moore's invitation and instead he simply and unambiguously *tells* his reader what he requires of him. In this, one sees at work the shift, described earlier, from the early modernism of the 1920s to the later thinking of Bridson, Briet and Jones: the time for subtlety and reliance on a reader's effort and ingenuity has passed and instead, Jones seems to indicate, the cultural moment demands not allusion, but specific and thorough direction.

The kind of note that Jones is referring to in his preface are frequent in *The Anathemata* and comprise a reasonable proportion of his 573 notes. An example would be note two and three on page sixty-seven: the former reads 'The word Cymry, kum-ry, the Welsh people, derives from the old Celtic compound *combrox*, "a person of the same kind", plural Combroges; pronounce kum-bro-gees, g hard, accent on middle syllable'. The latter reads: 'set (Welsh e somewhat resembles the a in "cake"), seat, pew'. There are many other instances, for example, note one on page 147, which is attached to the word 'harquebuses': 'Pronounce hark-we-busses, with the initial aspirate strongly sounded'. So determined is Jones that his reader should pronounce the words correctly he goes to the lengths of

supplying specific phonetic instruction. Yet another example comes on page 172 in note three. This note is attached to the line: ‘Listen: when it’s adieu to y’r / Miletus ladies’. Jones complements the imperative ‘listen’ that the line begins with by using an equally assertive note: ‘Pronounce as “ard-yer t’yer”. My Greek seamen speak cockney’. Jones does exactly the same in the previous note also: attached to the line ‘Gunwales under last bon voyage’ is the note ‘Pronounce as though English, not as in French’ (172). There is a similar instance in *In Parenthesis* also in note five in the General Notes section: ‘Pronounce all French place-names as in English’ (192). This is certainly an interesting and perhaps peculiar situation to find oneself in: the reader is presented with words of quite obviously French origin, but he is instructed to read them in a different and unrelated accent. Thus, Jones transitions from providing factually accurate phonetic guidelines (this is how to say the word) to dictating how the lines are to be read (this is how *I* want you to say the word). Jones’s decision to alter the pronunciation of a word from, say, French to Cockney is a far cry from Eliot’s and Moore’s invitation and reader-driven participation.

By telling the reader that ‘his seamen are cockney’ Jones imposes onto the reader and the poem a way of reading it that may otherwise have been very different. In practical terms, what this means is that a reader may have approached that line reading it aloud with a Greek accent or indeed any other accent: Italian, Chinese, American or Liverpudlian. The line came with multiple imaginative options from which a reader could choose, which in turn would have not only altered the voice of the speaker, but also how the reader imagines the scene: a Greek seaman, one can imagine, looks very different to a Liverpudlian seaman. What Jones does in his note, though, is to close down those options and to replace them with one: a Greek seaman speaking Cockney. The reader now has little choice but to enunciate and to imagine the speaker as directed by Jones. There are also other citations that do something similar, but are not entirely concerned with pronunciation. For example, note thirty-nine to Part 4 of *In*

*Parenthesis*, which cites the use of ‘5.9’ in the verse and adds ‘Read: five nine, not five *point* nine’ (211). Jones then goes on to concede that some people do in fact include the point, but that his reader must not. This note, as with the ‘Cockney seamen’ note, aptly demonstrates that Jones is deciding for his reader how the poem should be read. Jones is imposing one reading strategy at the expense of others and in so doing he narrows one’s available imaginative responses. One is reminded of Briet’s equally determined effort to monopolize another’s reading experience when she appeals to researchers to allow centres of documentation to ‘read [articles] for him’ (16).

This same strategy continues throughout both *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata*, but it extends into the realm of interpretation and it is here that the links between Jones’s brand of cultural policing and Briet’s are most striking. Jones goes from telling his reader how he should sound the lines to how he should understand them. This is a crucial difference: delineating proper pronunciation is, for the most part, a matter of linguistic fact, but doing the same for matters of textual speculation takes away a reader’s analytical independence. The poem is transformed from being a text authored by Jones to one arbitrated by Jones and in this one recognises that both his ‘cultural technique’ and the one advocated by the likes of Briet, Bridson and Empson operate through a conscious strategy of mediation. Jones supplies the literary connections and analysis in such a way that a reader is compelled to follow along. This is what might be labelled ‘interpretative order’ and it is, for the most part, the primary function of Jones’s annotation: Jones uses the notes in order to push his reader down certain, prescribed analytical paths. The notes are used so that Jones is able to control the reading experience and in so doing they become Jones’s chosen mechanism for confronting *The Break* just as Briet utilises her strategy of documentalism to confront ‘the abundance of written documents’ (10) that she so bemoans. Interpretative order describes the dominant annotative strategy employed by Jones throughout both *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata*

and it is in this one finds a clear distinction between the notational practices of Eliot and Moore, and Jones.

Whilst Jones is, like Eliot, involved in the act of delineation he is far more occupied with imposing a particular analytical path through his text that he demands is to be followed and adhered to. Further, he does this through the use of copious and detailed notes of the like not seen elsewhere in this dissertation and often including one page of notes for only a few lines of verse or multiple notes within other notes as a way to encapsulate all possible interpretations of the text. Elizabeth Judge explains this well when she writes that Jones ‘draws in all possible texts he foresees, expresses the appropriate connections, and shuts the door to other works to create a self-enclosed, authorially defined and controlled symbolic structure (194).<sup>31</sup> Whilst I completely agree with Judge’s assessment, here, what I hope to have demonstrated by the end of this chapter is that this is not unique to Jones. Rather, the control he seeks and the ‘self-enclosed’ system that he creates is symptomatic of a far wider shift towards coercion as a means of dealing with the crisis of reading and this is further reflected in the similar annotative projects of someone like Briet and their related attempts, in her words, to effect the ‘preservation and conservation of culture’ (Briet 17).

What is at stake, here, is the Eliotic compulsion to specify materials that one ought to engage with and then, significantly absent from Eliot’s repertoire, to specify further what to do with them, leaving very little room for interpretative manoeuvrability. In Eliot and Moore, and whilst the two differ on the importance of demarcating the area of one’s attention, there is an agreement that the crisis of reading must be met by cultivating within their readers a willingness to participate and to expend effort. In Eliot, the reader is required physically to go to the cited texts and Moore’s poetry is built around an injunction for one to inspect and to

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<sup>31</sup> Interestingly, Jones employed this practice in everyday life also. When writing a letter he would often draw margins onto the paper and use this space to affix any supplementary comments that did not fit into the letter itself.



discover their own ‘margin of undidactic implication’ (*Letters* 443). Jones’s verse, like Bridson suggests to Pound, represents the introduction of material through instruction and not participation. In the concluding sections of this chapter I will offer a detailed taxonomy and then analysis of the categories of notes in *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata* as they contrast to *The Waste Land* culminating in a discussion as to how an appreciation of Jones’s notes alters the way his poetry and his relationship with Eliot has previously been understood. If this is the case, as I contend it is, then it will become all the more evident that the current critical models applied to Jones, written under the assumption that he *is* modernist, require rethinking.

Both Jones’s work and *The Waste Land* share two categories of notes, although, as will be explained, the frequency of their occurrence varies between poems. First, there are those notes that signal a connection between the host text and another text. This is the category to which most of *The Waste Land*’s notes belong and in *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata*, as with Eliot’s poem, these types of annotations are almost always prefaced by Cf. Again, like *The Waste Land*, these notes might be further sub-divided into those that include only a title, those that offer more specific bibliographic detail, such as, a chapter title, line number, or particular edition, and finally those notes that include the referenced verse itself. For example, in *In Parenthesis*, attached to the title of Part 2, ‘Chambers Go Off, Corporals Stay’, is the endnote: ‘Cf. *Henry V*, Act III, Sc. I (stage directions) and Sc. ii, line 2’ (192). Another example of this category would be the final note of *In Parenthesis*, which supplies specific lines from *Chanson de Roland*. In this note, Jones cites four lines from the poem in their original Anglo-Norman whilst the poem itself uses Rene Hague’s translation.

The second category of annotation, which again Jones shares with Eliot, consists of notes that in some way explain or describe the writer’s creative process. These notes often reveal an image that was chosen for some personal reason and often begin with formulations

such as ‘I had in mind’ (note 15b to Part 3 of *In Parenthesis*; note 1 on page 89 of *The Anathemata*; note to line 221 in *The Waste Land*), or ‘I associate X with X’ (note 1 on page 110 of *The Anathemata*; note to line forty-six in *The Waste Land*). As a case in point, take the use of ‘I had in mind’. In *The Anathemata* Jones attaches to the line ‘to say: Roma knows great A’ (89) this note: ‘I had in mind a child’s rhyme which I can but hazily recall’ (89) before then including the rhyme. Similarly, in *The Waste Land* Eliot attaches to the line ‘Homeward, and brings the sailor home from sea’ (68) this note: ‘This may not appear as exact as Sappho’s lines, but I had in mind the “longshore” or “dory” fishermen, who returns at nightfall’ (78). In both cases, the poet concedes that what they had in mind might not be accurate, but that it nonetheless provoked their imagination and helped shape the respective line.

It is worth pointing out here the variance of annotative categories between the discussed poems. Whilst *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata* share with *The Waste Land* the use of cf, Jones employs it far less than Eliot does: in *The Waste Land* it operates as the principal annotative strategy, but in *In Parenthesis* and especially *The Anathemata* Cf. is hardly used at all. This is true also of notes that explain the poet’s creative process. This becomes significant for my argument because it is in Eliot’s use of these two kinds of note, as demonstrated in Chapter One, that he encourages and invites a participatory aesthetic. In other words, those notes that use either tactic, which are the majority, are conducive to the textual environment that Eliot hopes to construct, which is one predicated on the expenditure of effort. However, if Jones offers a rejection to this particular facet of Eliot’s poetics, as I contend, then one would expect Jones’s poetry to include fewer examples of this kind of note. This is exactly what I discovered in my comparative analysis of the three poems. Jones does not include these notes to the extent that Eliot does because, unlike Eliot, he wishes to build a textual environment that is hospitable to engendering a cartographic impulse, where the poet

guides the reader through the text as Jones perceives is required in a cultural climate characterised by The Break.

Bearing this in mind, I now want to turn to the final two categories of notes that are found in both *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata*, which are also the most frequently used in Jones's poetry and form the basis of interpretative order. Significantly, these two categories are *not* found, for the most part, in *The Waste Land*. The first category is the explanatory note, which, as the label suggests, offers the reader some kind of scholarly explanation or clarification. The notes that describe pronunciation, as previously discussed, belong to this category, as do notes such as note 7 to part 5 in *In Parenthesis* in which Jones explains that a Aisne stove is 'a make of French kitchen-stove' (213). A similar example is found in *The Anathemata* when Jones explains that King Pellam in Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* is 'lord of the Waste Lands and the lord of the Two Lands' (50). Also belonging to this category are the war notes that are particular to *In Parenthesis*. Of the 322 notes in the poem almost half (a total of 148) clarify or explain an aspect of war. This is often explaining a slang term used by soldiers such as the third endnote to Part 1, which defines 'gun-fire' as 'tea served to troops before first parade' (192) or the fifth endnote also of Part 1 which defines a 'wad' as a 'canteen sandwich' (192).<sup>32</sup>

The high incidence of the war note is of interest and worth pausing over. If Jones's argument is, as outlined in the discussion of The Break, that notes are able to open up 'unshared backgrounds' and ensure the propagation of certain cultural deposits upon which Western Civilisation has been founded then the war notes seem, at a first glance, not to fit. It would, for example, be difficult to recognise how the slang term for a sandwich might be

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<sup>32</sup> Despite stating in his preface to *In Parenthesis* that it is not a 'War Book', but only 'happens to be concerned with war' (xii), Jones's poem has often been read alongside war poets such as Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon. Paul Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory*, for example, reads *In Parenthesis* as glorifying war and depicting it as heroic in the tradition of Rupert Brooke. Many Jones critics have taken issue with this stance including Vincent Sherry in his 1982 article in which he argues that although Jones does examine the war through a framework of heroic literature this is done in order to highlight that the Great War is anything but heroic.

required cultural knowledge. However, they provide a localised and microcosmic example of how Jones's poetic method operates. As Eliot points out in his introduction to *In Parenthesis*, whilst 'the lives of all of us were altered by that War [...] David Jones was the only one to have fought in it' (viii) and, as we already know from Chasseud's analysis of Jones's time at the FSC, the war had a fundamental impact on his future artistic endeavours. In fact, according to Rene Hague, *In Parenthesis* itself was borne out of Jones's dissatisfaction with other literary attempts to represent the war, notably Erich Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (29). Thus, one might speculate that Jones's war notes stem from a motivation, evident also in his other notes and his notion of The Break, to ensure the anamnesis of those deposits specific to the war that Jones and so many others fought and died in: the notes become a poetic rendering of the sentiment 'lest we forget'. However, this is how Jones's poetry and his annotative method function generally: his verse is an attempt to stem the Break and to provide a map to the cultural deposits of one's historical and literary heritage. The war notes, then, are not anomalous, although they might appear so when juxtaposed with lengthy passages about Malory or Shakespeare, but rather symptomatic of a wider pedagogical and poetic project.

The second of the final two categories is the evaluative note. These notes differ from the explanatory note in that they provide the reader with commentary or analysis that goes beyond the presentation of information: Jones uses the note to interrogate information and not merely offer it up to the reader. This note can further be divided into two sub-categories: notes that comment on the verse itself and notes that comment on a link that has been proposed in the manner of the first category. An example of the former would be note one on page 226 in which Jones explains that the line 'Unless he ask the question' refers to the 'Percival story concerning the consequences attendant upon the failure of the hero to "ask the question"'. Jones then points his reader to Jessie Weston's *From Ritual to Romance*. An

example of the latter would be note 2 on page 65 also in *The Anathemata*. Here, Jones directs the reader to the Epistle for the Third Mass of All Souls Day. However, rather than stopping here as is customary in the first category of notes, Jones continues to offer an analysis of the nature of artefacts. What separates these notes from creative process is how they are framed: Jones presents the analysis he offers as fact. These glosses, one gathers from their tone, are not to be disputed or debated: Jones omits caveats that Eliot relies on in *The Waste Land* and Jones offers elsewhere, such as, the use of ‘I had in mind’ and ‘the arbitrary connection’ in *The Waste Land’s* Tarot card note.

Other interesting examples of the evaluative note include note 37k to Part 4 of *In Parenthesis*, which begins with ‘there is a fusion of themes here’ (209). Jones then goes on to instruct the reader as to what exactly these themes are. He explains that the ‘predominant and general idea’ of ‘the buried king’ is to ‘make fruitful and protect the land’ and further clarifies exactly how this refers to the verse through his imagery of ‘the head of Bran the Blessed under the White Tower in London’ (209). To be completely sure that the reader has followed his train of thought and understands what the verse means Jones adds a further five ‘supplementary notes’ in order to clarify terms such as Bran the Blessed. We must also bear in mind that the original note itself is part of a long series of ten notes. Jones is explaining to his reader the exact meaning of the verse to the extent that he is writing notes for notes, which are themselves for other notes. There are many other examples throughout *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata* that employ the same tactic. For example, to the line in *The Anathemata* ‘when the Faustian lent is come’ Jones notes: ‘The reference is to Spengler’s use of the term “Faustian” which he employs to describe the Celto-Latin-German-Western-Christian culture’ (64). In one fell swoop, Jones has limited the connotative field of his poetry to what he dictates the reference is referring: a reader is no longer able to read that line and think of Marlowe or Goethe, but instead he is instructed to think of Spengler. Others include

note 1 to page 120 and note 1 to page 205 of *The Anathemata*, which both begin by telling the reader that ‘the allusion is to...’.

These kinds of notes, as already indicated, form the basis for the distinction between *The Waste Land* and Jones’s poetry. Whereas Eliot invites his readers to participate in the reading process and to evaluate his sources, Jones seeks to instruct his readers and to tell them how to read the poetry and how to understand his verse. This is especially clear in the way that both writers use Cf. Eliot uses Cf. in order to invite participation: the reader is invited to go to the cited text or passage and to evaluate the source. Eliot wants his readers to engage with the works and to examine why exactly he made that connection and whether or not they agree with the connection. The vast majority of Eliot’s notes constitute a Cf. and nothing else: what the reader decides to do with the information is left up to the reader. Whilst Jones does also use these same kinds of notes, he also uses a different kind of note much more regularly. A large part of the evaluative notes, especially in *The Anathemata*, begin with a Cf. or offer a connection between the verse and another text, but, whereas Eliot stops here, Jones does not. He continues and completes what might be described as the second half of the Cf.: the evaluative procedure of investigating and discussing the relevance of the author’s connection. In Eliot, it is this second half that is requested of the reader.

What this amounts to, in *The Waste Land*, is investigating why Eliot might have drawn a link between his verse and, say, Baudelaire, Shakespeare or Weston. It is then left up to the reader to go the source text and evaluate how appropriate Eliot’s connection is. Jones, however, does not allow his reader this opportunity. Instead, he completes the evaluation and investigative task for his reader. How this works in practice can be seen in note two on page 160 of *The Anathemata*. Here, Jones invites his reader to compare his verse to Tennyson’s poem *The Princess*, specifically the line ‘The Rhodope that built the pyramid’. However, Jones then continues to offer a further analysis by commenting that columns in Ancient

Greece 'were made fuller at the middle to prevent any appearance of concavity' (160). Whereas Eliot would have left this latter half of the note to the reader, Jones does the reader's work for him. This works in the same way with explanatory notes and other evaluative notes that are not only tied to a Cf.: Eliot invites the reader to draw connections and participate in the making of meaning, whilst Jones forces the reader to examine his work in a prescribed manner.

These examples and the many others like them are the apotheosis of interpretative order. Jones pushes his reader down a certain analytical path; he closes down the field of analytical possibilities, and reduces that field to just one interpretation: the one that Jones deems to be correct. As mentioned in my analysis of Briet, one can usefully reapply Marx's theory of alienation in order to explicate the way Jones's notes operate. For Marx, as explored in the introduction, an act of labour is deemed alienating when it is completed at the behest and for the benefit of another: 'the creative power of his labour', Marx writes, is an 'alien power confronting him'. In other words, and again quoting Marx, one is not able to 'develop freely his physical and mental energy', since it has been monopolised by another. In his urgency to micromanage and police the ways in which a reader approaches his verse, Jones's annotative strategies can be read as provoking precisely this form of alienation and the consequent rejection of self-activity that is so key to writers such as Moore and Olson. There is in Jones's work and in his need to heal the Break and enshrine his cultural deposits against the advent of mass print, the same injunction offered by Briet to 'free the individual labour of the scientists from pondering servitude' (15). In both instances they resort to authority, or what Briet labels 'competency', as means of circumventing the perceived crisis of reading. Before exploring the opposite phylogenetic line to figures such as Jones and Briet, represented here by Charles Olson, I wish to pause and consider a highly significant contributor to the various debates outlined surrounding issues such cultural policing and

authority, Ezra Pound. By shifting my attention to the prose and verse he was producing at the same time that Jones was writing, I aim to illuminate further the comparably coercive methods of Jones and Briet, as related to a politics of annotation, and as such continue to map the cultural and literary territory of late-modernism.

### **Make Him Believe: The Cultural Coercion of Jones and Pound**

The title of this sub-section is taken from Pound's 1934 essay 'Ecclesiastical History', in which he offers an analysis of the power of the church. He writes: 'This was a time when Church no longer had ENOUGH to believe that with proper instruction and argument the unbeliever or heretic could be made to see daylight' (61). Here, Pound laments the inability for the Church to proselytize, to persuade through reason and appeal, and as such concedes that the Church, in order to continue to exist, must instead 'MAKE HIM BELIEVE' through 'an invocation of authority' (61). The coercive and authoritarian impulse evident in this remark is precisely the kind of ideological outlook that I attribute to Jones and Briet. What continues to be articulated is the apparent cultural necessity of predetermining and dictating the value that is ascribed to certain texts or ideas. If the recruitment of intellectual acolytes through reasoned argument is foreclosed then, so Pound's argument goes, one must instead simply 'make him believe' in the same manner that Briet sought to 'instruct, enlighten and culturally assist' (43). The urgency demanded by Pound's assertion is brought about by the conviction, shared by Jones and Briet, that society had reached a fulcrum over which it was about to tip. As already stated, when set against the participatory poetics of Moore and to a lesser extent Eliot, both Jones and Pound had, by the 1930s, lost faith in the capacity for the reader to be active. As such, the authoritarian gesture we see in Pound's response to the



Church, and elsewhere in his work, is borne out of this dissatisfaction and an apparent need to act.

The same recourse to authority and coercion glimpsed above is seen in Pound's essay 'Prefatio Aut Cimicium Tumulus', significantly published in the same year that Bridson reviewed *The Cantos*. In this essay, Pound distinguishes between his style of writing and that of Eliot along the lines of self-activity. Quoting Eliot's statement that 'existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves' Pound writes:

It would be healthier to use a zoological term rather than the word monument [...] However, accepting for the moment Mr Eliot's monumental or architectural simile: the KRINO, "to pick out for oneself, choose, prefer", which seems to me the major job is to determine first the main form and main proportions of that order of extant letters, to locate, first the greater pyramids and then, possibly, and with a decently proportioned emphasis to consider the exact measurements of the stone – courses, layers, etc (390).

What Pound describes as 'KRINO' is precisely what I have argued Eliot, and more so Moore, promote and it is certainly what Olson celebrates through his concept of *'istorin*, which will be discussed at length later in this chapter. However, Pound rejects this on the grounds that a reader is not qualified to 'pick for oneself', arguing that such a task falls to someone such as himself. He will be the one to 'determine the main form and main proportions' and once the 'greater pyramids' have been located and specified then, and only then, will it be appropriate for Pound to relinquish his control. When translated into a cultural and literary context, the similarity to Briet and Jones's annotative method is clear: as with Jones, Pound will be the one to prescribe and map the paths that a reader must travel and it is on this point that both writers are distinct from the likes of Moore and Olson. Further, there is a striking similarity between the spirit of Pound's analysis and Briet's justification for the centres of

documentation and her pledge to read and evaluate on the behalf of her researchers. One sees in this the intellectual shift that has taken place between the time of Eliot and Moore in the 1920s and then Jones and Pound in the 1930s: whereas for the former two KRINO was, albeit to differing degrees, something to be cultivated, it is viewed now as something to be wary of and even rejected.

Pound solidifies his position later in this same essay. When writing about Taupin's *Quartes Essais* and his analysis of a passage from Dante, Pound discusses how Taupin omitted to explain a specific passage concluding: 'He may have expected the reader to see it for himself. I know from longer experience than Dr Rene that there is no use in expecting the reader to do anything of the sort' (391). Somewhat ironically, although less so than one might at first assume, this is highly reminiscent of the same comments that Bridson made and Pound so acerbically attacked earlier in the year: that the reader must be 'met halfway'. At the heart of both Jones and Bridson, and also Pound, is a coercive impulse that dictates the reader cannot be relied upon to participate willingly or intelligibly and as such they must, as Pound stated, be 'made to believe' by those who see themselves as more qualified. However, given the similarity it is significant that Pound, unlike Jones, Briet and Bridson, still chooses *not* to articulate his project through the figure of the note despite the fact that he does seem to concur with their wider pedagogical aims, predicated as they were on cultural policing. This difference is, I think, key and when considering the function of authority in these texts the note takes on added significance. Jones does at least share his notes and as such he shares the basis of his authority, which is precisely what Bridson requests of Pound. However, claiming authority *without* notes, as Pound does, is arguably far more suspect and as such Pound's conflict with Bridson appears to stem from the fact that, even more so than Jones, he does not wish to relinquish his self-imposed role of, returning to his analysis of KRINO, architect.

Indeed, Pound would come to admire in Fascism this same tendency towards non-transparent authority.

However, Jones and Pound do not only share a similarity in views when considering the cultural role they have created for themselves, but also a comparable attitude as to why this role is necessary in the first instance. In the 1938 essay titled 'The Jefferson-Adams Letters as a Shrine and Monument' Pound begins by dividing American history into four periods. The first he describes as being American civilisation, starting in 1760 and concluding in 1830. The second, from 1830 to 1860, is a 'period of thinning, of mental impoverishment, scission between life of the mind and life of the nation' (147). The third he simply describes as the period of Civil War and the fourth, without date, is the 'possibility of revival, starting perhaps with a valorisation of our cultural heritage, not merely as something lost in dim retrospect, a tombstone, tastily carved whereon to shed dry tears or upon which to lay a few withered violets' (147). There are clear and definite parallels to Jones here. Both identify a dislocation between the 'life of the mind and life of the nation' and whereas Pound labels this a 'scission' Jones calls it 'The Break'. Both are describing what they perceive to be a loss of connection between people and what Pound calls 'cultural heritage' and what Jones calls 'cultural deposits', with Briet identifying this as 'national heritage'. Both also stress the possibility of 'revival' and both identify the route to revival to be a 'valorisation' of one's cultural heritage and as such they see themselves, to use Jones's term, as rememberers.

In this essay, Pound also discusses his concept of the Paideuma, which he refers to as a 'national mind' and being 'that mental formation, the inherited habits of thought, the conditionings, aptitudes, of a given race or time' (148). Thus, what Pound refers to as Paideuma Jones labels cultural deposits and the crisis for both is that our connection to this heritage has been lost. Indeed, the final description of what constitutes the Paideuma is interesting in this regard. Pound draws attention to the contingent and constructed nature of

the Paideuma: it is, he concedes, a 'formation' that is an 'inherited habit' and is 'conditioned' (148). Pound seems attuned to the hegemonic nature of any such 'national mind' and as such his continued desire to 'make him believe' what is a local and constrained definition of cultural value becomes all the more problematic. Looking forward to Olson, what separates him from Jones and Pound on this point is that whilst he is just as invested in Gloucester as Jones is of Anglo-Saxon history or Pound is of what constitutes the Paideuma, Olson is very clear that being enmeshed in Gloucester is unique to him and the reader need not pursue that particular heritage with anything like the same vigour. Like Pound, Olson is very alert to the fact that his investment in Gloucester is a 'formation' of *Charles Olson* and so, unlike Pound, it need not become a site of reverence for the reader also. There is, again, a disjunction, then, between Moore and Olson's need for the reader to uncover what is valuable to them, and then Pound, Briet and Jones's conviction that people should uncover what is deemed valuable by Pound, Briet and Jones. They consider themselves to be presenting what is actually and objectively valuable whilst Moore and Olson appear to recognise how such a claim is highly contestable. Further, this is can be traced to a potent sense of being at the precipice of cultural degradation that was perhaps not as keenly felt by Eliot and Moore before and nor by Olson afterwards.

Further similarities between Jones and Pound can be found by developing what one understands of their continued response to the perceived crisis. In yet another essay, published in the same year as the above, Pound expands his conception of the Paideuma by defining what he describes as a national culture. Returning again to the topics of cultural debasement and information overload, Pound laments that a 'regeneration of American culture' will not be possible 'while Marx and Lenin are reprinted at 10 cents and 25 cents in editions of 100, 000 and Adams' and Jefferson's thought is kept out of the plain man's reach' ('National Culture' 162). As seen throughout Jones's work, Pound is embarking on a policy

of cultural policing wherein he seeks to delineate certain texts that he feels will help to close the scission and revitalise the national mind and to hinder the publication of materials that he feels will not. Similarly, he then goes on to describe himself as a ‘physician of the mind’ who seeks to discover a ‘serum, which will make impossible the existence on the American scene of the persons who have impeded this study, wilfully or in abuleia’ (‘National Culture’ 162). Pound goes on to offer some thoughts as to how this serum might be delivered: ‘To organise in our barbarism, in our utter rabidity and inconsequence a hierarchy [...] Until a selection of the intelligentsia can organise something, until they can set up at least a model they cannot expect the 120 or whatever million to copy it’ (‘National Culture’ 165). One might recall, here, Briet’s similar call to authority when she contends that the problem is ‘one of selecting the best works’ and on this issue ‘a competency is necessary’ (14). As he conceded in his analysis of KRINO, Pound certainly feels himself to have such competency. Indeed, the proposed solution to the ‘utter rabidity’ of mass print that Pound finds himself working against precisely betrays his authoritarian instincts. His goal is to establish a ‘hierarchy’ wherein he, and other members of the ‘intelligentsia’, constructs a model, which can then presumably be followed obediently and unthinkingly. What Jones and Briet do is to erect an annotative corollary to this where the reader is expected to adopt the interpretative and evaluative models articulated through the figure of the note even to the point, in Jones, of copying his pronunciation.

Thus, it is through cultural policing and coercion that Pound seeks to ameliorate the scission. It is, he argues, the responsibility of the intelligentsia to instruct the masses and this is the same impulse that we see in Jones also. Pound concludes the essay with this thought: ‘For a national culture the first step is stocktaking: What is there of it *solid*. The second step is to make this available and to facilitate access to it’ (‘National Culture’ 166). This underlines Pound’s sense of being coercive: it is his responsibility, as with Jones, to ensure

that readers have access to the ‘correct’ material. Using Jones’s term, the motivation is to ‘open up unshared backgrounds’ (‘Preface’ *The Anathemata* 21) and to provide access to cultural deposits or what Pound rather nebulously describes as that which is ‘solid’. Notice, though, the similar imagery here: both conceive of a deposit, something that is solid, a bedrock, and both want to provide access to it, but implied in this ostensibly egalitarian gesture is a policy of alienating and authoritarian cultural policing. Whilst the tone may differ vastly across the two writers, with one expressing their view with feverish demands and the other a kind of gentle ushering, the project is very similar and they share the same impulse, which grows out of a sense of urgency provoked by apparent cultural debasement.

In order to substantiate the ideas expressed across Pound’s various essays and how they help to illuminate the cultural moment shared by Jones I wish to hone in Canto XLVII and LI from The Fifth Decad of *The Cantos*, also known as the Leopoldine Cantos. It is worth noting that these cantos were published in the same year as *In Parenthesis* and they both share very similar textual gestures, such as Pound parenthetically interrupting his poem to tell the reader that ‘All of this is important’ (209) or writing the number 200, 000 and then parenthetically explaining that this is ‘two hundred thousand’ (214). Or, Pound writing the abbreviated Dno and then stating that it is ‘pronounced Domino’ (215). The similarity of these stylistic choices in *In Parenthesis*, *The Anathemata* and *The Cantos* help to make the case that both writers share a coercive style of poetry wherein they feel obliged to direct one’s reading experience. Beginning, then, with Canto XLVIII and specifically lines 101 to 131, the passage begins with a rather imagistic description of an insect: ‘Velvet, yellow, unwinged / clambers, a ball, into its orchis’ (243). In his *Companion* Terrell suggests that the image describes a chrysalis that has not yet metamorphosed into a fully-fledged butterfly and thus it becomes an image of the *potential* of fecundity (188). By comparing the transformation of the insect to the male testicle, Pound further links the transition to fertility

and to an act of creativity: it is an act of becoming. Significantly, the fecundity is achieved by the insect through inaction: the insect ‘clammers’ into a ball, it is ‘unwinged’ and waits passively, in hibernation, to become winged. Thus, this opening image is one of fecundity and creation achieved through the *negation* of action. Pound makes this very clear in his introduction to Remy de Gourmont’s *The Natural Philosophy of Love*, which he translated in 1921. Discussing the biology of insect reproduction, of which the image is reminiscent, Pound argues that the insect solves the problem of gestation ‘by hibernation, i.e. a sort of negation of action’ (2). Significantly, Pound then pushes this idea further in order to comment on the current cultural climate: ‘In his growing subservience to, and adoration of, and entanglement in machines, in utility, man rounds the circle almost into insect life’ (2). What the insect has achieved (beauty and fecundity through inaction) Man cannot since the mammal is, for Pound, defined or at his best when typifying ‘muscular splendour’ (5).

Thus, what Pound is articulating in his introduction and in this opening image from the cited passage is a conviction, apparent throughout his writing, that inactivity is inimical to the progression and fecundity of culture. One’s reliance on mechanism, so the argument goes, has relegated humanity to the insectile. When humanity exhibits the characteristics of the insect, Pound suggests, he cannot fulfil his creative promise and culture stagnates and this is what is at issue in these opening lines. However, the ideas and vocabulary employed here provides a rich set of prompts for discussing the ideas of cultural policing and the need for coercion: Pound is attempting to negotiate what he perceives to be the degradation of society brought about by a lack of effort and he confronts this through a turn to the authoritative. Yet, most significantly, this also highlights a key difference between Pound and Jones and also helps to explain the lack of notes in Pound and the inundation of them in Jones. Whilst both predetermine the texts and ideas that have value, Jones reveals through the figure of the note the process at which he arrived at this judgement and explains so thoroughly what he deems

to be significant about his material that he dramatically reduces the need for the reader to labour. Jones has already performed the act of intellectual labour on behalf of his reader. In this, he coincides with Briet's willingness to read and analyse her researcher's documents in order to reduce their necessary labour and free them from 'pondering servitude' (15). Yet, whilst Jones and Pound both appear to denigrate the participatory nature of Marx's self-activity and opt instead for a system of imposition, Pound does still demand effort, but in the service of that which he has deemed valuable. Returning to the notion of KRINO, Pound attacks activity when it is self-directed, but there still must be activity in the first instance to avoid the insectile and it is here that Pound and Jones diverge. This also helps to explain why Pound attacks Bridson whilst at the same time ostensibly agreeing with him, as seen in his Dr Rene comment. All agree that *self*-activity is too dangerous to promote, but Pound disagrees with Bridson, Briet and Jones that the aim ought to be to temper readerly activity more generally.

The second half of this referenced passage continues to open up the necessity of effort within Pound's poetics by complicating the insect imagery already established. Pound writes, for instance: 'Here three ants have killed a great worm. There / Mars in the air, fell, flew' (243). Again, according to Terrell this is a metaphor, originating in de Gourmont, of a male insect who is 'armed for sexual contamination' (183). This image thus presents a far more generative connection between humanity and the insect than the one implied in the first half. Just as the insect has died in the act of copulation and thus expended its energy so too is humanity able to expend its own energy through the creation of art. As such, the insect image now comes to represent not the negation of action, but rather the possibility of action and it is with this latter image that Pound seems to ascribe most value. It is the 'muscular splendour' that he seeks to cultivate in the reader. However, looking back to de Gourmont, from whom this imagery is taken, one also realises that the generative force expended by the insect is a



fleeting one: it is not self-sufficient and self-perpetuating. The insect enjoys a brief moment of ‘muscular splendour’, an escape from its mechanistic existence only to then die. As de Gourmont makes clear, quoted in Terrell:

After coupling they fade as lamps when extinguished [...] When the female sees the sees the small flying star descend toward her, she gathers [...] exults in fear, trembles in joy. The fading light is symbolic of the destiny of nearly all insects [...] coupling accomplished [...] life vanishes from them’ (183).

What is at stake for Pound, and why this is pertinent for my wider discussion of his work and of Jones, is a way to first of all cultivate this energy and to move away from the mechanistic dominion of the insect and then to keep the lamp burning. Ultimately, for both this is achieved through coercion and by ‘making him believe’, but, as already pinpointed, the difference then comes from the role played by the reader: does he keep the lamp burning himself, through the instruction and direction of Pound, or is the lamp kept alight for him, as is arguably the case with Jones? Whilst an important distinction, this does not detract from the overall similarity across the two writers and their shared aims, especially when viewed in the context of the very different aims of, say, Moore and Olson.

This argument can be further teased out by looking at Canto LI, which begins with a reimagining of a poem by Guido Guinicelli:

Shines

In the mind of heaven God

Who made it

More than the sun

In our eye.

Fifth element; mud; said Napoleon (250).

The reference to mud conjures, in the context of the poem, corporeality of experience and it is juxtaposed with the ethereal and spiritual, ‘the mind of heaven’. Pound is creating a contrast

with the realm of earth and the spiritual. For Pound, mud is being used to signify the material conditions of the world that hinders the progress of the light: it engenders opacity and viscosity where there ought to be transparency and lucidity. Interestingly, the syntactic arrangement of the poem somewhat demonstrate this: having no punctuation the opening lines flow one from the other whilst the final cited line, the one that introduces mud, trips the reader up with its superfluous use of the semi-colon. However, when attentive to its various cultural connotations, mud is also what enacts or makes bodily intelligence. As is the case in various religious origin myths, intelligence is brought forth from a corporeal element such as dirt or mud. As such, mud has both the capacity to be generative and to give shape to intelligence, but also to hinder and restrict it. One can connect this line of analysis back to the discussion of the insectile: both are mechanical and reductive, but also generative. The remainder of this Canto constitutes a probing of what social conditions need to exist in order to make mud a hindrance or to make it generative. Characteristically, Pound begins by arguing, as in XLV, that usury is what transforms 'mud' into something negative. He then produces a litany of propositions declaring what usury detracts from culture, such as, 'with usury the stone cutter is kept from his stone' and 'the weaver is kept from his loom', ultimately arguing that 'usury rusts the man and his chisel / It destroys the craftsman, destroying craft' (250).

Pound seems to be suggesting that what has been lost is the transformative relationship between a person and his ability to create. The above passage describes, on the one hand, the generative uses of craft, art and labour and then, on the other, how these things have been dislocated because of usury. Thus, and returning to Marx, Pound is describing a pre-capitalist (although he sees it more as a pre-usury) economy where mental and material labour are symbiotic. Yet, unlike Marx who looks to a future governed by communist relations, Pound is nostalgic for such a pre-capitalist moment. Usury has divorced the

craftsman from his craft: it has stripped labour of its creative capacity, just as Marx argued. What is also interesting is how mud continues to function within these examples: the point is that the chosen professions (builder, sculptor, and framer) all shape mud: they are all involved in the art of expending labour in order to create something. As for Marx, labour becomes a productive force and here we see how mud, when laboured over and with, becomes a conduit for intelligence: mud does not hinder, but is rather a vehicle for artistic expression. What is at stake, then, is the efficacy or potential for artistic expression in particular economic circumstances and the point for Pound is that, in the age of usury, these things are no longer possible. Perhaps unexpectedly, there are clear parallels here between Pound, Marx and Morris: all three contemplate a moment when mental and material labour were or might be harmonious and where labour manifests its capacity to be generative, and all three pinpoint the introduction of certain capitalist values as the principal cause of this degradation. Pound's response to this is to be authoritarian: if certain historical conditions have rendered the malleability of mud defunct then one's only option, so Pound suggests, is to coerce and to heal through edification and this is the same impulse found in Jones. This further helps to explain the imagery found in Pound's prose of healing a sickness and making people believe through an 'invocation of authority'. The fundamental compulsion in this regard, and continuing Pound's image of mud, can be summarised thus: if people are no longer capable of shaping mud then Pound, and Jones, will shape it for them. This is also the fault line along which we might distinguish Pound and Jones from Moore and Olson: the latter two believe in the capacity for mud to be shaped by the reader. Indeed, this is richly suggested by Jones's imagery of cultural deposits and likewise Olson's notion of archaeology: for Jones the job of the poet is to dig on the reader's behalf, whilst for Olson one ought to unearth them for oneself.

As if to validate his methodology, Pound spends the remainder of the canto providing instructions for how to fly fish using Charles Bowlker's textbook, *Art of Angling, Greatly Enlarged and Improved, Containing Directions for Fly-Fishing, Trolling, Bottom-Fishing, Making Artificial Flies, etc.*, as a source. For a poet who spent a large portion of his career advocating the need for *le mot juste*, one cannot ignore the significance of his choice of text here. The contrast between the angler and those who practice usury according to Pound is striking here: the former is at one with nature, able to craft exactly the correct fly, attentive to its function and the harmony between utility and craft whilst the other embodies the negation of these attributes. In the final lines, Pound then contrasts this to the eel fisher who simply positions baskets in the water with no sense of craft or attentiveness. Whereas the fly fisher is patient and always active in his pursuit the eel fisher is opportunist and passive in his; he accumulates resources not through skill and labour, but through mindless force. The fly, then, becomes a beautifully wrought symbol of the political commentary explored thus far: it represents everything that Pound admires whilst the eel fisher comes to represent everything that he wishes to eradicate. Staying with this metaphor, society, Pound seems to suggest, is comprised of eel fishers when it ought to be comprised of anglers. Pound surely sees himself as a fellow angler and he seeks to transform eel fishers also to anglers, but, most importantly, not through a process of persuasion or inclusivity, but through coercion.

This perhaps also goes some way to explaining why Pound's poetry is so allusive, elliptical and erudite and also why he does not use notes in order to alleviate this and in fact openly disparages those who do. Pound's poetry is written to anglers whilst Jones's is written to eel fishers. However, this is by no means true of Pound's prose which, as already suggested, is coercive in the fullest sense of the word and in much the same manner that Jones's notes are. Thus, whilst Jones is still highly coercive, he is transparent in incorporating the note, and therefore the necessary information, into the poem, as is needed to fulfil his aim

of ‘opening up unshared backgrounds’. Pound, however, separates out the two modes. As such, Pound’s poetry can be seen as the conceptual justification for the overtly coercive stance he adopts in his prose; that is, it is *because* his poetry is so often deemed impenetrable that his prose must not be so. The effect of Pound not using the note, when compared to Jones, is the refusal to make his authority transparent, since he locates his explanatory material not in the context of the volume of the poetry, as Jones does, but elsewhere in the prose, with this refusal tending towards Fascism, which is a politics Jones, whilst coercive, did not share.

In this section of the chapter, I have explored the poetry of David Jones as representing one possible route out of literary modernism. Jones’s verse comes at a point in the early to mid-twentieth century when Eliot’s participatory projects of cultural delineation is recalibrated as an act of coercion, designed to ‘instruct, enlighten and culturally assist’ (Briet 43). For Jones, this involves constructing for his readers and through his notes a map that might guide readers through and recall one’s cultural deposits. However, as demonstrated at the beginning of this chapter, it is because critics have so persistently overlooked Jones’s notes that the nuances of this shift have been neglected. As such, one sees in contemporary Jones scholarship an attempt to justify Jones’s inclusion into the modernism of figures such as Eliot, and Joyce when, in fact, his represents a distinctive move away from their poetic projects. Thus, by comparing within the branch that both Eliot and Jones belong to, I have aimed to provide a new way of looking at Jones’s verse and the need to emphasise the role his notes play and how they function as a kind of map. Whilst Jones has been my primary focus, I have also sought to situate his thinking and poetry within a much wider contextual net, which has included detailed reference to the comparable annotative strategies of Briet and a detailed discussion of Pound’s similar authoritarian impulses. In the second half of this chapter, I will continue to discuss the ways in which writers have registered their trajectory

out of modernism through the figure of the note with particular reference to Charles Olson's *The Maximus Poems*, published one year before *The Anathemata*.

**‘Barbed Wire or Pemmican’: Picking a Private Way in *The Maximus Poems***

As already stated, Olson's preoccupation is to isolate and substantiate, like Moore, a methodology that might be applied to any and all texts, and not to cultivate a particular and prescriptive set of ‘cultural deposits’. However, in reading Olson in this manner I find myself distinctly outnumbered. There is a tendency in Olson studies to situate his work within the conceptual framework of delineation that I have thus far applied to Eliot and Jones, and it is in opposition to these critics that I position this section of the chapter. Rebecca Steffy describes Olson's verse, for instance, in terms of an archaeological compulsion, which ‘pushes outward in the centrifugal motion of “projective poetics” to site and archival document’ (405). The point, as Lytle Shaw argues, is ‘not merely to discover facts or physical contexts, but rather *make contact* with them’ (54). Shaw continues: ‘This contact effect, establishing physical presence at the site where knowledge might be extracted, is the romance of historical knowledge for Olson and also the romance of ethnography; both require not merely our interested participation but our literal corporeal contact as well’ (54). Further, citing the oft-quoted Herodotean notion of *istorin* meaning ‘to find out for oneself’, Sasha Colby contends that, for Olson, the ‘past is something to be touched and experienced, not, like historical discourse, invisible’ (95). She concludes: ‘In digging down through the recesses of the poem's meaning, we too are put “in touch” with the “senses” led by Olson's site-specific references. We are made to follow Herodotus's method by finding out for ourselves’ (103). Read in this way and particularly in regards to the emphasis on an

archaeological procedure, Olson's verse becomes a mechanism for the propulsion towards, and again borrowing Jones's phrase, specific 'deposits'.

In each of these examples, then, Olson's verse is understood in reference to a literal handling of the archival materials that he uses throughout *The Maximus Poems*. In other words, there is demanded a physical and actual handling of certain designated materials that requires an extranoematic movement beyond the poem, which, in the case of *Maximus*, means travelling to Gloucester. The reader, critics such as Shaw seem to suggest, upholds the invitation to find out for oneself by retracing the same steps that Olson took in his writing of the poem. When understood in these terms Olson's poetics do not seem all that dissimilar to the method of cultural policing advocated by Jones and Briet in their response to the advent of mass print. Like Jones, so the argument goes, Olson is valorising and then pushing his reader towards certain textual sites: Gloucester becomes comparable to what Welsh history represented for Jones; it becomes a constituent element of Olson's Paideuma. Olson would appear to be invested in, to use Briet's phraseology, 'the preservation and conservation of culture' (17); with that cultural site being Gloucester and all that it signified for Olson. In line with Shaw and Steffy's interpretation of Olson's archaeological project, one might also argue that Pound's work of the 1930s and 1940s, as discussed above, provides a useful point of connection. Unlike Jones and Briet, Olson does still demand active participation from the reader and indeed more so than any other writer, since one is ostensibly required to 'make contact' with the designated materials. As such, Olson might be read as subscribing to the Poundian model of circumscribing what is worth a reader's attention, as with Briet and Jones, but unlike them, retaining the need for the expenditure of effort.

Certainly, the importance that Olson placed on participation is not to be disputed. As Robert von Hallberg argues, Olson's poetry is 'not a reflection upon but an engagement with' and that it 'invites not observation, but response' (32) so that a reader might be drawn into an

‘hermetic circle of understanding by *requiring* interpretation; apparent obscurity demands participation’ (32). Indeed, Olson himself was clear as to the significance of participation. In his 1951 essay ‘Human Universe’ Olson bemoans the lack of a motivation to participate, which, he argues, characterises his cultural moment: ‘The notion of fun comes to displace work as what we are here for. Spectatorism crowds out participation as the condition of culture [...] Passivity conquers all. Even war and peace die [...] and man reverts to only two of his components, inertia and gas’ (159 – 160). Elsewhere in ‘Human Universe’ Olson further lingers over the necessity of labour arguing, for instance, that ‘the way is hard’ (157) but that ‘habits of thought are habits of action’ (156). However, where I disagree with the critical trend outlined above is in the assumption that the focal point of one’s participation is intimately, if not exclusively, linked to a specific site (Gloucester) and a specific textual matrix (archival material in and around Gloucester). For Jones, Briet and Pound, and one might argue implicit in Shaw and Steffy’s analysis of Olson, the poet determines the epicentre for where one’s labour ought to be directed. Contrary to this, I wish to propose that for Olson the act of participation in and of itself is valued above what is being participated with and on this point he is most emphatically antithetical to the cultural projects of those writers discussed in the first half of this chapter.

In *A Bibliography for Ed Dorn*, Olson makes this clear when he offers this advice to Dorn:

Dig *one thing or place or man* until you yourself know more abt that than is possible to any other man. It doesn't matter whether it's Barbed Wire or Pemmican or Paterson or Iowa. But *exhaust* it. Saturate it. Beat it./And then U KNOW everything else very fast: one saturation job (it might take 14 years). And you're in, forever... (75).

Olson is not being glib here: it really does not matter for him whether the reader studies barbed wire or Pemmican. The concern for Pound, recalling the concept of the KRINO, is



precisely that if left to his own devices a reader may very well devote his energies to Pennican or worse still the latest penny weekly, but this would be doing himself and society a great cultural disservice and so the reader's attentions must be directed. Yet, for Olson, and anticipating postmodernism, there need not be any such attempt to prescribe literary value in this way. Unlike Jones, Pound and Briet, then, Olson's project is one that celebrates textual inclusivity and even a cursory glance through *Maximus*'s pages will reveal the same variety and range of texts that both Moore and Bush would embrace: journal entries, letters, newspaper clippings, archival records, and the *National Geographic* alongside luminaries such as Shakespeare, Herman Melville and Ralph Waldo Emerson. What matters is the vigour with which one participates and that one participates at all. Olson is teaching his reader a method for how to participate and whilst Olson applies this method to Gloucester, his reader need not do the same and in fact, he is encouraged not to do so. In a 1953 letter to Frances Boldereff Olson describes Gloucester as his 'own front yard' (qtd. in Butterick xxxvii) and that it is Gloucester's history that has engaged him 'blindly, stupidly' (qtd. in Butterick xxxvii), but the point to remember is that each reader has his own front yard. One might recall a similar impulse in Bush's aim to 'provide an apparatus that will allow the user to navigate and consult whatsoever material he desires and deems useful' (115). For both Bush and Olson, it is the reader's responsibility to determine what value ought to be attributed to what is being read. This is not to diminish the obvious significance that Gloucester had for Olson or to suggest that he did not wish to impart that significance to his reader, but one must also recognise that Gloucester was specific to the poet and this was partly, if not wholly, his attraction to it in the first instance. One is encouraged, as Olson styles it in *Maximus*, to 'pick / a private way / among debris / of common / wealth' (136), and the poem itself is a persistent probing of the strategies best suited to nurture and fulfil this impulse.

It is in this way that Olson's project might be considered antithetical to Jones's: whereas Jones attempts to bequeath to his reader his own cultural deposits, Olson encourages one to discover one's own, and his poetry is an attempt to provide the methodological tools necessary for such an excavation. In the true spirit of self-activity, Olson attempts to confer authority onto the reader and as such destabilize the kind of authoritarian and coercive 'cultural assistance' evident in Jones and Briet. The political gesture at the heart of *Maximus* is the creation of what Olson labels the *polis*, a society in which its citizens are engaged and motivated to participate in both the future construction and present understanding of its materials. It is through *Maximus* that Olson attempts to work through the specifics of such a society. What matters most, as with Bush, is creating a textual habitat that allows a reader to discover his own Gloucester and to forge out of those materials his own *Maximus*. In 'Maximus, to himself' Olson writes these lines: 'It is undone business / I speak of, this morning, / with the sea / stretching out / from my feet' (*Maximus* 57). Through his verse, Olson bequeaths to his reader a method and it is intended that the reader carry this methodology to places and materials beyond Gloucester. The poetry itself, then, is always 'undone business', since it functions, similarly to Moore's poetry, but unlike Jones's, as an open system wherein a reader is required to contribute directly to its system of signification. This is clearly politically and aesthetically a far cry from Briet's desire to free researchers from 'pondering servitude' (15) by mediating and evaluating material on their behalf, or Jones's attempts to use the note to prescribe paths of interpretation. Both Jones and Briet seek to construct textual spaces that are alienating in the fact that they propose to be very much *finished* business. Instead, Olson responds to the perceived crisis not by disavowing the participatory textual models of high modernism, but rather by reinvigorating them and taking them to their logical conclusion by transforming self-activity into an essential literary, cultural and political gesture in a manner even exceeding Moore.

As such, articulating a methodology for how to participate, which is the epistemic bedrock of the *polis*, becomes a fundamental issue for Olson. In *A Bibliography* Olson outlines what he understands the concept of methodology to be and the significance it holds for his poetry. He writes, for example: ‘And as yet no one has applied that methodology (HOW – AS, *hu* – PROCESS (is “to move”) – METHOD IS (*meta hodos*, the way after: TAO) – what I am trying to say is that a METHODOLOGY is a science of HOW)’ (302). This idea is repeated elsewhere in the text when he defines process as ‘how-how-how’ (305). In *Letters for Origins*, he expands on this idea by adding that methodology ‘is the science of the path [...] it is not the path but it is the way the path is discovered’ (106). Again, at the beginning of ‘Human Universe’ Olson poses a similar question: Was ist der Weg, which, when translated, means what is the way (155). What is at stake for Olson, as indicated in his definition of methodology, is not so much *what* is discovered or examined, but rather *how* one goes about doing it. In fact, Olson would even go so far as to prioritize the question of method over content. In the Black Mountain College catalogue of 1951 the author, more than likely Olson, writes: ‘One central and consistent effort is to teach method, not content; to emphasise process [...] For facts change, while the method of handling facts – provided it is life’s own free, dynamic method – remains the same’ (qtd. in Ganahl 94). Thus, reading Olson’s poetry along these lines and further situating him alongside Moore and in opposition to Jones and Eliot undermines the entrenched critical view that Olson’s verse is predicated on the physical handling of certain specified materials from, say, Gloucester or Yucatan.

Olson would return to this question of articulating a method for how to participate time and time again. In ‘Human Universe’, for example, Olson bemoans the inability of ‘learned monsters’ (163) to ‘reify what they do know’ (163). He continues: ‘What is worse, they do not know how to pass over to us the energy implicit in any high work of the past because they purposely destroy that energy as dangerous to the states for which they work’

(164). He continues in his most Poundian tone: ‘When I look at the filth and lumber which man is led by, I see man’s greatest achievement in this childish accomplishment – that he damn well can, and does, destroy, destroy, destroy energy every day’ (164). In ‘Projective Verse’ Olson considers a similar proposition. After outlining his theory that a poem is ‘a high energy-construct and, at all points, an energy discharge’, which is energy transferred from where the poet got it [...] by way of the poem itself to, all the way over to, the reader’ (240) he poses this question: ‘So: how is the poet to accomplish same energy [...] what is the process by which a poet gets in, at all points energy at least the equivalent of the energy which propelled him in the first place [...]?’ (240). Similarly, and using the same language as in ‘Projective Verse’, Olson states in ‘Human Universe’ ‘there is only one thing you can do about kinetic, re-enact it’ (162). The question, though, is *how* one might go about re-enacting it. What textual mechanism might be most conducive to the transference of energy from poet to reader and further what mechanism would best be able to substantiate the methodology that would allow this to take place? The point for Olson is that his poetry has a real world, pragmatic purpose that has to do with the construction of a *polis*. In ‘The Praises’, for example, he writes: ‘that which has been found out by work may, by work, be passed on / (without due loss of force), for use / USE’ (175). Part of *Maximus*’s ‘use’ is to substantiate a procedure that empowers a reader to continue the ‘undone business’ of the poem, but also the *polis*.

Throughout the remainder of this chapter, I wish to demonstrate that it is within the figure of the note that Olson found the strategy best suited to his methodological aims. In opposition to the way in which Jones used the note to cultivate interpretative order and to police both what ought to be read and how to do so, Olson uses the figure of the note to provide a template for how one might engage with textual material in accordance with the values of self-activity and *istorin*. To make this case, I will proceed by exploring ever-

expanding layers of annotative practice beginning with Olson's appreciation and examination of Melville's marginalia in *Call me Ishmael*. Towards the beginning of *Ishmael* Olson states that he is 'willing to ride Melville's image of man, whale and ocean to find in him prophecies, lessons he himself would not have spelled out' (13). One such lesson was the significance and creative potential of note taking. Olson's study of Melville was, amongst many other things, a mentorship in the practice of annotation that would follow Olson through his composition of *Maximus*. Moving on from Melville and turning towards *Maximus*, I examine in detail the many examples of what Alan Golding has labelled Olson's 'footnote-like devices' (78). I situate my analysis of *Maximus*'s marginalia, parenthetical citations, and even poems that are called footnotes in the wider contextual net of poems such as 'The Kingfishers'. With Olson's own notational strategies established, I then want to conclude by introducing and reconceptualising one of the latter's most sophisticated and dedicated scholars, George Butterick. This will focus on Butterick's 1978 *A Guide to the Maximus Poems of Charles Olson*, which is a line-by-line analysis of *Maximus* comprising some 4000 annotations. These annotations include explanations of historical and literary figures, definitions of particularly obscure words or images, explanations of chronology, translations, personal anecdote, material from Olson's letters and essays, and connections between *Maximus* and Olson's other poetry.

What is most interesting about the *Guide*, I wish to argue, is not so much its content, as well researched and insightful as it is, but rather the strategy of annotation that Butterick develops to work through *Maximus*. Taking my cue partially from Marshal McLuhan's now famous statement that 'the medium is the message' (3) I argue that it is significant that Butterick has written his guide, all eight hundred pages of it, in the form of annotation. Whilst Butterick understands his own project as 'an act of scholarship of the most fundamental and traditional sort' (4), I expand on this explanation by assigning to the *Guide*

significance beyond the contents of its exegesis. His 4000 notes, in addition to being informative, act as a case study for what it means to enact a method of Olsonian participation. Butterick's *Guide* becomes a formal expression of how one might go about contributing to the 'undone business' of *Maximus*. As with Moore, Olson is building a lexicon around the necessity of intellectual labour and participation, and the note, both his and Butterick's, thus becomes a key to opening up the nuances of this poetic vocabulary.

By framing the *Guide* in this manner, as much more significant and germane to Olson's wider poetics than simply an act of scholarly exposition, I argue that there exists a generative relationship between Olson's annotative practices in *Maximus* and Butterick's *Guide*. Butterick's annotative procedure is not incidental, but rather already encoded, by way of *Moby-Dick*, into the fabric of *The Maximus Poems*. Olson uses the figure of the note to work through a methodology of participation and it is this same methodology that Butterick would re-apply to *Maximus* via his *Guide* and, further still, it is this methodology that both Butterick and Olson encourage their respective readers to make use of. Crucially, Olson meant for and enabled another person to engage in his work in this manner and as such Butterick's guide, both its use of annotation and the act of labour it represents, is the intended and necessary consequence of *The Maximus Poems*. I will also explore the proposition that whilst Butterick might appear to be at odds with Olson's intention, given that he *does* focus on the historical site of Gloucester, in fact *Maximus* became Butterick's own Gloucester; the work itself, and more specifically the man Charles Olson, became Butterick's 'own front yard', his Pemmican. It is this complex set of interdependent relationships that this chapter hopes to come to terms, all the time maintaining an eye on the way Olson's cultural project provides an alternative to Jones and to what this suggests about the wider issue of a perceived crisis of reading in late-modernism.

### Call me Annotator I: The Citational Contexts of Charles Olson

If, as I contend, the note is central to Olson's project then it is necessary first to trace the germination of Olson's annotative practices. By what avenues and routes did the note find its way into the work of Charles Olson? In his introduction to *A Guide* Butterick justifies his use of annotation by pointing to Olson's own interest in note taking. Butterick writes: 'The desire has been to treat Olson on his own terms, not only in accordance with the principle of *'istorin* which allows the reader to discover the pleasure and ramifications of the poems for himself [...] but the terms by which Olson would have treated Melville, to whom he had devoted so much of his life' (xiv). What Butterick is referring to in his mention of Melville, as he goes on to make clear, is Olson's dissatisfaction with the scholarly annotation of *Moby-Dick* and especially Luther Mansfield's and Howard Vincent's 1952 annotated edition. Butterick then aligns his own annotative strategies in the *Guide* to Olson's 'Principles of Annotation', which Olson penned in the margin of the Mansfield text. It reads, as quoted in Butterick:

- (a) all uncommon or contemporary allusions identified, and where from, M[elville]'s source
- (b) on sources in general
  - (1) if it is clear where his came from, any other sources are only encumbrances ('Introduction' xv).

What Olson expects from Melville's editors, then, is a substantial index to Melville's allusions and the sources in which they originated. This is the approach adopted by Butterick in order, as he explains earlier in the introduction, 'not [to] seek to analyse or interpret, but to allow the reader to participate actively in the poems' (ix). Thus, by referencing these 'principles of annotation' Butterick hopes to give credence to his own project by aligning it to Olson's annotative preferences. Butterick admits, for example, that he 'found helpful or at

least reassuring' (xv) to find Olson's remarks in Mansfield. However, if Butterick's intention here is to confer on his project of annotation the tacit approval of Olson then he misses a trick. The mention of Melville's name in the context of Olson and note taking raises other, perhaps even more interesting, lines of enquiry.

Prior to embarking on his poetic career, launched in 1948 with the publication of *Y & X*, Olson had been deeply embedded in the world of Melville scholarship. The topics and circumstances of Olson's time in academia have been well documented and need only be briefly repeated here.<sup>33</sup> Having completed a Master's thesis on Melville titled *The Growth of Herman Melville, Prose Writer and Poetic Thinker* in 1933 at Wesleyan University, Olson entered Harvard to complete a PhD specialising on the reconstruction of Melville's personal library. Partly funded by one of Melville's granddaughters, Eleanor Melville Metcalf, Olson's focus quickly gravitated towards indexing and examining the many hundreds of Melville's marginal annotations that he had recovered whilst locating the novelist's surviving books. Olson would continue this habit for the remainder of his life. So important was Melville's marginalia that Olson would spend years collecting and transcribing onto index cards and other scraps of paper all of the comments that he came across thus creating a kind of Melvillian Mundaneum. Of particular interest to Olson was Melville's marginalia in his seven volume edition of Shakespeare's collected plays, an interest that Olson first examined in a 1938 term paper titled '*Lear and Moby-Dick*'. Despite the interest that this paper generated from Olson's academic supervisor F.O. Matthiessen, Olson left Harvard on the suggestion of his newly acquainted mentor Edward Dahlberg to pursue his study beyond the confines of doctoral research and funded by a Guggenheim fellowship. After abandoning his research to support the war effort by working in the Foreign Language Division of the Office

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<sup>33</sup> See Tom Clark's biography of Olson titled *The Allegory of a Poet's Life* and also Merton Sealts's afterword to *Call Me Ishmael*.



of War Information, Olson eventually completed in 1945 and published in 1947 the culmination of his research: *Call me Ishmael*.

What Butterick fails to point out in his introduction when commenting on Olson's dissatisfaction with Melvillian textual criticism is that *Call me Ishmael* is, at its very core, a study of annotation. If Butterick seeks to defend his annotative project by aligning it to Olson's appreciation of the note, as indeed I also aim to do, then there is no more suitable starting point than *Call Me Ishmael*. Take, for example, the central hypothesis of the study outlined in Part Two of the text. Known as 'Two *Moby-Dicks*' hypothesis, Olson would contend, Merton Sealts explains in his afterword to *Ishmael*, 'that reading Shakespeare led Melville to recast an existing manuscript that he had begun early in 1850' (131). By reading Shakespeare, so Olson's theory goes, Melville's conception of *Moby-Dick* was radically altered. Therefore, as Sealts points out, exist two versions of the novel exist: one created before Melville's engagement with Shakespeare, and the second, the *Moby-Dick* we know today, after Melville's reading of the plays. Olson's evidence for this shift comes in the form of Melville's marginalia to plays such as *King Lear* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. In Melville's reading of the plays and the notes he left behind there is the germination of *Moby-Dick* and it is these notes that Olson describes as 'the ferment, Shakespeare, the cause' (73). This included the use of marginal and parenthetical commentary, but also hand drawn footnotes in which Melville would use an asterisk in the main body of the text and then write a related note at the bottom of the page or similarly asterisked information gathered at the end of an act or scene in the style of an endnote.

Much of *Call me Ishmael*, then, comprises an excavation and analysis of the shift, revealed in the notes, from the first *Moby-Dick* to the second. Speaking about Melville's notes at the end of the seventh and last volume, for example, Olson writes: 'The significant thing is the rough notes for the composition of *Moby-Dick* on the fly-leaf of the last volume.

These notes involve Ahab, Pip, Bulkington, Ishmael, and are key to Melville's intention with these characters' (39). Elsewhere he states: 'Joined to the passages on Shakespeare in the *Mosses* piece, the notes in the Shakespeare set verify what *Moby-Dick* proves: Melville and Shakespeare had made a Corinth and out of the burning came *Moby-Dick*, bronze' (40). Take as a specific example the chapter in *Call me Ishmael* titled 'Lear and *Moby-Dick*'. In this chapter, Olson uses Melville's notes to trace the exact lines of influence that Shakespeare had on the subsequent creation of *Moby-Dick*. Olson moves in this chapter swiftly from example to example detailing how it is within the figure of the note that there is registered what Olson calls 'the deep creative impact' (39) that the plays had on Melville. The note, for Olson, is both an index of this impact and the site of its construction. Olson describes, then, how Melville 'heavily checks' (48) the scene where Edmund is dying arguing that 'Melville is dumb with horror at the close' citing Melville's gloss to the scene: 'Terrific!' and 'Here's a look Shakespearean – *Regan* talks of *ingratitude!*' (48). Further, Olson is attentive to Melville's 'markings upon the scene in which Edgar discovers, with a hot burst in his heart, his father's blindness' (48). The question remains: what can we learn from Olson's view of Melville's glosses and in which ways might it have influenced his later work and especially the annotative practices that are found in *Maximus*? In Melville's checks, notations, underlining, marginal annotations and bracketing of Shakespeare's plays, Olson unearths a fertile ground of creativity that would go on to influence his later verse. Through Melville Olson came to understand the potential of annotation just as, forty years after the publication of *Ishmael*, Butterick would learn this same lesson from Olson.

It was out of an appreciation for Melville's annotation that Olson's own annotative strategy emerged. In fact, so important were Melville's notes for Olson's poetic education that, consciously or otherwise, they penetrate *Maximus*. One notices across *Maximus* and Melville's volumes of Shakespeare the employment and integration of strikingly similar

notational techniques. Take, for example, the use of the double-bracket across Melville's copy of Shakespeare. On page 335 of *Volume I* and again on page 56 of *Volume VII* Melville marks his copy of the text, *The Tempest* and *King Lear* respectively, with a distinctive double-bracket. In the section of *Maximus* titled 'In the interleaved Almanacks for 1646 and 1647 of Danforth', Olson also uses a double-bracket, which, strikingly, is the same size and has the same ornate shape and style to group together 'Kreton pippins' and 'Long red apples'(227). The pattern of apparent annotative inheritance is replicated across Melville's and Olson's texts. For example, both writers use similar styles of marginal annotation such as in *Volume V* on page 572 and *Volume VII* on page 297 and then also in the section of *Maximus* titled '2<sup>nd</sup> Letter of Georges' (143 – 145). Underlining is also used throughout both *Shakespeare* and *Maximus* in addition to the use of square brackets. The latter instance is especially intriguing. Olson's use of square as opposed to the conventional semi-circle shape parenthesis has been discussed at length by Susan Vanderborg and as such it is interesting to note that Melville also uses the square bracket exclusively, as seen on page 164 of *Volume VI*. Both writers also make frequent use of asterisks as a way in which to provide foot- and endnotes.

Given Olson's exhaustive study of these volumes and his intimate knowledge of Melville's annotation, it is inconceivable that Olson had not noticed Melville's particular textual markings and thus when one finds very similar ones in *Maximus* it is no great leap to say that the one influenced and informed the creation of the other. Olson learned from Melville the creative possibility of the note as a way to articulate and work through the material at hand and just as Butterick's annotative model is inherited from *Maximus*, Olson's is inherited from Melville. As with the likes of Otlet and Bush, Melville utilises the figure of the note as a mechanism for framing and understanding one's relationship to a text, in this case Shakespeare. This reveals a creative feedback loop between varying annotative

responses to texts. Just as Melville uses the note to work through Shakespeare and Butterick uses the note to work through Olson so too does Olson use the note to work through his own poetry. The notion of feedback to describe the generative relationships between Melville, Olson and Butterick's citational practices can be better characterised with reference to Olson's poem 'The Kingfisher'.

Taken from Weiner's 1948 *Cybernetics*, a text heavily influenced by Bush's work, feedback here refers to the recursive model by which one text interacts with another but also how the reader interacts with the text itself. In the poem, Olson famously quotes passages from Mao's 1948 Report to the Chinese Communist Party, which is in turn being read by Jean Ribaud. With the lines beginning 'the light is in the east' (37), Olson reintroduces and reframes these passages and in this way feeds already established data back into text. In this same way, Olson's engagement with Melville is fed back into his own poetry, as seen in the various annotative gestures described above, which are then fed into Butterick's analysis of *The Maximus Poems*. Thus, when Olson concludes that 'the feedback is the law' (35) what is at stake is the necessity of the participatory gesture, an act of labour that characterises the poet's initial engagement with his material and the reader's subsequent engagement. Just as Gloucester captured Olson's attention, 'blindly, stupidly', so too did Melville's work and in this *Maximus* becomes, like Butterick's *Guide*, an embodiment of the compulsion to participate.

Whilst feedback helps to illuminate the relationship between Olson and Melville it also becomes a structural motif through which to understand the participatory nature of Olson's verse more generally and particularly his use of annotative gestures. Cybernetics as a field of study is primarily concerned with examining the structural conditions that cultivate certain actions and certain outcomes and most importantly to pinpoint the specific circumstances that are conducive to this systemic alteration so that it might be replicated. The

question is how to isolate a method that would allow one to sustain a feedback loop between input and output, between reader and text and then back to the reader. In other words, in a society saturated by more and more information, how might Olson motivate a reader to do what he has done with Melville and Gloucester in a manner that cultivates self-activity and does not rely on the authoritarian and coercive methods of Jones and Briet? When Olson speaks about the need for his poetry to have a ‘use’ and when he bemoans the difficulty of identifying the ‘process by which a poet gets in, at all points energy at least the equivalent of the energy which propelled him in the first place’ precisely what concerns him is what Bush intended to solve with his memex machine. Olson graduated from his self-imposed apprenticeship with a keen sense of the importance of annotation and a varied citational vocabulary that seemed to lend itself to these wider cultural aims. It is to this we will now turn.

### **Call Me Annotator II: The Citational Poetry of *The Maximus Poems***

As a starting point, then, take the section of *The Maximus Poems* titled ‘The Savages, or Voyages of Samuel de Champlain’. Here, Olson begins with an exclamatory ‘look at this!’ and continues: ‘1529 / (or 1537 anyway) Cape Ann is Cape / MARY!’ (453). Connected to ‘(or 1537 anyway)’ by way of a single line protruding into the margin is the name Ribiero. Immediately, one cannot fail but notice the obvious similarity in gesture between Olson’s ‘look at this’ and Eliot’s ‘look’ used in *The Waste Land*. The name Ribiero refers to the Portuguese cartographer Diego Ribiero who lived and worked in Spain in the early to mid-1500s. His most famous work is the 1527 *Padron Real*, which delineates the coast of South and Central America and it is most likely to this map that Olson is referring when he asks his reader to ‘look at this!’ As Olson points out in his verse the place known now and to Olson as

Cape Ann was labelled by Ribiero as Cabo de Sta Maria or Cape Mary. Like Eliot before him, Olson is seemingly building a vocabulary around the act of reader participation where the emphasis is going to the cited material whether that is the *American Archives* or Pepys's Diary. Through a notational gesture, the reader is seemingly being directed to a specific text, in this instance a particular map, which has been deemed by author important enough to examine. As a microcosmic example, this section is symptomatic of Olson's wider poetics when read along the lines of Shaw and Steffy: finding out for oneself equates to the reader following a textual path that has been prescribed by Olson. The imperative 'look', as with Eliot, would seem to give the reader no alternative but to seek out the map and then read the verse with that object in mind.

On the surface, this same point can be made of other annotative gestures spread across *Maximus*, including in 'Letter 16'. In this section, Olson incorporates material from the 1896 *Letters of Stephen Higginson*, who was an influential merchant and naval agent, to trace Higginson's exchanges with Timothy Pickering, who was a Secretary of State from Massachusetts in the Government of John Adams. Olson uses direct quotation and cites the specific letters he is using in the 1896 *Letters*, these being letters 48, 49, and 27. Olson also quotes from a letter that Higginson sent to Adams when the latter was Vice-President. The content of the cited letters concerns the financial state of the fishing industry in and around Gloucester towards the end of the eighteenth century. When introducing Higginson Olson describes a House of Commons committee that questioned Higginson on these matters in 1774 and Olson provides this citation to the full record of the examination: 'c.f. Force's *American Archives / Fourth Series*, I, 1645-1648 – *get*' (78). One notices again the similarity between Olson's 'get' and Eliot's 'look' along with the corresponding inclusion of 'Cf.'. As with the Ribiero comment, this is precisely the kind of gesture that Olson critics have taken very seriously. It is because of notations such as this that critics have read Olson as

delineating, like Eliot and Jones, textual ‘deposits’ for the reader to pursue. Olson is deictically pushing his reader to a particular and specified textual location with the intention of him fulfilling the criteria for *‘istorin* by making contact with the materials he finds there. Hallberg describes, for example, the use of ‘get’ as ‘an order to the reader’ (23) that Olson ‘barks out of the page’ (23) and that Olson ‘actually expected his readers not just to be impressed with his learning, as many are, but to go to the library and read the books’ (23). Yet, at the same time that he ostensibly demands of his reader that they ‘get’ the papers, Olson also undermines any such injunction. To do as Hallberg suggests, here, would be an impossibility.

The reference that Olson includes refers to Peter Force’s 1853 six series *American Archives*, which has recently been digitized by the Northern Illinois University. Whilst Mayor of Washington from 1836 until 1840, Force was a printer by trade with his *Archives* being his major work and representing almost twenty years of dedication. Described by Force as a ‘documentary history’, the text includes a compendium of thousands of documents including newspaper articles, booklets, political manifestos, letters and records that chart American archival history from Colonial settlement through to the post-revolutionary era. In his citation, Olson specifies the Fourth Series and then Volume I out of a possible six volumes. However, were one to follow this trail, as Hallberg suggests is intended, one would arrive at a volume titled: ‘From the King’s Message of March 1774 to the Return of Independence by the US in 1776’. Olson presumably meant to cite the first Series Volume II, which would indeed take the reader to 1645 – 1648. There is a significant difference, here, between Eliot’s alacrity when correcting the erroneous publication data attached to *From Ritual to Romance* in *The Waste Land’s* notes. As briefly mentioned in Chapter One, Eliot had mistakenly labelled the text as being published by Macmillan when it was in fact published by Cambridge University Press, with this being one of the few changes Eliot made to the 1925

edition of the poem. This also marks a substantial difference when considering Jones's assiduous and bibliographically accurate citations in both *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata*.

However, this bibliographic inaccuracy is by no means an isolated incident in *The Maximus Poems*. Take, for example, this parenthetical citation in the section of *Maximus* titled 'West Gloucester': '[The Sea Fort, Massachusetts Colony Records, 1633 24' by 70' to be built at cost 2400£' (397). Here, Olson cites the colony records in order to document what he writes about in the verse, which is the building of Salem Neck. However, the citation that he provides is in fact incorrect. Quoting the records, which specifies a '40 ffoote longe and 21 ffoote wide' (qtd. in Butterick 525) fort and not the 24 foot by 70 foot measurements provided by Olson, Butterick concludes: 'Olson is perhaps bluffing with the figures, probably not having the text with him in Buffalo at the time of writing, since the passage is marked in his copy' (525). Whilst this is reasonable to suggest and more than likely true the suggestion raises a more interesting question: why did Olson not correct the measurements at a later date especially since, as Butterick points out, Olson underlined the correct ones in his copy of the records?

A similar incident provides a possible explanation for Olson's apparent indifference to bibliographic precision. In the section titled 'Signature to Petition' Olson depicts the case of John Watts who, in 1622, stole salt from harboured ships and was fined, along with his accomplices, the value of ten ships and one hundred tonnes of salt. In the margin of this section Olson provides this citation for the source of his information: 'Admiralty Bundle of Court Papers 78639, Reign of Charles I, Suit of Owners of Zouche Phoenix, London, against Watts and other Members, including the Reverend' (412). However, again as Butterick points out, Rose-Troup cites a different source when describing the same event: she does not mention the Admiralty Bundle and cites from the Court of Requests Bundle XVI. Olson did



not let this discrepancy go unacknowledged and said of his mistake: 'It has taken a month more now, to reach this point. And that, curiously, involved a turn from port books to the Court of Requests. Which I, mistakenly, thought was Admiralty' (qtd. in Butterick 552). Yet, still he saw no need to correct the mistake. Unlike with Jones, for whom bibliographic accuracy is paramount because it is the text itself that holds most value, what matters to Olson is the process of arriving at the papers and the effort that he was willing to expend, that he was willing to spend a month's worth of work amongst the archives.

It is not that Olson is simply careless or unable to cite a text correctly; it is much more the case that, unlike Jones or Briet, the specific text is not what is at stake. Olson is revealing through his citational gestures a procedure and whilst he expects his reader to follow this procedure, it need not lead him to the same places: he does want the reader to follow the imperative 'get', but not necessarily the material with which it is associated. This said, it would be a mistake to suggest that what 'get' points to and as such the material that Olson has so lovingly excavated hold no value at all, but rather that one ought to question, following Olson's celebration of the poet as pedagogue, what is really being taught. Olson has granted his reader with an opportunity to study that which is most important to him and this is an opportunity not to be squandered or taken lightly, but equally it would remiss only to concern oneself with the material that is pointed to. Upon reading 'get' or 'look' it is incumbent on the reader to take such a gesture seriously and to do so may well include travelling to Gloucester, be it literally as with Shaw or figuratively through the verse, but one must never be satisfied with Olson's destination and instead seek and discover his own. It is through this kind of self-activity that Olson hopes to build the *polis*.

In this way, *The Maximus Poems* becomes a model for how to handle information that the reader might follow. In an age of mass print, *Maximus* represents a counterpoint to the cultural projects of Jones and Briet that relies not on coercion, but the need and indeed joy of

vigorous participation and self-activity. Through the figure of the note, Olson at once establishes the value of expending effort, but also makes it clear that the reader is not bound to Gloucester as the poet is. Yet, seemingly not satisfied with articulating the methodology for excavating, in his case, the materials of Gloucester, Olson goes one step further and uses the figure of the note to excavate *The Maximus Poems* itself thus further solidifying and elucidating the generative vision of notation advocated throughout the text. The way in which Olson does this is by using what might be labelled poetic notes, which are discrete poems throughout *Maximus* explicitly labelled notes. Take, for instance, the section called ‘A Later Note on Letter #15’ (249) or ‘A Footnote to the Above’ (149), which is appended to the section titled ‘John Burke’ and similarly after ‘All my Life I’ve Heard about Many’ Olson includes ‘A Note on the Above’ (178). Further still, in ‘for Robert Duncan who understands what’s going on’ Olson interrupts the verse with this parenthetical instruction: ‘[see below add from Josselyn]’ (207). If one then turns to the end of the section there is included a separate poem titled ‘o John Josselyn you’, which Olson elsewhere described as a ‘piggy back poem’ (qtd. in Butterick 578).

Whilst each example thematically contributes something different to the poem depending on its placement, they all serve the purpose of glossing and reframing Olson’s own work. In this way, Olson proves his idea that ‘feedback is the law’: there is an inescapable gesture of participation both across utterances, between the poet and his materials, and then between the reader and those same materials. In the section beginning ‘Outer Darkness’ there is yet another example of this where Olson uses, as Melville so frequently did in his *Collected Shakespeare*, an asterisks to correct part of his poem: he attaches it to the line ‘just before the Indian attack, 1676, after which no further record\* of Henry’ (590). The gloss then informs the reader that this is in fact incorrect and that ‘He died in Pemaquid’ (590). Significantly, these poetic notes present a view of reading and textuality that is revisionary

and generative; it is presented as ‘undone business’ with the persona adding and amending ostensibly in the process of writing almost as if to augment within the reader’s mind that this kind of annotative self-activity is what constitutes the primary action of the *polis*. If a reader was not clear about the participatory methodology being advocated upon experiencing Olson’s primary engagement with Gloucester, then, these supplementary gestures ought to crystalize the poet’s intention.

An additional aspect of these examples that ought to be mentioned here, even if just in passing, is what they suggest about the value of the note within Olson’s work. By labelling a poem as a note, Olson is disrupting the long established idea of a note as somehow secondary to the text that it is attached to and instead he elevates it artistically and typographically. As another example of this take section titled ‘In the interleaved Almanacks for 1646 and 1647 of Danforth’ (227). Here, Olson lists various ingredients, mostly apples and other fruits, and marks whether they have been gathered or picked. At the bottom of the page, Olson indicates that the list was transcribed from a footnote in *Winthrop’s Journal*. That a footnote itself could be transformed into poetry in this way or that a poem could be labelled with all sincerity a note is perhaps one of the artistic high-points of this dissertation.

Despite being underrepresented in Olson studies, or perhaps because of it, the very beginning of *Maximus* helps to tease out and establish the ideas explored above. Setting the tone for the entire text, the opening presents rather clearly the central contention of this chapter that, like Bush, but unlike Jones and Briet, Olson is not concerned with demarcating the cultural value of texts, but rather using the note to articulate a method of participation for the reader’s use beyond the parameters of Gloucester. *Maximus* begins with these lines:

Off-shore, by islands hidden in the blood

Jewels & miracles, I, Maximus

A metal hot from boiling water, tell you

What is a lance, who obeys the figures of

The present dance (5).

There is evoked here a secret that is ‘hidden in the blood / Jewels & miracles’. The first stanza establishes the speaker as Maximus who vows to ‘tell you / what is a lance / who obeys the figures of the present dance’. This line establishes a mode of address in which the poet instructs the reader and establishes from the outset that there are certain rules or presupposition governing one’s reading of the poem, ‘the present dance’. The act of telling here very much typifies these opening lines: the reader is expecting to be told something. The following lines reinforce this sentiment. The second stanza continues along this line when the reader is told that ‘the thing you’re after / may lie around the bend’ (5). The poem continues to play with the idea of hunting and finding until arriving at these lines: ‘But that what matters, that which insists, that which will last, / that! O my people, where shall you find it, how, where, where shall you listen / when all is become billboards, when, all, even silence is spray-gunned?’ (17). With this, the poem establishes the necessity of articulating a method for how one might handle the influx of material that characterises the twentieth century. What the poem begins to work through is a methodology for locating, against the white noise of the billboard, ‘that which insists’. The question that is being asked is how does one come to know what is significant ‘when even sound itself is neoned in’ (*Maximus* 6).

As already outlined, for Jones and Briet the response to this question is a coercive one, where they will ‘instruct, enlighten and culturally assist’ (Briet 43) the reader so that they might come to acquiesce to Jones and Briet’s vision of what one ought to be attentive towards. However, for Olson, and Bush, the response must be to empower the reader with the responsibility to make such a decision and so both Olson and Jones are responding to the same influx of printed materials, but with very different pedagogical and cultural intentions. Using the image of the bird throughout these early pages, much like the bird in ‘The

Kingfishers' left hunting amongst stones, Olson presents his verse as a series of images that he has picked up and built into a nest. *Maximus*, the imagery seems to suggest, is a nest of images and archival materials lovingly built from the twigs and pebbles and leaves of Gloucester. However, it is not just Olson who needs to collect these jewels, but the reader too must collect his own. In this light, the final lines of this section reads much like a challenge to the reader to compete with Olson.

The poem is here articulating the difficult but necessary requirement to participate and the struggle to participate. Letter 3 opens by again evoking this same sense of overload when Olson writes: 'Let those who use words cheap, who use us cheap / take themselves out of the way / Let them not talk of what is good for the city' (13). The use of 'cheap' here is especially interesting. Broadly speaking, the word has two related meanings. First, and most obviously, cheap refers to a monetary transaction in which one party receives something for very little. This leads to a wider and more figurative usage of the word that the *OED* defines as 'that [which] costs little (trouble, etc), easily obtained; plentiful, abundant; or small value, "cheap"' Thus, when Olson speaks about 'those who use words cheap' he is probing a transaction between a reader and poet and also the nature of that transaction: where words are given freely and taken freely and not laboured over. The passage in Letter 3 attempts to articulate the nature of that contract and what one must do to uphold it. There is a price to pay to enter the *polis* and that price is predicated on a transaction between reader and poet where words are not given cheaply, but are fought and laboured over and where words have a cost attached to them. Olson is building an economy around labour and effort. He asks: What must one do to create a *polis*? What is required of the reader? What is the nature of the transaction between reader and poet? These are the same concerns raised by the vocabulary of 'Projective Verse': Olson does not give his words cheaply and the reader must not expect to get anything from them cheaply either. The currency of *Maximus* and the *polis* that it seeks

to articulate is participation and labour and engagement and this is what Olson has concentrated through the landscape of Gloucester and this is a landscape that the reader is invited both to traverse over and through. The further point, and for the purposes of this dissertation the most germane, is that these debates are focused through the prism of the note.

Olson is seeking to outline, without doing so explicitly for that would undermine the very premise of his argument, the act of participation whilst also encouraging the reader not to follow his lead. Thus, the act of participation is first of all located and substantiated (seen in the use of ‘get’ and related gestures) then there is provided a working example of that model being applied (Olson’s own archival activates that comprise much of *Maximus*), but he then opens up the potential of this method being applied elsewhere once the reader has appreciated and grappled with Olson’s own application of it. This describes a far more nuanced account of Olson’s relationship to archival scholarship than the rather two-dimensional analysis where ‘get’ simply and only means ‘get’. Take, for example, these lines again from the early section of *Maximus*:

Eyes,

& polis,

Fishermen

And poets

Or in every human head I’ve known is

Busy

Both:

The attention, and the care

However much each of us

Chooses our own

Kin and

### Concentration (32)

Olson is encouraging here the necessity of effort and participation, but he is also making it clear that each of us must choose what we apply that methodology to: we choose our own ‘kin and concentration’ and not let, as with Jones, the poet decide for us. As a final move in this argument, I will now turn to Butterick’s *A Guide to the Maximus Poem of Charles Olson*, ultimately contending that within its pages one finds a case study for what it might mean to fulfil Olson’s methodological impulses, both in terms of the need for participation and the need to build one’s own Gloucester.

### **A Case Study in ‘istorin: George Butterick’s *A Guide to the Maximus Poems of Charles Olson***

It would be difficult for anyone familiar with Olson studies to question the importance of the contributions to that field made by George Butterick. Butterick edited the first and only collected edition of Olson’s *The Maximus Poems* (1983), bringing together Volume One (1960), Volume Two (1968), and Volume Three (1975). He also edited the collected non-*Maximus* poems (1983) and the first eight volumes of the complete correspondence between Olson and Robert Creeley. In addition to this, Butterick was, before his death in 1988 at the age of forty-five, the curator of Olson’s archives at the University of Connecticut. It is for these reasons that Alan Golding, in a 1985 review of the collected *Maximus*, said of Butterick that he ‘has almost single-handedly been responsible for giving Olson’s canon shape and making it available’ (213). Whilst Butterick’s editorial contribution to Olson studies is celebrated, even winning him an American Book Award for *Maximus*, his most ambitious project, the *Guide*, has not fared so well. In his introduction to *A Guide* Butterick describes his decision to embark on such a project in terms similar to Empson’s defence of the note:

‘The burden may be just as great upon the reader. The major difficulty, and it can be discouraging, is the large amount of reference needed to populate a poem that seeks to occupy and extend a world’ (ix). Thus, Butterick set out to ‘provide the scholarship useful for reading these poems which are as complex and allusive as Pound’s *Cantos*’ (ix). However, Butterick is quick to add that his aim is not to close down interpretation, but rather ‘to allow the reader to participate actively in the poems, find his or her own meaning, exercise one’s own judgement along the lines of Olson’s own principle of *istorin*, “to find out for oneself”. (ix). It is with this final remark that Butterick’s detractors have taken issue.

In a 1978 review of Butterick’s *Guide* Gavin Selerie contemplates what Olson might have thought had he lived long enough to see its publication: ‘Charles Olson would have been horrified to find any student of his own verse wading through a critical work which purported to reduce (or expand) the substance of a poem to any easily digested logical scheme’ (582). In a similar manoeuvre to the one Yeats performs in this dissertation’s epigraph, Selerie continues by appealing to the entrenched opposition between poetry and annotation: ‘Most readers of poets have committed the sin of concentrating on the commentary to a poem rather than on the text itself’ (582). This is a damning account of the *Guide*: reading it, Selerie suggests, would be a ‘sin’ and, if caught, would ‘horrify’ Olson. Z.J. Quereshi continues down a similar path: ‘As most readers know, notes of the kind presented [in Butterick’s *Guide*] [...] can rarely, of themselves, construct a poem’ (246 – 247). For Quereshi, the best Butterick could hope for is for his work to sit on a dusty library shelf to be used only to ‘look up what is obscure’ (247). What appears to irk Selerie and Quereshi is not the quality of Butterick’s scholarship, but rather that such a project should exist in the first place. Thus, whilst Selerie is happy to concede that Butterick ‘displays [...] thoroughness [...] in assembling this vast range of material’ (583) he also maintains that ‘the force of *The Maximus Poems* derives particularly from the openness of direction’ (583). The



*Guide* may well acclimatise a reader to the ‘seeming insulation’ (583) of Olson’s verse but something of the poem would surely be lost in reading it alongside Butterick. This is a typical Catch-22 situation: on the one hand Selerie and Quereshi recognise the need for such a guide, but on the other they find its completion distasteful.

Almost forty years on and critical opinion of Butterick’s *Guide* has not changed. In his 2015 essay ‘Futtocks’ Anthony Mellors characterises the relationship between the *Guide* and *Maximus* in a manner similar to Selerie and Quereshi:

Armed with Butterick’s *Guide*, the adept reader of *The Maximus Poems* is able to pull together sheets of thought and reference that would otherwise remain unspliced in Olson’s vast three-masted vessel. Like all figurative vessels in fragments, *Maximus* suggests coherence while staying determinedly in pieces. Like *The Cantos*, it seems virtually unreadable without commentary, just as the incomplete relics of Greek civilisation needed Pausanias’s *Guide*. And yet the experience of reading poetry freighted with scholarly ballast seems to many readers dishonest, distracting, and somehow besides the point, especially in the case of *Maximus*, which, following Olson’s Herodotean notion of ‘*istorin* begs the question *Is it really finding out for oneself?*’ (201).

Quereshi concludes his review by asking this same question: ‘Does [Butterick’s *Guide*] really help the reader to dig his own ground, to find out for himself?’ (247). The complaint is clear enough. Olson’s poetry, as we have already seen, promotes a strategy of reader participation. In reading Olson’s poetry one is expected to follow the advice given to Ed Dorn in *A Bibliography on America* where Olson decides not to ‘list books’ so that instead ‘you will have to find em yrself. And by wading through unconscionable stuff’ (73). The injunction to find out for oneself is for critics such as Mellors a literal one: it is the reader’s responsibility to discover and become familiar with the materials of *Maximus*. Butterick’s *Guide*, so the

argument goes, precludes such an engagement. What the reader is expected to do, Butterick does for him.

Yet, whereas these critics focus on the bibliographic function of the *Guide*, I am attentive to the possibility that the text's alternative contribution is in the substantiating of a formal strategy of Olsonian participation. In this 4000 annotations that constitute the *Guide* and the decade's worth of exhaustive work they represent, Butterick has created for Olson's reader an embodied representation and template of precisely what is required to add to the 'undone business' of *The Maximus Poems*. Butterick's notes, then, are a reification of the compulsion, required by Olson's poetry and demanded by the poet himself, to find out for oneself. In other words, the note as used by Butterick is the method by and through which one is able to participate in the materials of *Maximus*: if participation is central then the act of annotation is the method of that participation. Thus, when Butterick pre-emptively defends his guide against the likes of Mellors by claiming it will 'allow the reader to participate actively in the poems' (ix) in order to encourage 'continuing work on them' (ix) one wonders whether it was the content of his *Guide* or its annotative method that Butterick had in mind. As such, the *Guide* is not 'beside the point', as Mellors claims, but entirely the point. Rather than undermining Olson's project Butterick is surely its very apotheosis and in composing the *Guide* he creates a template for others to follow and he demonstrates the efficacy of annotation as it pertains to Olson's insistence on *'istorin*. What is more, Olson directly cultivated precisely this kind of response to his work by actively recruiting Butterick to contribute to the 'undone business' of his verse. Throughout their time working together, Olson would write hundreds of letters to Butterick asking him to supply information about various historical questions pertaining to Olson's poetry, which would often require Butterick to complete archival research on his behalf. In fact, when people asked questions of Olson, either about *The Maximus Poems* or perhaps the history of Gloucester, he would very often

direct their query to Butterick, as in a letter to James Laughlin in 1969 in which Olson praised Butterick's ability to 'instantaneously supply you faster than I can all you will need' (*Selected Letters* 424). This is not incidental. Olson is actively recruiting Butterick and has conceived of his poetry in such a way as to make it necessary for others to become the annotator.

Whilst the argument about Butterick's text thus far does address the ways in which the *Guide* satisfies the need for self-activity as crystalized through the figure of the note, it does not as yet speak to the necessary value of finding one's own 'kin and concentration' beyond the parameters of Gloucester set by the writer. On the surface, at least, Butterick's labour is very firmly fixed towards Olson's 'front yard' with Butterick ostensibly following it also 'blindly, stupidly'. Yet, things might not be quite as they seem. Another common complaint levelled against Butterick is one made most forcefully by Marjorie Perloff in her 1981 review of Butterick's *Guide*. She mounts an attack against Butterick arguing that his frequent use of prefixes such as 'In a conversation with the author ...' or 'I recall ...' typify a text not based on the poetry itself, but rather on Butterick's personal relationship with the poet. Perloff argues: 'Such annotations occur frequently page after page of the *Guide*. Dr. Butterick probably knows more than anyone else alive or dead about Olson's opinions and preoccupations, his daily mental processes, what books to read, and whom he spoke to' (41). She continues by praising the *Guide* as an 'inventory of Charles Olson's mind at the time of writing a given text' (42) but ultimately concludes that the guide 'fails to discriminate the essential from the merely pedantic' (43). I wish to conclude this chapter by arguing that far from not perceiving what is essential about Olson, Butterick's *Guide* is a testament to the practices that Olson so carefully encodes into his verse. What Butterick does is to employ the annotative strategy encoded by Olson in *Maximus* in order to participate in the materials he has at hand and that are important to him: the letters, diaries, and manuscripts of Charles Olson. Olson the man becomes Butterick's Gloucester. To read the *Guide* in this manner one

is reminded of Nabokov's *Pale Fire*: everywhere the reader of Butterick's *Guide* looks there appears Butterick himself. However, unlike Perloff, I do not see this in a negative light, but rather as the natural consequence of Olson's own annotative strategy where one is compelled to dig and exhaust the material that is closest and most important to him.

As a specific example of how this interaction between Butterick and Olson might play out take Butterick's notes to Letter 6 of *Maximus*. Butterick begins by citing a journal entry written by Olson that is almost two pages long in order to explain the line 'Moulton cried up that day' (43). Moulton refers, so Butterick tells us, to Cecil Moulton who was the 'captain of the schooner Doris M Hawes on which Olson sailed in the summer of 1936. The cited journal article describes Olson's summer with Moulton' (44). Butterick then goes on to gloss the line 'that Englishman, / and mountain-climber' by referencing a conversation that occurred between Butterick and Olson: 'In conversation, July 1968, Olson only remembered him as one of two Englishmen met while travelling west in the summer of 1938: one a man named Smith, a musician; and this one, an historian from Cambridge, whose name the poet had since forgotten' (45). It is telling that in a scholarly guide Butterick has used as a reference a conversation that took place a decade before *Guide* was published that was presumably not immediately recorded by either party in order to gloss the name of a historian that Olson forgot in the first place. The section continues in much the same vein. Butterick cites more of Olson's journal, letters between him and Pound, and yet more conversation between the poet and annotator. One begins to get a clear sense that what is most important for Butterick is not the archival documents at Gloucester or even *Maximus* itself, but rather the poet behind them. Butterick employs the methodology inherited by Olson on what matters most to him: Olson. This is the 'kin' that Butterick chooses and in the shape of his *Guide*, all 800 pages of it, there is a clear demonstration that Butterick has laboured and struggled and forged out of Charles Olson his own Gloucester.

Whilst I come to a very different conclusion to Perloff, she is certainly correct as to the frequency of Butterick's personal musings: examples such as the above are almost too many to count. Writing about the line 'she said it was an arabesque' in 'Letter #41 [broken off]', for instance, Butterick describes how the 'she' refers to 'Mrs Mildred (Shute) Smith, a librarian at the Sawyer Library in Gloucester, whose mother owned a guest house at 28 Middle Street where Olson arranged for his own mother to stay in the winter of 1940' (237). However, Butterick did not discover this through a letter or even from Olson, as one might expect, but from the mouth of Mrs Smith herself: 'According to Mrs Smith in an interview, June 1971, it was Olson himself, with scarf wrapped around head and hat, who would cry out "Arabesque!" and leap over the porch railing of the house, long legs flying, into the snow' (237). There can be no greater testament to the principle of *'istorin* than the act of travelling to Gloucester to interview someone on the basis of one line in a poem and further there can be no clearer indication that the topic that Butterick has chosen to 'exhaust' is Olson himself. Seen in this way, Butterick's guide is an intimate response to Olson's call for participation: it is a creative extension of Olson's *Maximus* and a working through of what it means to labour in service of one's chosen materials.

Throughout the course of this chapter, I have traced the phylogenetic lines belonging to Eliot and Moore as registered in the competing literary and cultural projects of David Jones and Charles Olson. I have hoped to demonstrate that whilst Jones relies on the negation of self-activity in favour of a highly coercive and authoritarian annotative style, Olson instead seeks to empower the reader so that he might not only participate fully in the materials of his text, but also apply this inherited methodology beyond it. Thus, the fundamental difference between the two is the extent to which they believe the poet has a pedagogical responsibility to direct the reader's attention and monopolize his labour. In this, the two poets come to represent two competing routes out of literary modernism as they continue to negotiate, in

very different ways, the same perceived crisis of reading that writers such as Eliot, Moore and Pound confronted. The next and final chapter will argue that Vladimir Nabokov's *Pale Fire*, as with *The Maximus Poems*, seeks to disrupt and dismantle a politics predicated coercion and authoritarianism. In contrast, I will suggest how David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest* revitalizes certain modernist strategies and reintroduces the notion that self-directed participation is not always to be encouraged.

### III

## Writing in the Age of Hypertext and the Web: Vladimir Nabokov, David

### Foster Wallace and the Post-Modernist Note

Following on from David Jones and Charles Olson and moving through to the end of the twentieth century, this chapter will explore the convergences and divergences of Nabokov's *Pale Fire* and Wallace's *Infinite Jest*. Following Olson's *The Maximus Poems*, one can read *Pale Fire* as performing a very similar project of anti-coercion and anti-authoritarianism. In a manner reminiscent of Jones's notational strategies, Nabokov simulates a textual and interpretative experience ostensibly predisposed to a unilinear reading, as the reader finds himself subjected to Kinbote's frequent and domineering commands to 'see page X' or 'go to note Y'. Thus, the novel appears to encourage the reader to expend effort in order to pursue certain predetermined paths and, since its first publication, this is precisely what so many readers have done. Repeatedly readers have approached the novel as a riddle to be solved; Kinbote's instructions and other carefully planted clues, if followed and unpicked, will lead to the discovery of some hidden truth. However, as will soon become clear, Nabokov manipulates his novel's annotative network in such a way as to make any such quest a fruitless one as its paths lead to dead ends and trap doors. By ironising Jones's brand of citational coercion and opening it up to ridicule, Nabokov provides his reader with an opportunity to reassess and reject what the novel ostensibly compels, with this political gesture aligning him to Olson.

Thus, like Olson, Nabokov promotes through his work and its annotative structure the necessity of self-activity, but through the parodic simulation of precisely its opposite: it

celebrates self-activity by ostensibly celebrating the negation of self-activity. By inducing the reader into spending time and effort solving an apparent riddle and then making it increasingly evident that such an endeavour is supremely ironic, Nabokov cultivates within his reader an ability to question authority, remain sceptical and ultimately reject the coercive strategies with which he is confronted. As such, Nabokov disrupts any sense that the novel bends towards a totalizing centre of meaning and instead reveals the site of meaning to be decentred and multilinear. The joy of reading *Pale Fire* and its gift to the reader is the opportunity to oppose what one is being instructed to do. In this way, the novel can be read as an allegory for how to handle information, especially when it has the potential to be manipulated, and how to mitigate and keep in-check the entrenchment of centralised power in post-war society.

Writing thirty years after *Pale Fire* and heralding the end of the postmodernism that Nabokov's novel is associated with, Wallace sets his project explicitly against that of Nabokov. Describing him as his 'real enemy, a patriarch for my patricide' (147), Wallace rallies against the appropriation of once innovative postmodern literary techniques, specifically irony, into mass commercial media, specifically television. For reasons that will be made clear, the appropriation of this irony has cultivated, Wallace argues, 'manic ennui' (147) and endemic passivity and his aim, not entirely dissimilar to Nabokov, is the reinvigoration of the necessity of self-activity and participation. This said, the central difference between the two that will be explored throughout this chapter is that Wallace aims to do this without recourse to irony. Despite having similar pedagogical outlooks, Wallace sees Nabokov as utterly and inescapably entwined with irony, so much so that his attempt to subvert coercion is filtered through parodic self-awareness. Wallace, however, hopes to reach a point *beyond* this and as such to escape the ironic structure that underpins the entirety of a novel such as *Pale Fire*. Yet, even here, the two are closer than Wallace would want to



concede. As I will demonstrate, in order to reinvigorate the need for participation within his reader, Wallace uses the main body of his text to inculcate passivity by creating a highly seductive prose that one is encouraged to continue to read at all costs and, like the television he denigrates, keep tuned in. The hundreds of notes attached to *Infinite Jest* then become an antidote to this as they reveal essential information that requires the reader to abandon and reject the allure of the prose, with Wallace hoping to nurture this newfound impulse for use beyond the novel. Whilst the two novels therefore share a very similar foundational strategy, which hinges on simulating that which they hope to undermine so that the reader might reject it, the point for Wallace is that his notes represent a release from this ironic framework, whilst for Nabokov they remain enmeshed within it.

In his promotion of participation, Wallace has significant affinities with predecessors such as Moore and Olson. However, as will be explored, Wallace does also, unlike Nabokov, reintroduce and argue for a need for cultural and informational hierarchy, which is at odds with Moore and Olson, but also the multilinear and decentered *Pale Fire*. If Nabokov's ultimate aim, as I argue, is to dismantle societal and cultural privileging of totalizing narratives by disrupting the ability to supplant onto his text an ultimate meaning, then Wallace, in contrast, does maintain the need for some discriminating and centralizing impulse. In this sense, a discussion of *Infinite Jest* functions as an ideal concluding chapter to this dissertation. Wallace simultaneously promotes the kind of self-activity that typifies the work of Moore and Olson whilst also, in his attack on mass media, tacitly propagating Eliot and Jones's premise that some forms of information are more valuable than others, as such bringing together the two phylogenetic lines that I have been tracing.

**Annotative Installation III: The Post-Modernist Projects of Ted Nelson and Tim Berners-Lee**

The decision to align *Pale Fire* to the work of computer theorist Ted Nelson is by no means an arbitrary one. Unlike with Otlet and Eliot, or Briet and Jones, I am by no means the first person to connect Nelson and Nabokov. Indeed, that recognition goes to Nelson himself. In his 1980 *Literary Machines*, Nelson describes *Pale Fire* as a ‘brilliant poetic hypertext’ (103) and recalls that he had wanted to use the text as part of the first public demonstration of his hypertext system at the Joint Computer Conference in 1969 only for IBM to reject the proposal. Before exploring *Pale Fire* directly I want to press upon this comment and consider what exactly attracted Nelson to Nabokov’s novel and explore the obvious creative affinity he felt for it, the hope being to use this to illuminate my analysis of *Pale Fire*. As with Bush’s memex machine, which Nelson cited as a direct influence on his work, hypertext was borne out of an increasing anxiety about the quantity of available information and the seeming inability for modern information retrieval and storage systems to handle this influx. In a short pamphlet published in the year before *Pale Fire*, Nelson described how ‘we are at war with the consumption of text, not because consuming text is a bad thing, but because there is too much of it about and we don’t know what to do with it’. Yet, even on this point Nelson would often betray a far more laissez-faire attitude to the apparent overload than any of his predecessors. In his 1974 *Dream Machines*, for instance, he would instruct his readers to ‘concentrate on magazines, not books’ as ‘magazines have far more insights per inch of text, and can be read much faster’ (*Information Vacuum* 16). Certainly, there is not the same regard, here, for evaluation and selection that would characterise Briet and even, at times, Otlet.

As with Bush, then, it is clear that Nelson did not see himself as an arbitrator of textual value, but rather as an architect for how it might be handled better. Unlike Briet, his response to the advent of mass print was not one of regulation, but restructuring. Galvanized

by Bush's notion that the memex ought to mimic the 'associative trails' of the brain, Nelson was to admonish the kind of thinking that I will demonstrate critics have applied to *Pale Fire*. In the same pamphlet cited above, for example, he ridicules those who view reading as akin to a 'man in a maze doggedly trudging one path to the center, thinking this is the only option that exists – to step off is to begin again without progress' (*Information Vacuum* 8). Just as Nelson was to spend his career resisting this view of textuality so too would *Pale Fire*, despite critical claims to the contrary. In addition to helping to explain the rationale behind his invention of hypertext with its decentered, segmented and linked textual experience, Nelson's denigration of the unilinear and teleological introduces a key similarity between his work and *Pale Fire*. From the very start, Nelson conceived of hypertext as having not only a practical purpose, but also a pedagogical and political one.

For example, in his groundbreaking paper titled 'Complex Information Processing: A File Structure for the Complex, the Changing, and the Intermediate' and delivered in 1965 at the annual Association for Computing Machinery National Conference, Nelson described hypertext as an 'adjunct to creativity' (84) that 'could have great potential for education, increasing the student's range of choice, and his freedom' (96). For Nelson, the capacity for hypertext to enable 'intricate and idiosyncratic arrangements, total modifiability and undecided alternatives' (85) is, as with *Pale Fire*, bound up with a desire to create a way of handling information that is user-orientated and non-hierarchical. Again in 'Complex Information Processing', Nelson makes it clear that 'the system should hold any shape imposed upon it' (88) and elsewhere that it must 'adapt readily to the user's own style of handling things' (89). This could not be conceptually and politically further away from Briet's injunction to read documents on behalf of another. In an idea strikingly similar to that of self-activity, Nelson hopes to effect this user-defined procedure through 'self-documentation' (92), which describes the capacity for a reader to mark-up text with various

notes and to create links between those notes and the nodes to which they are attached. As Nelson proudly declares, the revolution of hypertext is that it ‘will have no trouble accepting a commentary on a commentary on a sub-draft of an outline for a variant list of source materials’ (93), with all of these being entirely directed by the user.

As I will demonstrate is of equal concern to Nabokov, what motivates Nelson is the way in which this reconfigures the role of the reader. By conferring ultimate authority onto the user and providing a way in which to organize textual material that is, as Nelson styles, ‘multifarious’ (84) and ‘polymorphic’ (84), Nelson disrupts any sense that meaning operates as a totality or that information and its traversal can be centralized. As Nelson states in ‘Complex Information Processing’, in the clearest possible refutation of Briet, ‘it is the man’s job to draw connections, not the machine’s. The machine is not a judge’ (93). As with Olson’s notion of *‘istorin*, this transforms hypertext into a political gesture wherein we become our own knowledge workers: through the figure of the note and ‘self-documentation’, the hypertext user, like the reader of *Pale Fire* and *The Maximus Poems*, is accorded an opportunity to forge his own pathway through a textual landscape of his own making. It is the user and not the author who determines how one moves through the system. Seeing *Pale Fire* along these lines, as I do, forces a reassessment of current critical trends in Nabokov studies.

In all of this, Nelson is providing an embodied corollary to certain abstract philosophical and critical trends of the 1960s, with which *Pale Fire* has also been associated. In its ability to provide a materialistic and lived expression of a multilinear, pluralistic and decentered textual network, which further has the potential to democratize access to information and empower its users, hypertext can be understood as a manifestation of the thinking of writers such as Jacques Derrida and Roland Barthes. It is no coincidence that one finds across both Nelson and Derrida’s respective writings the same words being used to

describe textuality, such as, link (*liasons*), network (*reseau*), and web (*toile*). Indeed, one might also point, here, to Nabokov's description of the 'link-and-bobolink' and the 'web of sense' (53) in *Pale Fire*. As George Landow explains, what unites figures such as Derrida and Nelson, and I would argue Nabokov also, is the agreement that 'we must abandon conceptual systems founded on ideas of centre, margin, hierarchy, and linearity and replace them by ones of multilinearity, nodes, links, and networks' (1). To be clear, then, hypertext and its response to the advent of mass print indexes a paradigmatic shift now labelled postmodernism, with this being registered by *Pale Fire* also, thus helping to explain what I will demonstrate are the complementary projects of Nelson and Nabokov.

In *Signature*, Derrida comments that a constituent characteristic of all language is the 'possibility of disengagement and citational graft, which belongs to the structure of every mark, spoken and written' (185). Derrida's use of the image of the citation helps to convey his view that all language has the capacity to be taken out of context; which is to say, all language exists in a perpetual state of decenteredness. Or, to put it another way, any utterance exists as another utterance's notation, since, as Derrida observes, 'to write means to graft' (*Dissemination* 355). This characteristic of all language is precisely what hypertext is able to utilize by building a system of linked nodes, where each segment is just such a 'citational graft'. On any one page, the user is met with multiple links all of which are connected to different nodes that can be traversed in any order with the user able to add to the extant network by creating notes. As such, hypertext recalibrates the very notion of centre and margin as the user effectively creates and recreates the system's focal point simply by the act of navigating the network. The consequence of this is that the reader becomes the organizing principle of the text, since, as Landow explains, 'all hypertext systems permit the individual reader to choose his or her own centre of investigation and experience' (58). Returning to Olson, this is the promise implicit in reading *The Maximus Poems* and its provocation to

‘pick a private way’ and, as I will argue, it is the experience of reading *Pale Fire* as one rejects what the novel compels one to do by no longer hunting for clues and solving apparent riddles. Further, this promotion of non-hierarchy is embodied by hypertext and theorized by Derrida and it engenders a political gesture overlooked by those Nabokov critics so dedicated, to cite Nelson, to ‘doggedly trudging one path to the center, thinking this is the only option that exists’. As with Olson and Nabokov, this political gesture is not ancillary to the project of hypertext, but, rather, central to it. For example, after asking his reader to ‘imagine a new libertarian literature with alternative explanations so that anyone can choose the pathway that best suits him’ (*Dream Machines* 4), Nelson makes his ultimate aim clear: ‘Tomorrow’s hypertext networks have immense political ramifications [...] rolled into such designs is the future of humanity [...] There are many struggles to come and many vested interests may turn out to be opposed to freedom’ (4).

Seen by many as the technological culmination of hypertext and the ‘future of humanity’ that Nelson envisaged, Tim Berners-Lee’s World Wide Web would go live for the first time August 1991, five years before the publication of *Infinite Jest*. Designed primarily as a way to file share and transmit scientific data, Berners-Lee, like Nelson and Bush, saw his invention as helping to navigate a by now ever expanding inundation of information: ‘Suppose all the information stored on computers everywhere were linked. All the bits of information in every computer at CERN, and on the planet, would be available to everyone. There would be a single, global information space’ (‘Long Live’). In order to achieve this ‘global information space’, Berners-Lee’s great innovation was to take hypertext and its structure of linked, segmented and easily annotated information and to provide access to this platform to users across the globe. Somewhat ironically, the World Wide Web has vastly added to the available information. Rather than simply indexing or storing extant information, it has enabled the generation of billions of web pages. One such variety of web page that I

would like to hone in on in my continued discussion of Nelson, Nabokov and Wallace is the internet encyclopedia. Now commonly associated with Wikipedia, which was founded by Jimmy Wales in 2001 and had generated 18 billion page views per month as of August 2017, this service is almost as old as the internet itself.

Sites such as Wikipedia function by users creating pages on various topics, which are then submitted to a central website and left open to searches. These pages would then include hyperlinks that lead to other pages and allow for the kind of cross-reference and exploration that both Bush and Nelson envisioned. However, in order to ensure the veracity of the submitted material, sites such as Wikipedia include some form of vetting process where users are able to edit the material. These suggested alterations are then discussed amongst the wider community with the aim being to arrive at a consensus, albeit the pages might be altered several times and are never as such 'finished'. Significantly, for my purposes, it is the way in which this often protracted discussion is formatted that holds some interest. When reviewing or editing a page, the user will essentially footnote the selected area and then write a comment explaining the proposed alteration and this is then logged on a separate page appended to the original. In this separate page, users are free to debate and exchange views and add further notes to the already created citations. Thus, as with the World Wide Web at large and as with Nelson's hypertext, internet encyclopedias such as Wikipedia aim to handle the advent of mass information through the figure of the note. In the current iteration of Wikipedia this additional section is called Talk, but in earlier releases it has been labelled Notes and the online encyclopedia Everything2 (founded in 1988) included a similar section called Annotations.

Ostensibly, this is the apotheosis of how Nelson intended hypertext to be used: it is user-orientated, participatory and non-hierarchical whilst democratizing access to information. Writing about this same inclusion of notes within Wikipedia, Christian

Vandendorpe comments that ‘its open editorial structure obliges readers to exercise a healthy skepticism about the information they find there’ (157). He continues: ‘The ability to consult the history of each article, which contains the various stages it has gone through, encourages this critical attitude’ (157). For Vandendorpe, then, the World Wide Web and especially sites such as Wikipedia fulfil the political promise of hypertext: ‘As a result of the Internet, we are moving from a mass-media culture to a participatory culture [...] Millions of citizens who could never have dreamed of having any influence in the old political and cultural order have the means to participate actively’ (155). However, the reality is perhaps slightly different. In the same way that the World Wide Web has quickly been co-opted by commercial interests, Wikipedia also does not function quite as Nelson might have anticipated and Vandendorpe suggests. In order for the Note pages to function, sites such as Wikipedia must also have a clear policy on what is defined as valuable and non-valuable information and in this sense, the additional page becomes a space in which to excise and evaluate. On Wikipedia, for example, there exists official moderators whose role is to assess the standard of entries and they have the ability to ‘control’ pages, which means certain topics can be locked until they adhere to site-wide policy, irrespective of any community consensus. Similarly, pages on the online encyclopedia Intermedia are granted a ‘Seal of Approval’ when they meet certain internal expectations and entries without this can be removed at will by moderators. Further, the site GE2 required moderators to check each entry and then ‘sign-off’ on it. In practice, then, there are clear parallels to Briet’s system of information management, which relied on mediation and evaluation, with her role adopted by centrally appointed moderators.

Thus, there is a tension evident in the application of hypertext, as evidenced by sites such as Wikipedia, and this tension can be used to frame Wallace’s movement away from *Pale Fire* in the same way that it explains the shift from hypertext as an ideal to the World Wide Web in practice. As Robert Samuels points out in his essay on what he labels



automodernism, the web is ‘quintessentially postmodern’ given ‘its nonlinear nature or the multiplicity involved in social networking’ (173). Yet, as he goes on to clarify, ‘in ways that are perhaps even subtler, the technologies modify and even run counter to some of the classic tendencies within the postmodern’ (173). It is with these counter narratives, as they exist in websites such as Wikipedia and in *Infinite Jest*, that I am interested. As I will demonstrate is the case with *Infinite Jest*, Wikipedia does promote participation as celebrated by Nelson, but it also reinstates the sense that there ought to be a hierarchy between valuable and non-valuable information and further that there ought to be some centralizing force that provides the framework through which to assess which is which. Unlike Vandendorpe, philosopher Alan Kirby has been attentive to this tension. Taking his cue from Linda Hutcheon’s proclamation that postmodernism ‘is over’ (27), Kirby, like Wallace, considers the legacy left behind by texts such as *Pale Fire* and inventions such as hypertext and the moment of postmodernity they came to characterise. In order to describe the new cultural moment that, according to Kirby, is typified by the World Wide Web and specifically platforms such as Wikipedia, he coined the term digimodernism, which, he argues, ‘has decisively displaced postmodernism to describe itself as the twenty-first century’s new cultural paradigm’ (273).

What defines Kirby’s digimodernism, known under other guises and more generically as postpostmodernism, is the fetishization of participation at the level of a ‘physical’ and ‘tangible’ intervention, which then ‘shapes narrative development’ in a manner not permissible in print literature (276). As Kirby explains, ‘no matter how inventively you interpret *Gravity’s Rainbow* you don’t materially bring it into existence and in this Pynchon’s postmodern exemplar exactly resembles *Pride and Prejudice*’. In other words, as Kirby clarifies, ‘the physical properties of the text remained solidified and inviolate’. What Kirby has in mind, then, are cultural products such as *Big Brother* or *Strictly Come Dancing* where viewers physically intervene into the text in a non-reproducible manner that materially alters

its outcome, such as by voting contestants out of the show or sending text messages to be read by presenters. Whilst this dissertation and its analysis of the note and the expenditure of labour has demonstrated the existence of a continuum of twentieth century texts that do encourage participation beyond the merely imaginative, as such problematizing the temporal parameters that Kirby ascribes to an apparently specifically twenty-first century phenomenon and his insistence that it cannot exist within print literature, the overarching observation is a valuable one. For Kirby, the digimodern ‘cultural phenomenon *par excellence* is the internet [...] It gives the undeniable sense (or illusion) of the individual controlling, managing, running, making up his / her involvement with the cultural product’ (54). The example that Kirby uses to demonstrate this is precisely Wikipedia and to be exact its notational structure of user exchange and debate. However, Kirby sees this intensive participation as facile populism that only provides the pretense of genuine intellectual engagement, which, in turn, complicates and divides him from the postmodern projects of Nelson and Nabokov. In Kirby’s words, ‘the digimodern era, at least so far, is a cultural desert’ (274).

Thus, Kirby, and as I will argue Wallace, expose the limits of the kind of participation promoted by Nelson and this is a limitation evident in Wikipedia’s ostensibly contradictory impulses. As I will show, *Infinite Jest* uses the figure of the note to highlight what Wallace takes to be the inadequacy of participation that aims to be entirely non-hierarchical without a path for the reader to follow, which is precisely what is promoted by the multilinear and user-orientated postmodernity of hypertext and *Pale Fire*. In this, *Infinite Jest* prefigures the reality that Wikipedia and similar ventures have had to confront, that participation without direction is sometimes untenable and in this he reinvigorates certain strands of modernist thinking. Further, by problematizing the act and saturation of participation he anticipates Kirby’s digimodernism, which might help to illuminate the paradigmatic transition evident between *Pale Fire* and *Infinite Jest*. Ultimately, what this chapter comes to terms with is the

shift from postmodernism to digimodernism and how this can be framed by the responses to the continued influx of information apparent in Nelson's hypertext and platforms such as Wikipedia. I will explore how we might find in *Pale Fire* and *Infinite Jest* the literary expression of this shift, with each complementary iteration being illuminated and framed by the figure of the note.

### **'The Pleasant Experience of the Roundabout Route': *Pale Fire* and Its Lumpers**

'It is not improbable that had there been no revolution in Russia', Vladimir Nabokov reflected in a 1966 interview with Herbert Gold, 'I would have devoted myself entirely to lepidopterology and never written any novels at all' (*Strong Opinions* 100). That Nabokov spent a large portion of his life studying butterflies has become the kind of biographical snippet that seems to follow certain writers around just as the fact that T.S. Eliot worked for Lloyd's Bank or that William Carlos Williams worked as a GP. Its persistence, though, is for good reason. By Nabokov's own admission, he dedicated more time to lepidopterology than he did to either writing or teaching (*Strong Opinions* 100). These efforts resulted in several publications in leading scientific journals and perhaps culminated in the noted entomologist Francis Hemming naming the family Lycaenidae Nabokovia after him. In one such published paper, titled 'On Some Inaccuracies in Klots' Field Guide' (1952), Nabokov describes his approach to taxonomic analysis in a manner that should by now be very familiar: 'It should attempt to express structural affinities and divergences, suggest certain phylogenetic lines, relate local developments to global ones – and help lumpers to sort out properly the ingredients of their lumps' (*Strong Opinions* 321). The use of 'lumpers' here refers to a tendency in taxonomy to organise large and varied groups around broad similarities whilst disregarding what are perceived to be negligible differences. The lumper

promotes a gestalt position: he categorises based on one or two signature similarities, but is not attentive to the nuances and frictions that might exist across all other characteristics. Given this compulsion to categorise along the widest possible parameters the resulting taxonomy can often comprise quite disparate subjects whose membership is based on attributes that might be only nominally apparent. By promising to ‘help lumpers to sort out properly the ingredients of their lumps’ Nabokov articulates the necessity of dismantling and reassessing the methodological assumptions that lead to the categorisation in the first instance. One is required, quoting Nabokov’s advice to his students at Cornell, ‘to notice and fondle details’ (qtd. in Boyd *American Years* 174) and especially to be attentive to those details that might complicate a larger similarity. There is in Nabokov’s observation a warning applicable to all areas of study and not only lepidopterology: one ought always to be alert to the possibility that a characteristic might be attributed to something based not on the evidence of what it is, but rather on one’s preconceived notion of what it should be.

Throughout the first portion of this chapter, the concept of lumping will be called upon in order to work through and recalibrate current understanding of Nabokov’s annotative strategies in what is perhaps his most discussed and celebrated novel, *Pale Fire* (1962). As already indicated, I will demonstrate that critics have persistently and mistakenly recognised in Nabokov’s notes a Jonesian compulsion for the reader to expend effort by following ostensibly predetermined textual paths. When one is presented with a note, the structural imperative is to follow its trail and to pursue the citational path that has been laid before you. To varying degrees, all of the writers of this dissertation rely on this implied annotative contract between reader and text. The note is chosen as the structural device best suited to mobilizing a desired reaction: it is a mechanism through which to articulate the pedagogical necessity of engaging with certain specified texts. At a first glance, Nabokov’s text is no different. Comprised of a total of 129 separate notes linked to various lines in a 999-line

poem titled 'Pale Fire' and bookended by a foreword and an index the text constantly instructs the reader to 'see line X' or 'read line Y' with the narrator often dramatically reinforcing just how important this is: 'see, see now, my note to lines 993 – 995' (139) or 'see Foreword, see Foreword, at once' (204). One specific example of this deictic methodology can be found in the novel's fictional Foreword. In a fit of urgency, Kinbote insists that his reader 'see my note to line 991' (13) and should the reader capitulate to his demands then he will find himself reading a rather intimate innuendo about the relationship between Kinbote and the poet John Shade. However, one is then pushed along the trail further and instructed to go to the note for lines 47 – 48. This pattern continues for a little while longer until we are instructed to visit the note to line 62 in which it is clearly revealed that Kinbote is in fact the king of Zembla. As such, and as with Moore, the reader has been bibliographically conditioned in order to appreciate that following these annotative paths has its rewards: he has uncovered a piece of information far sooner than his counterpart who decided not to follow Kinbote's instructions.

Given this apparent acid test for the value of tracking down the notes, it is easy to see why so many hold the conviction that *Pale Fire* contains within it a puzzle or riddle to be solved and that the solution can be uncovered through a careful tracking of Nabokov's notes. One comes to feel, all too easily, like Nelson's 'man in a maze doggedly trudging one path to the center' (*Information Vacuum* 8). From the promise of a treasure hunt for the lost Zemblan crown jewels to the misquoted poets that seem to cry out for correction, critics have capitulated to these demands and this is evident in the earliest reviews of *Pale Fire* and the most recent articles. This is a critical tendency that Amy Reading describes as an 'extended intellectual sparring match' (79) where the reader attempts to solve the novel's puzzle and therefore one-up Nabokov. However, when, as Nabokov advises, one begins to investigate a little closer the details of *Pale Fire*'s fictional notation a very different picture is painted.

Like Moore, Nabokov anticipates his reader's citational conditioning and relies on the received understanding of a note's bibliographic and extranoematic function, but, unlike her, he does so only to undermine the annotative strategies that his reader so desperately tries to follow. Try as he might, for instance, the reader who seeks the location of the crown jewels finds himself reading in circles: in the index entry the reader is pointed to 'Hiding Place' (238), which in turns points him to 'potaynik' (239) and then from here to 'taynik' (243) and back to 'Crown Jewels' (238). The question, though, is why critics accept this invitation in the first place. In a novel where even the most cursory of readings reveals an increasingly parodic take on scholarly labour and the pursuit of certain prescribed paths, why is there such insistence on reading in a manner that the text seems so obviously to ironize? In fact, Nabokov hardly tried to deny the confusion caused to him by readers who attempted to supplant onto his text a schematic that resulted in solution. In an interview with Alfred Appel conducted in 1967 he mused, for example, over his readers trying to extract from his work some meaning: 'It is sometimes rather amusing to find my readers trying to elucidate in a matter-of-fact way these wild workings of my not very efficient mind' (Appel 133). Likewise, two months after the publication of *Pale Fire*, Nabokov declared: 'You can get nearer and nearer, so to speak, to reality; but you can never get near enough because reality is an infinite succession of steps, levels of perception, false bottoms, and hence unquenchable, unattainable' (*Strong Opinions* 11). With this, one perhaps begins to understand why Nelson had such admiration for *Pale Fire*. Clearly, there is a parallel between Nabokov's description of 'an infinite succession of steps' and 'false bottoms' on the one hand and Nelson's hypertextual system of links and 'undecided alternatives', on the other. In this manner, both Nabokov and Nelson appear firmly set against any notion that through the gradual and teleological application of effort one might eventually arrive at anything resembling a solution. Indeed, in *Speak, Memory*, when discussing how to solve a chess problem, Nabokov

likens this process to a 'wild goose chase' and describes the 'pleasant experience of the roundabout route' (qtd. in Boyd *Russian Years* 514). In slightly more acerbic terms, he also conceded that 'the author is perfectly indifferent to the capacity and condition of the reader's brain' (qtd. in Durantaye 307) and as such undermined any notion that a text should be conciliatory to its readers in a way that puzzles or riddles would surely require.

Why, then, have critical assessments of *Pale Fire* for so long been convinced that the reader's role is characterised by the necessity of expending labour in order to follow citational directives in the hopes of uncovering the secrets at the heart of the text? Furthermore, why does Nabokov write a novel almost entirely composed of notes in the first place? The answer cannot be, I think, simply to parody the activity of writing literary criticism. Indeed, one only needs to look to Nabokov's own scholarly career to dismiss this response out of hand. Between the years of 1949 and 1957, and as such at the height of Nabokov's literary work, he painstakingly worked on a translation of and commentary to Alexander Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*. This would involve intense archival work and often resulted in Nabokov working from 9AM until 2AM for days on end (Boyd 68). Given the dedication with which he worked on *Onegin* and the apparent joy he felt during this process, it is counter-intuitive to see *Pale Fire* merely as parody of what Kinbote calls an 'apparatus criticus' (73). There must be more at stake than mere parody and it is by pressing on the figure of the note itself and by situating *Pale Fire* alongside other literary note takers that this chapter hopes to answer these central questions.

One preliminary answer comes from reapplying Nabokov's interest in lumpers: critics have based their understanding of *Pale Fire*'s notes not on what they are, but on what one expects them to be. The first half of the twentieth century witnessed the refinement of a narrative, traced throughout this dissertation, that the act of annotation is intimately tied to an act of intellectual and physical labour. So seductive is this narrative that *Pale Fire*'s reader

finds himself labouring through the novel's annotative network, fervently leaping from node to node, trying to unravel the novel's deepest mysteries, despite the obvious parody of such an activity. At the moment Kinbote declares himself to be a 'commentator' (12) his reader approaches the novel and its annotative structure, consciously or otherwise, with this particular internalised and inherited narrative of how a text comprised of notes should behave. Repeating the same mistakes made by Kinbote, he runs the risk of becoming, to quote Shade's poem, 'a dedicated imbecile' (21). Where others have seen in *Pale Fire*'s notes an invitation to participate not dissimilar to the one issued by Eliot, I see what might best be described as an annotative simulacrum. *Pale Fire* simulates through its structure the same annotative relationship between notes, poem, and reader that is established in the likes of Eliot and Jones and because of the seductiveness of the internalised narrative, the critic enters into that simulation willingly, with Nabokov all the time beckoning him or her. Thomas Karshan neatly summaries this tension when he writes: 'The attempt to turn literature into work, paradoxically, exposes its futility and opens up the possibility for literary play. That this is a precarious and self-contradictory basis for literature is what attracted Nabokov to it' (144). In other words, *Pale Fire* holds in suspension both the impulse to work and its subsequent parody.

Brian McHale described *Pale Fire* as 'perhaps the paradigmatic limit-modernist novel' (19) by which he meant the novel vacillates between modernist and postmodern epistemic strategies. In making this claim, McHale anticipates recent work completed by Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker into what they have labelled metamodernism, which might help to frame my understanding of *Pale Fire*. As David Rudrum explains, 'metamodernism oscillates between the irony, parody and pastiche associated primarily with postmodernism, and the modernist enthusiasm for purity and totality' (306). In their 2010 essay 'Notes on Metamodernism', Vermeulen and van den



Akker add to these oppositions by further describing the oscillation as between ‘unity and plurality, totality and fragmentation, purity and ambiguity’ (316). Indeed, borrowing Eric Voeglin’s use of the Platonic concept of metaxy, meaning an ‘in-between’, Vermeulen and van den Akker contend that what defines metamodernism is an inability to move beyond this constant shifting between positions: ‘The metamodern is constituted by the tension, no, the double-bind, of a modern desire for *sens* and a postmodern doubt about the sense of it all’ (317). Whilst *Pale Fire* does not ‘desire’ the ‘totality’ and ‘unity’ that Vermeulen and van den Akker describe with any sincerity and as such is not truly metamodern, by simulating these attributes it does still perform the oscillation that they describe, as McHale identified. Through the figure of the note, Nabokov is simulating the interpretative and epistemological strategies of modernism, but he is also always drawing attention to the fact that his novel is only a simulacrum where the constituent elements of the modernist annotated text (poem, notes, participatory reader) are fictionalised. My departure from traditional readings of *Pale Fire*, as already indicated, is predicated on the extent to which one agrees with this proposition.

Given my understanding of Nabokov’s use of notes, one might be tempted to conclude that they are merely reductive, aiming only to frustrate and confound. If the notes invite labour and require one to traverse certain specified paths, but then offer no ultimate reward or gratification for doing so, then might one reasonably ask, why bother reading them in the first instance? However, thinking this way would be a mistake. As already suggested, *Pale Fire* enacts a similar anti-authoritarian project to that of *The Maximus Poems*, in this case, by constructing a textual space in which the reader has the opportunity to reject what the novel compels him to do. John Barth once described *Pale Fire* as a ‘joy’ (Boyd *Magic* 5) and arguably this is produced by Nabokov at once encouraging his reader, like Jones, to follow certain predetermined textual paths laid out by the frenzied and domineering Kinbote

only to then, once co-opted, reveal it to be folly and open to ridicule. *Pale Fire* is not a rejection of critical exegesis, then, but rather a profound commentary on the modes of scholarship that one should engage with and the wider role that literature has to play within society. In suggesting there is an answer to be uncovered and a riddle to be solved, as so many critics do, the parodic force of the novel has been overlooked. As with Nelson's hypertext, the notes do not lead to a grand solution, but this is not to say they are not worth reading, since in engaging with them one experiences the joy of witnessing the performative dismantling of an authoritarian and coercive methodology, represented by Kinbote's annotative demands and their subsequent unravelling.

This is made all the more acute by the fact that not all of the notes are impasses, such as, the chain in the Foreword that leads to the apparent revelation that Kinbote is the King. However, this simply makes the eventual dismissal of the novel's seduction all the more climactic and, to use Barth's term, joyful. By encoding into his text certain localized riddles to solve and then, through a manipulation of his reader's citational conditioning, suggesting there are much deeper mysteries to be uncovered across the novel as a whole, Nabokov makes the challenge to throw off this seduction all the more difficult and therefore rewarding. If his aim, then, is to provide a textual space in which the reader is able to undermine and challenge the apparent authority of the text itself, which I argue it is, then one's success is made all the more valuable within the context of the novel. Just as he promotes self-activity through the apparent negation of it, Nabokov also promotes the reader's need to challenge coercion through one's ostensibly encouraged acquiescence.

Significantly, then, this chapter describes a moment in the history of twentieth-century literary annotation where the association between annotation and its deictic function is challenged, but it also examines the determined and frequent attempts by critics to reassert it. Thus, what follows will comprise a meta-analysis of *Pale Fire* in which I examine in detail

the novel's critical reception. For a novel such as *Pale Fire* such an interpretative strategy is not only useful, but necessary: Nabokov's novel is such that one is required to read the readers and to do so, particularly within the analytical framework provided by annotation, provides new insight into both the novel and how, up until now, it has been understood. Given that my argument hinges on an understanding of the novel wherein one is encouraged to reject what the text ostensibly compels then, one ought to be able to say something about the interpretative strategies that *are* promoted. Not to do so would be to suggest Nabokov only encourages the rejection of one reading strategy, which I argue is the case, but without then any recourse to what might be a favoured manner of reading. In outlining my proposed alternative method of reading the novel, I will return to Nelson's claims that *Pale Fire* is a 'brilliant poetic hypertext' (103) not only by suggesting that in its rejection of coercion it is non-hierarchical, but also that it encourages multilinearity. Whilst I would not want to claim this is the definitive way of reading the novel, as to do so would be entirely antithetical to my wider analysis, I would like to suggest it as a mode of approach that is more aligned to the spirit of the novel and its political gesturing.

### **Kinbote's Scholars: Mary McCarthy, Brian Boyd and the Joy of Discovery**

By arguing that *Pale Fire* contains within it a political agenda, I mount a direct challenge to Nabokov's own assessment of his work's social import, which is that 'a work of art has no importance whatever to society' (*Strong Opinions* 33). Further, in the introduction to *Bend Sinister*, Nabokov famously stated that he cared not for 'politics and economics, atomic bombs [...] symptoms of the "thaw" in Soviet Russia' (3). However, given certain events that marred Nabokov's youth it would be difficult to see how he could not have been politically motivated. In 1917, after the February Revolution in Russia, his father joined the Russian

Provisional Government, but, then, after the Bolshevik Revolution of October the Nabokovs were forced to flee to Crimea. It was at this time that Nabokov wrote an early poem in which he described Lenin's revolutionaries as 'grey rag-tag people' (Wyllie 22). Further, in March 1922 Nabokov's father was accidentally assassinated in Berlin by Russian monarchist Piort Shabelsky-Bork and some years after this, in 1936, Nabokov's wife, Vera, would lose her job because of increasing levels of anti-Semitism. In this same year, Shabelsky-Bork became Second-in-Command of the Russian émigré group. Indeed, Nabokov hints in the statement that opens this chapter that politics played a more vital role in his work than he would concede: 'It is not improbable that had there been no revolution in Russia I would have devoted myself entirely to lepidopterology and never written any novels at all'. Whilst this could simply mean that the revolution disrupted his studies, it could also suggest that it was the war itself that provoked and acted as a catalyst for his subsequent literary efforts.

If one works from the assumption, then, that political and ethical issues do play a role in his work, Nabokov's *modus operandi* might seem to be, as with *Pale Fire*, the simulation of that which he hopes to undermine and this is precisely what we see in *Lolita* also. Nabokov writes in such a way that the reader finds himself captured by the beauty of Humbert's narrative and is therefore seduced into thinking, by extension, that the relationship described is also beautiful. The most poignant moments in *Lolita* are, I think, when the reader stops for a moment and realises the full implication of their apparent appreciation of the beauty of Humbert and Lolita's relationship. In this same fashion, the most fascinating moments of *Pale Fire* are when the reader finds himself feverishly chasing down clues only to then realise that they lead to nowhere. It is in these moments that Nabokov most obviously delivers his political message, by simulating and then undermining the coercive annotative strategies seen in the likes of Pound and Jones. Both Olson and Nabokov reconfigure the

literary text to deliver methodological training and for both this involves a performance of the value of challenging and questioning authority.

Criticism has not always seen it this way. One critic who is determinedly unwilling to question the novel's authority is Mary McCarthy, as evidenced in her 1962 review of *Pale Fire* titled 'A Bolt from the Blue'. McCarthy's review is a key moment in the early reception of the novel and also important in attempting to answer the questions already outlined. As such, it is worth citing at length. The review begins with these words: '*Pale Fire* is a Jack-in-the-box, a Faberge gem, a clockwork toy, a chess problem, an infernal machine, a trap to catch reviewers, a cat-and-mouse game, a do-it-yourself novel' (83). She then goes on to comment: 'When the separate parts are assembled, according to the manufacturer's directions, and fitted together with the help of clues and cross references, which must be hunted down as in a paper-chase, a novel on several levels is revealed [...]' (83). This was not simply an abstraction for McCarthy though, but a physical strategy to be enacted. In a letter to her friend Hannah Arendt dated 1 June 1962, McCarthy writes: 'I really fell in love with the Nabokov book and worked very hard on it, with pure joy [...] I ran around Paris, to the library, to friends who knew Russian, to friends who knew German, to friends who knew chess, and enlisted, miraculously, their interest, as though they caught fire from the book too, at second hand' (qtd. in Kiernan 494). One sees immediately that, unlike with hypertext, McCarthy conceives of the novel as a supremely hierarchical system in which meaning is organized in a top-down, centralized fashion, with Nabokov carefully orchestrating one's reading experience. In both her reading of *Pale Fire* and its embodied expression on the streets of Paris, McCarthy becomes a precise corollary to the 'man in a maze doggedly trudging one path to the center' (*Information Vacuum* 8), albeit McCarthy's willful adherence to Nabokov's unicursal trail is clearly a more stimulating experience than one assumes it

would be for Nelson. She is not selecting her own ‘centre of investigation’, as with hypertext, but rather relying on it to be supplied by Nabokov.

There is in McCarthy’s description of *Pale Fire*, then, a very clear example of a critic whose interpretative strategies are tied up with the expenditure of effort and following certain predetermined paths within the novel. In other words, she is repurposing the same reading strategies that writers such as Jones attached to their own work and erroneously redeploying them to explain and understand *Pale Fire*. As such, I suggest, she is misrecognizing what is a simulation for something sincere, a simulation whose function is a dismantling of authoritarian coercion. *Pale Fire* is, for McCarthy, a ‘do it yourself novel’ replete with clues that need to be hunted down. In his note to line 57 of ‘Pale Fire’ Kinbote points out that Shade’s original draft of the poem included a passage with this line: ‘All doors have keys’ (79). This image is repeated later in the novel in Kinbote’s note to the lines ‘One day, / When I’d just turned eleven, as I lay / Prone on the floor and watched a clockwork toy [...] Bypass chair legs and stray beneath the bed’ (31). In his note, Kinbote describes how he once saw this toy, broken, in Shade’s house, but, he triumphantly declares, ‘now the rustic clockwork shall work again, for I have the key’ (112). It is no coincidence that when describing *Pale Fire* McCarthy uses this same image: the novel is, she tells us, ‘a clockwork toy’, and, like Kinbote, she has the key. This notion is repeated elsewhere in Nabokov criticism. In one of the first biographies of Nabokov Andrew Field proposes that ‘there is much to be said for this view that provides a universal key which “works” in almost all of Nabokov’s fiction’ (102). McCarthy first professes that the novel is a riddle to be solved and she then contends that the key can be found through painstaking effort.

At the same time that McCarthy stresses her dedication to solving the ‘chess puzzle’ that is the novel, however, she also acknowledges its parodic nature by describing it as ‘a trap to catch reviewers’ (83). This begs the question, if McCarthy believes *Pale Fire* to be a trap

why does she seem so willing to fall into it? There is a friction being articulated in McCarthy's description here: she is attempting to reconcile on the one hand her desire to fulfil the annotative and deictic debt that the novel places on her with a recognition, on the other, that the text has erected this structure for the purposes of parody. Thus, McCarthy begins her review by carefully extrapolating what she describes as the two planes of the novel: the 'plot's ground floor' (Kinbote is the beloved King and he has inspired Shade to write his poem) and the 'second story' (Kinbote is the pedant Botkin who believes himself to be the King of which everyone is aware) (84). She then chastises those readers who might read the novel as a detective story, 'with the reader racing the author to the solution' (86), and instead explains that 'each plane or level in its shadow box proves to be a false bottom; there is an infinite perspective regression, for the book is a book of mirrors' (86). However, no sooner has she said this, and in so doing reneged on her initial characterization of the novel as a 'chess problem' and a 'puzzle', that she goes on to say that *Pale Fire* is a 'treasure hunt'. The remainder of her essay, then, constitutes a thorough analysis of the minutest details of *Pale Fire* that is far more in keeping with her initial summary and her efforts in the library.

The review is a confused one and it wavers between quite contradictory positions. It does so, I contend, because McCarthy finds it impossible to reconcile the tone of the novel with its notational structure. She is confronting the procedure of teleological effort associated with annotation that the novel seems to promote and the parodic tone through which it is articulated. This describes an important moment in the history of the twentieth-century literary note and goes some way to pinpointing *Pale Fire*'s significance in the wider debates of this dissertation. The novel is an index of and a commentary on the annotative strategies promoted by writers such as Eliot and Jones and in its reception there is registered an attempt to reconcile the entrenched narrative of note taking with the distancing and ironic recalibration of annotation as it exists in *Pale Fire*. In other words, McCarthy is attempting,

one might argue rather unsuccessfully, to negotiate the novel's apparent coercive and compelling annotative strategies that encourage a reader to travel along certain paths, which McCarthy dutifully does, with the pervasive tone of irony that underpins these demands. She at once both desires to do as instructed and yet senses the ridicule in doing so. McCarthy is caught, here, in the novel's metamodern vacillation between a simulated modernist schematic and its postmodern disruption. The consequence is that McCarthy appears to find herself in a kind of interpretative No-Man's Land where she hopes to uncover the 'unity' and 'totality' that Vermeulen and van den Akker describe by piecing the puzzle together, whilst seemingly also aware of, but unable to explicitly confront, the fact that there are and always will be pieces missing. However, as will become clear, McCarthy's position is symptomatic of a much wider pattern within Nabokov studies. McCarthy's critical anxiety can be somewhat traced through these lines in Shade's poem:

Life Everlasting – based on a misprint!  
 I mused as I drove homeward: take the hint,  
 And stop investigating my abyss?  
 But all at once it dawned on me that this  
 Was the real point, the contrapuntal theme;  
 Just this: not text, but texture; not the dream  
 But topsy-turvical coincidence,  
 Not flimsy nonsense, but a web of sense.  
 Yes! It sufficed that I in life could find  
 Some kind of link-and-bobolink, some kind  
 Of correlated pattern in the game,  
 Plexed artistry, and something of the same  
 Pleasure in it as they who played found (53 – 54).



Prompted by the disjunction between the imperative ‘stop investigating my abyss’ and the question mark that ends the line presented the contradictory impulses that McCarthy is attempting to work through. She is caught between the novel’s suggestion, articulated through its parodic tone, to curtail one’s exegesis, with Nabokov’s calculated employment of an annotative structure that demands one to discover in its ‘link-and-bobolink’ a ‘web of sense’, ‘a correlated pattern in the game’. There are moments throughout the novel where McCarthy’s compulsion to uncover this pattern must have been pushed to the very limit. Recall, for example, Kinbote attempting to decipher Hazel’s scribbled notes from her encounter with the ‘poltergeist nuisance’ (150). After re-citing Shade’s passage in which he advocates for ‘some kind of link-and-bobolink, some kind / Of correlated pattern in the game’ Kinbote despairs:

I abhor such games; they make my temples throb with abominable pain – but I have braved it and pored endlessly, with a commentator’s infinite patience and disgust, over the crippled syllables in Hazel’s report to find the least allusion to the poor girl’s fate. Not one hint did I find (152).

Or, Kinbote’s perhaps less subtle accusation in his note to lines 747–748 that ‘Anybody having access to a good library card could, no doubt, easily trace that story to its source and find the name of the lady; but such humdrum potterings are beneath true scholarship’ (202). This is especially ironic when read in the context of McCarthy’s trip to the Parisian library and her compulsion to do exactly what Kinbote here derides.

Interestingly, Nabokov’s choice of Kinbote as a narrator only goes to reinforce the compulsion to try to uncover the ‘correlated pattern in the game’. Kinbote is opened up to ridicule in the novel not exactly because of his painstaking exegesis, but because his efforts have been directed at the wrong place. In his parasitic attempt to infiltrate a poem that has very little to do with him he works for all the wrong reasons, which in turn only heightens the

challenge for the reader to work for the right reasons: to discover, for instance, the final resting place of the jewels or whether Shade really composed 'Pale Fire'. Helen Oakley is a perfect embodiment of a critic who attempts to rise to this challenge. Reading the novel as a kind of detective story Oakley claims:

In *Pale Fire* the reader is encoded into the text as a detective also. It is possible either to read straight through the book or zigzag back and forth to try and make sense of the poem through the commentary or vice versa. Unlike the classic detective story, there is not even the illusion of fair play, as the dice are loaded against the reader from the start because of the unreliability of Kinbote's narrative (490).

Oakley concludes with this remark: 'In *Pale Fire* and *Despair* Nabokov does not use the detective fiction genre in order to shield the reader from irrationality, but rather he challenges readers to find the solution' (494). The reader sees Kinbote's narration not as a parody of participatory reading, but as a challenge to be overcome with this motivating the reader to work even harder. It is no coincidence that the title of Shade's poem shares its name with the title of Nabokov's novel: the novel is simulating the annotative strategies that Kinbote demonstrates in order to entice the reader to mimic his commitment to revealing the text's 'plexed artistry' and to then disrupt those same strategies when they are applied by the reader to the novel itself. This is what is meant when I describe the novel as an annotative simulacrum: the novel encourages its readers to labour over the text with this interpretative position then being recursively fed back into the novel's structure. The reader seeks to displace Kinbote by employing the same reading strategies that he misuses, which is in turn the ironic gesture of reading a novel such as *Pale Fire* in the first place. There is no reader who can truly unpick the 'web of sense', try as McCarthy might; there are only subsequent and ever-expanding iterations of Kinbote. Yet, this is precisely the beauty of the novel: in following its paths one senses oneself metamorphosing into a kind of Kinbote figure and so

the text is providing the opportunity to reject its demands. This, in turn, allows one to appreciate the power of dismantling and rejecting its purposely coercive and authoritarian narration. Simply put, the text allows one the opportunity of not doing what McCarthy and Oakley do, which is to say, we are provided with the capacity to refute the endless tracking of clues and textual pathways. Yet, if this is what one ought not to do then there must surely also be a reading strategy that *is* promoted; this will be explored towards the end of the section once the former position has been fully examined.

Despite seemingly acknowledging the deceptive nature of the text and the task it sets its reader, McCarthy is still not able to escape the narrative that suggests she must expend effort and hunt for clues. This notion of the text being deceptive was freely admitted by Nabokov. In a 1962 interview with the BBC it was proposed to Nabokov that ‘in your book [*Pale Fire*] it seems to me that you seem to take an almost perverse delight in literary deception’ (*Strong Opinions* 11). He answered that ‘all art is deception and so is nature; all is deception in that good cheat, from the insect that mimics a leaf to the enticements of procreation’ (11). In *Speak, Memory* Nabokov writes: ‘I like to fold my magic carpet, after use, in such a way as to superimpose one part of the pattern upon another. Let visitors trip’ (139). Further still, when asked by Alfred Appel to distinguish between parody and satire (the first he admitted to and the second he dismissed), Nabokov answered that parody is a game whilst satire is serious. What McCarthy is trying to work through in her review is whether she is a player or the one being played. An acknowledgment of this, however, opens up the possibility for a more lenient analysis of McCarthy. Perhaps, it is not that she fails to understand that her persistent labour is the subject of parody, but rather that she understands all too well, but then decides to acquiesce regardless. By this thinking, the reader is trapped in a kind of perverse interpretative feedback loop where the novel invites effort and the reader, acknowledging the parody of accepting, is forced to do it anyway because, simulated or not,

that is what the text encourages. The reader is held up to ridicule by expending effort and enacting the only interpretative strategy that Nabokov ostensibly leaves available to him. In other words, Nabokov forces the reader to become the subject of ridicule: he both pushes the reader towards it and then belittles the reader for not resisting. The reader is provided with the opportunity, no matter how seductive and compelling the alternative, to recognise the novel for what it is: ‘a wild goose chase’ in which one partakes of ‘the pleasant experience of the roundabout route’. Yet, one would be mistaken to see this simply as postmodern self-reflexivity or infinitely indulgent egoism on the part of Nabokov. It is seductive and it is compelling precisely because the point is to allow the reader to experience the joy of rejecting that which he is persuaded he should not.

The phylogenetic line that is headed by McCarthy can be further traced through more recent interpretations of *Pale Fire*. Take, for instance, James Ramey’s 2004 ‘Parasitism and *Pale Fire*’s Camouflage: The King-Bot, The Crown Jewels and the Man in the Brown Macintosh’, in which he seeks to solve the novel ‘as instinct obliges us to crack our mental knuckles and work at what’s really going on’ (187). Ramey then hones in on the figure of the botfly arguing that ‘the botfly’s amazing reproductive biology offers solutions to some of the novel’s resilient riddles’ (187). Establishing the need to ‘work’ in order to solve the novel’s riddle, Ramey’s argument proceeds by identifying Kinbote as a kind of textual botfly, a parasitic creature who uses Shade’s poem as an ‘unsuspecting carrier [...] which is much likelier to reach potential “hosts” than Kinbote’s own publications would be’ (189). Citing the same passage from ‘Pale Fire’ as above, Ramey uses it as a prompt from which to further suggest how an analysis of the botfly ‘could be expected to yield solutions to some of the novel’s puzzles’. If McCarthy worried about critics being caught out then here is a critic who feels very much as if he has caught on. Positioning himself as, in his own words, an ‘ultrasophisticated solver’, Ramey begins by proffering a solution to where the crown jewels

have been hidden. He accepts what reads very much like a challenge with the second person pronoun provoking the reader:

After the King's escape and the belated discovery of the secret passage, they continued their elaborate excavations until the palace was all honeycombed and partly demolished, an entire wall of one room collapsing one night, to yield, in a niche whose presence nobody has suspected, an ancient salt cellar of bronze and King Wigbert's drinking horn; but you will never find our crown, necklace and sceptre (192).

Ramey's answer is that the crown jewels can be found in the index itself. Specifically, he contends that the jewels reside in a wrongly italicized 'V' that appears in the index: 'Rather, by virtue of its placement, its form and its texture, I believe this V is the very site in the novel we have been attempting to locate' (196). Not satisfied with solving that puzzle Ramey sets about attempting to prove that a camouflaged Nabokov appears in the index also in the figure of 'one of his beloved invented species—a species similar in some ways to the monstrous *Dermatobia hominis*, but far superior, far more evolved, busily contributing tusks to the ivory tower' (198). However, what is most interesting about Ramey's argument is not so much its content, as expertly researched as it is, but the way in which he articulates it. One cannot help but feel, as he abseils deeper and deeper down the rabbit hole, a certain self-aware and ironic tone to his analysis. Ramey is attempting to straddle the sense of both playing and being played: the narrative of labour is accepted as being open to parody, but it is still too entrenched an interpretative strategy for Ramey to let go. Taking up the same quest to discover the last resting place of the jewels, Fred Crawford comes to this conclusion: 'Despite the lunatic Kinbote's care to conceal the location of the Zemblan crown jewels, he has dropped enough hints to enable a reader to find the crown, scepter, and necklace. They repose in the walls of the public lavatory of Kalixhaven on the Western coast of Zembla'

(55). Again, one senses a note of irony in Crawford's response that is, in part, engendered by the critic becoming aware of his own simulated interpretative activities. He is at once enamored by the annotative structure of the text and all that is connoted by it, but he also attempts to guard himself from ridicule by making his analysis not the object of, but part of the novel's humour.

In his 2010 article 'The Riddle of/in *Pale Fire*' Neil Isaacs continues this tendency when he examines the novel in terms of a riddle. Speaking about the opening lines of Shade's poem he describes them as 'an explicit and conventional challenge to readers to "read" or interpret the images, thereby "solving" a puzzle or enigma, in order to arrive at an understanding of what is signified. In this sense, the form or genre of these lines is that of a riddle' (317). He continues by claiming that by solving 'the riddle of the opening of "*Pale Fire*" [...] we may more clearly understand some of the secrets of *Pale Fire* as disguised therein' (319). After examining in detail Boyd's own attempt to solve the novel Issacs provides, like Ramey, his own solution to the riddle of *Pale Fire* and to do so he relies on the characteristically post-modern interpretation of the novel where Nabokov himself is to be found lurking within the pages of the book. He speaks of how the reader is able to follow 'the clues and sequential stages of the process' and thus 'solve the riddle this riddle-fancying author has set for the reader' (327). Taking his cue from the repetition of the 'if I was' structure in the opening of 'Pale Fire', which, he argues, constitutes the conventional 'Who am I?' opening of a riddle, Issacs answers the poem's question with this: 'I am Vladimir Nabokov, keeper of the secret, poser and designer of the riddle, unknown game-player, summoning author, creative planner' (327). However, again like Ramey, Isaacs has no sooner uttered his proposed solution before he begins to hold open to parody both the solution itself and the strategy he employed to arrive there. Isaacs prefaces his solution with these words: 'It

is in the spirit of playful engagement with a riddling, game-playing writer that this tentative ‘solution’ or ‘revelation’ is offered’ (328).

This same strategy is employed by Maurice Couturier in his 1999 essay ‘The Near Tyranny of the Author: *Pale Fire*’. Couturier begins much as I did by referencing McCarthy’s review and explaining that ‘since Mary McCarthy’s celebrated “Bolt from the Blue” each new exegete who has tried to tackle the difficult novel, the present one included, has paused more or less as a lucky space-traveler who would have stumbled upon the magic key’ (54). He continues by conceding that ‘I realise that, all this time, I have been trying to find that devilish key, perhaps in a hopeless attempt to outwit Nabokov’ (54 – 55). With the wry gesture of a wink to his reader Couturier then admits that his solution might be ‘too painfully reminiscent of Kinbote’s arrogance’ and ‘is unlikely to gain approval among fellow Nabokovians’, but that he must continue on regardless. Like Issacs and Ramey, his analysis rests on Nabokov’s insertion into the novel: ‘In point of fact, I would suggest, these two text-based subjects [Shade and Kinbote] reflect two complementary facets of one single but schizoid subject’ (64) with this subject being Nabokov himself. When considering Couturier’s approach to Nabokov’s annotative network, one is perhaps reminded of Kinbote’s description of footnotes as ‘the rogue’s galleries of words’ (*Pale Fire* 205). The choice of ‘rogue’ is an interesting one. Etymologically tracing its origin back to the middle of the sixteenth century the word denoted a vagrant or vagabond before becoming a more general term for someone who is dishonest. However, it has since taken on a slightly different inflection where it now designates, according to the OED, ‘one who is of mischievous disposition’. This seems to capture quite well Couturier’s understanding of the notes as concealing a secret agenda to deceive that it is in one’s best interest to cognize, whilst also remaining playful. One thinks of a rogue as dishonest, but likeable, a trickster who is captivating or enticing enough for one to allow the trick to be played regardless.

Again, one recognises, as with McCarthy, the same inability to reconcile the metamodernist vacillation between modernism and postmodernism. This results, as with the other critics thus far addressed, in the conception that *Pale Fire* is a puzzle that can be solved and for which there exists a key, on the one hand, with a seemingly knowing nod that to suggest such a thing is to leave one open to the ridicule of the novel, on the other. The critic seems to know that the rogue is playing him, but he still remains a willing participant and as such complies with the plan in much the same way that someone who was not aware would do. Yet, in trying to have it both ways, I would suggest this reading of the novel cheapens its political edge. Whilst there is some recognition of the irony involved, critics such as Couturier do still subscribe to the notion that Nabokov has set for his readers a riddle to be solved and as such view meaning as disseminated in a hierarchical fashion, with the author, and not reader, determining how one moves through the system. Along these lines, one might characterise the novel not as a ‘brilliant poetic hypertext’, as Nelson did, but anti-hypertextual.

However, none of these critics hold a light to the master Nabokovian sleuth, Brian Boyd, who, in his 1999 *Pale Fire: The Magic of Artistic Discovery* famously claimed to have solved the novel by arguing that both poem and commentary were inspired by Hazel and John Shade’s ghost. Boyd immediately begins his text by framing *Pale Fire* in terms of discovery: ‘*Pale Fire* invites readers to discovery in a way no other novel does’ (3) and also ‘these discoveries have much in common with the process of scientific discovery’ (3). As such, and like the other critics thus far discussed, he sees the novel in terms of a teleological and gradual process of discovery wherein there is, ultimately, a single truth to be revealed. Indeed, this is seen in the methodological approach of the study itself. Prompted by Nabokov’s assertion that ‘one cannot read a book; one can only reread it’ (3), Boyd divides his text into three sections, each one taking the form of a rereading, in order to make clear



that with, as he styles it, ‘imaginative effort’ (5) one will be able to solve the riddle of the novel. This rereading, so Boyd argues, takes the form of increasingly difficult problems to solve so that the first reading teases the reader to ‘continue at speed so that we can solve enough to look out for more’ (12). The result of this is that the reader becomes an ‘expert solver’ (13) who is well on his way to reaching ‘the ultimate solution’, which, for Boyd, is the reconfiguration and apparent discovery of the spectral influences in the writing process.

What is at stake with Boyd’s analysis is the unquestioning fervor with which he has accepted Nabokov’s apparent textual clues and pathways. Boyd begins his text by situating both Nabokov and his own analysis within a tradition of scientific discourse and falsifiability and yet no sooner has he done this than he is accepting, seemingly without query, every demand that the obviously unreliable Kinbote makes of him. The entire analysis is predicated on the fact that ‘Nabokov will make it worth our while to follow these cross-references’, but yet there is little, if any, heed paid to the fact that these cross-references are articulated through and contained within a quite clearly parodic novel. It is not a case of ‘trusting Nabokov’ (22), as Boyd asserts when discussing the annotative chain in the Foreword, but rather acknowledging that Nabokov has filtered these demands and these annotative pathways through the prism of Kinbote. This must, one assumes, alter fundamentally how one approaches and values them and it is this that is overlooked in Boyd’s study. He conflates Kinbote’s demands with the author’s and treats the former as though they were asserted with sincerity by the latter. Gone from Boyd are the self-conscious nods and winks of the likes of Couturier, Issacs, and Ramey. His reason for doing this, one might suggest, is his inability to ‘think that someone as playfully generous as Nabokov is out to frustrate them’ (*Magic* 43). However, in his desire to demonstrate that the notes are not there simply for the purposes of critical parody or irritation, which I certainly agree with, Boyd turns to the idea that they must therefore lead to somewhere, they must therefore point to a solution that can be uncovered.

This results in an admittedly impressive display of analytical adroitness, but also a successive and gradually unsustainable procession of logical leaps, all predicated and fueled by the initial assertion that Nabokov simply must be leading his reader towards a singular point of discovery. However, as already motioned towards, one need not rely on this initial assertion in order to provide an analysis of *Pale Fire*'s annotative structure that is able to characterise it as productive and generative. The very fact that the novel encourages and indeed compels one's acquiescence to its annotative demands, which are the same demands that Boyd and other Nabokov critics have succumbed to, is what provides the reader with the opportunity to reject any notion of inherent totality and as such reject its narratological coercion.

The critical uncertainty as to how to approach the simulated nature of *Pale Fire*'s annotative effort registers a deep-seated anxiety around the confluence of labour and pleasure. What the critics belonging to the described phylogenetic line struggle to reconcile is the compulsion to expend effort and track textual clues with its simultaneous and apparent parody. Critics from McCarthy to Ramey are unable to confidently assert whether or not *Pale Fire* encourages labour and if it does whether or not it is a source of gratification or a source of self-imposed ridicule. It is because of this definitional anxiety that one is able to pinpoint, as above, moments where critics seem to at once recognise the absurdity of labouring in the service of *Pale Fire*, but, with a wink and a nudge, the compulsion to play along regardless. In order to pursue textual pleasure within *Pale Fire*, which for Boyd and others amounts to 'solving' the novel, one is required to expend effort, but to expend effort is also to be ridiculed and herein lies 'precarious and self-contradictory basis for literature' that Karshan describes. In reading *Pale Fire* along the lines described one is persistently made aware of the compromised model of annotative and scholarly labour, but still labour remains the only viable interpretative choice. It is this anxiety that is evident in McCarthy and the other critics discussed above. As far as these critics appear to be concerned, one is compelled to attempt to

solve the riddle through an act of concerted effort and not to do so would be tantamount to not reading the novel in the first instance. The cost of reading *Pale Fire* is therefore to sacrifice one's analytical integrity such that the reader willingly enters into a contract of effort given and ridicule taken. Yet, this is precisely what transforms apparent parody into the destabilizing of coercive and authoritarian impulses. To read *Pale Fire*, as with *Lolita*, is to experience the almost cathartic pleasure of having one's exegetic assumptions dismantled and then laid bare: to read after a novel such as *Pale Fire* is to forever read differently than before. With this in mind, the chapter will now propose an alternative understanding of *Pale Fire's* notes with this anti-authoritarian impulse in mind.

#### **'A Note My Reader Shall Find': The Nabokovian Note**

If we are to believe Ramey or Crawford's solution to the missing crown jewels then they are certainly faring better than their fictional counterparts. Believing that the jewels were located in the Palace the new administration enlisted the help of two Russian treasure hunters. This is what, after much searching, the two discovered:

The two Soviet professionals could be excused for assuming they would find a real receptacle behind the real metal. At the present moment they were about to decide whether to pry out the plaque or take down the picture; but we can anticipate a little and assure the reader that the receptacle, an oblong hole in the wall, was there all right; it contained nothing, however, except the broken bits of a nutshell (*Pale Fire* 108).

This, I wish to suggest, is a much more accurate characterisation of what it is like to read a novel such as *Pale Fire*. One can, like the Russian experts did to the palace, search the novel and upturn every letter, but in the end and, despite all efforts, what one is left with is 'broken

bits of a nutshell' (109). By reading the novel in a manner that is alert to the complementary projects of Nelson and Nabokov, one is able to eschew any notion that the novel might have concealed within it a discoverable pattern and as such better establish wider political and cultural implications. Reading the novel as a series of distinct nodes that are connected to each other and to a parent text by way of easily traversed links within a multilinear and pluralistic network helps to circumvent the need to follow the way of reading *Pale Fire* promoted by critics such as Boyd. If one approaches it not as if it were plotted along a teleological line, but as if it were to be endlessly traversed, then one also arguably relieves the interpretative anxiety caused by being caught between the double-bind of metamodernism. One recognises the novel's capacity, in Nelson's words, to allow anyone to 'choose the pathway that best suits him'. *Pale Fire* does not seek to piece together the broken shell of the novel, but rather forms the segments into a thousand different shapes.

To clarify this position further, recall the idea, presented in Chapter Two, that a text's notes can be understood as a labyrinth. For the critic reading *Pale Fire* as a puzzle the labyrinth is unicursal: there is concealed within its annotative topology a pattern that, if properly traced, can be decoded. Finding one's way is painstaking work and might take hours upon hours of searching and travelling down dead ends, but the solution is there to be discovered for those readers willing to work. The novel is a maze of notational pathways, but there is a center and it can be found. A reader attuned to its hypertextuality, however, understands the novel to be multicursal and multilinear: its paths are there to be traversed, but each reading has the potential to generate different routes through the text and one should embrace the 'joy' of getting lost amongst its corridors. There is no solution for the hypertext critic, only a myriad of different paths in and out of the text. By reading the novel in this manner, one is able to celebrate the multilinear nature of the novel and so reject the apparent

need to find a solution and it is in this manner one can understand Nabokov as dismantling the coercive predetermination of certain paths that is valorized by Jones.

From the start of the novel, Nabokov appears to encourage just such a multicursal reading. As already discussed, the novel's fictional Foreword includes an injunction to 'see my note to line 991' (13), which results in the reader ultimately discovering, one page into the novel, the details of Shade's death. In addition to setting the expectation for the novel to contain a riddle to be solved, this link also disrupts the linear progression of the novel as it encourages the reader to disregard standard pagination, instead opening up the possibility of multilinear textual navigation. Yet, in fact, following the link and its subsequent annotative chain creates a second form of linear reading, which involves following Kinbote's path. Despite his obvious unreliability, and so a reader's likely reluctance to do this, the initial decision to follow Kinbote's instructions is richly rewarded. As such, a reader might continue with this strategy until he repeatedly falls down the many trap doors and circular paths set by Nabokov. Upon being told to read the seemingly irrelevant, but detailed description of Zemblan topography in note 149 for the third time, for instance, one might quickly tire of following Kinbote's path. Whilst speaking to the simultaneous simulation and ridicule of following predetermined pathways that this chapter has sought to explore, notes such as this also become justification and evidence for a third linear pathway through the novel, which is ostensibly that of Nabokov's and his planted clues and riddles. Critics such as the ones discussed in this chapter might well disregard Kinbote's linearity, as most rather quickly would, but they simply replace it with a perceived, but simulated, authorial linearity, which involves assembling the parts of the novel 'according to the manufacturer's directions, and fitted together with the help of clues and cross references' (McCarthy).

In denying all three pathways and especially the one apparently concealed by Nabokov and, as such, rejecting what the novel would otherwise compel one to do, one

instead has the opportunity to navigate the text as though it is a multicursal labyrinth and free from any hierarchical mode of organization. This newfound strategy is somewhat typified by Kinbote's teasing allusion in the Foreword to something 'mentioned in a note my reader shall find' (18). One could attempt to track down the suggested note, as such reverting to Kinbote's textual schematic, or one could see it as the start of a protracted series of clues, as such subscribing to the notion that Nabokov has planted within the novel a riddle to be solved. Yet, this also arguably provides an excuse to search the text free from the expectation of constraint that comes with either Kinbote's linearity or attempting to solve Nabokov's supposed riddle. The reader is given permission to explore the novel on his own terms; he is released into the wilderness of the text without any sense of where to start or how to proceed. This opens the novel up and invites the reader to see it as a multilinear network, as a cracked nut that does not require piecing together again. It is in this way that Nabokov provides an opportunity to reject what his novel ostensibly compels and as such disrupt any coercive impulse. By adopting a multilinear approach, authority within the text is dispersed and refracted onto the reader, which is precisely the anti-authoritarian gesture that I associate with the novel.

As such, and as Simon Rowberry points out, one might understand *Pale Fire* along the lines of a random access device (RAD). In her 2002 study *Writing Machines*, Katherine Hayles describes how 'readers are [...] less likely to read the text cover-to-cover than open it at random and mediate over a few pages before skipping elsewhere' (99). She continues by aligning this mode of reading to the invention of the codex in the Middle Ages and its capacity for 'random reading' before then claiming 'that the book is the original random access device' in that it enables 'considerably more freedom of movement and access' (99). Whilst, as Hayles points out, the ability to flick through a book and engage with random sections is a constituent structural element of any codex, the impulse to do so is very often

mitigated by the fact the text would simply not make sense. One *could* read *Pride and Prejudice* or *The Great Gatsby* in this fashion, but doing so would be a very difficult and not especially rewarding experience, which would fundamentally alter the narrative. When applied to a text such as *Pale Fire* or a hypertext system, what this describes, in practice, is a text where such traversal is not merely incidental, but rather self-reflexively encouraged at a systemic level.

As an example of what this might look like in practice, imagine that the reader has arrived at the note to line 98 in which Kinbote discusses misprints in the novel and asks the reader to see the note to line 802 'for other vivid misprints' (96). However, this is itself a misprint. When one arrives at the note to line 802 it is a note to the word 'mountain'. In this note, Kinbote describes a walk with Shade through the Bera Range where Shade divulges to Kinbote that he was recently writing about mountains. This note tells us nothing about misprints. Perhaps, at this point the reader might break free from Kinbote's directive and begin to explore nearby notes. If so, he would find that the subsequent note is presumably the one that Kinbote had intended to cite. It reads 'misprint' and discusses the problems that translators might have when working with Shade's poem. Given that the reader has already disrupted and rejected Kinbote's path through the novel he might continue to do so and as such refuse to go back to the note to line 98 or continue to the note to line 810 and instead pursue his own path through the novel. Perhaps, intrigued by the notion of misprints this might involve skimming the novel and searching for other uses of 'misprint'. The reader might, for example, recall Shade's cryptic declaration in 'Pale Fire' that 'Life Everlasting' is 'based on a misprint'; or, if he happened to have read the Foreword, might consider Frank's insistence that Kinbote concede 'that I alone am responsible for any mistakes in my commentary' (15).

Considering Kinbote's increasingly obvious derangement, this is perhaps an early example of someone trying to distance themselves from Kinbote and his scholarly project and, thus, depending on the order in which the novel has been read, either further proof of his unreliability or an early warning sign. What is especially interesting is that immediately after this admission, there is written 'Insert before a professional' (15), which can plausibly be understood as a 'note to self' that Kinbote inadvertently left in the final document. The reference to a 'professional' refers to Kinbote's subsequent admission that he hired 'a professional proofreader' who 'has found a few trivial misprints I had missed' (15). As we know there certainly are misprints still in the text, such as the rather obvious and non-trivial one that provoked this enquiry, which might cause the reader to question to what extent Kinbote's supposed network of publishers are a figment of his imagination. One recalls that Kinbote parted ways with his first publishers and so perhaps Frank, his second, and the supposed professional proofreader are the first of many fictions, mentioned in an attempt to confer authority onto a project already dead in the water.

One could easily think of ways to continue this exploration of 'misprinting', which might even involve widening the discussion to include misidentification, thus demonstrating that life really was, for Shade at least, 'based on a misprint'. Whilst such a traversal is not strictly random in the same way that Hayles envisioned, since one is carefully plotting their way through the novel and not indiscriminately flipping to random pages, it does share with her analogy a reconceptualization of 'freedom of movement and access'. By foregoing linear modes of reading, based on traditional pagination or Kinbote's instructions, and instead adopting a system similar to Bush's associative trails, the reader has selected an entirely idiosyncratic focal point and has been able to reconfigure his reading experience based around, in this case, the word 'misprint'. As in hypertext systems, one can think of this self-selected word as a stem around which other associative branches can be created and



followed. Of course, this single example could be replicated across the text dependent on which specific pathways the reader elected to pursue. Similar to hypertext, 'it is the man's job to draw connections, not the machine's. The machine is not a judge'. Thus, this is not to subscribe to Boyd *et al* by suggesting tracking 'misprint' is somehow an attempt to solve a perceived riddle or discover the key to *Pale Fire*: there is, unlike with Boyd, no necessary expectation of finding a single, unifying narrative planted by Nabokov that explains the connections. Instead, as Nelson styles it, this understanding of *Pale Fire* is attentive to the fact that a 'system should hold any shape imposed upon it' and elsewhere that 'anyone can choose the pathway that suits him'. It is true, of course, that one could conceivably approach any text in this manner, but the difference is that by simulating and parodying the notion that one ought to follow predetermined paths and then by structuring his novel using interconnected nodes and associated textual branches, Nabokov permits and even encourages such a mode of traversal. The multilinear is not alien to *Pale Fire*, then, but encoded within it: it is written in such a way as to accommodate multiple links between nodes that Nabokov could not have nor intended to map beforehand.

Thus, whilst it would be impossible to read the entire novel along these interpretative lines and, as such, one must necessarily follow at some point a linear reading, a novel such as *Pale Fire* promotes, even encourages, a degree of multilinearity that can be aligned to the wider project of hypertext. As Rowberry points out, when read in this manner the novel 'assumes the form of an isomorphic graph, whereby the reader can arrange the structure of the text to meet his/her own needs without adjusting the form of the text'. Or, in Nelson's words, by fostering self-directed and as such non-hierarchical multilinear reading, *Pale Fire* is able to 'hold any shape imposed upon it' and elsewhere allow 'anyone [to] choose the pathway that best suits him'. This describes precisely the 'pleasant experience of the roundabout route' that Nabokov celebrates: one is able to get lost amongst the novel's myriad

connections without the need to determine a final destination. This seems to me to be the fault line along which I contest the analysis of *Pale Fire* suggested by critics such as Boyd or McCarthy, which has subsequently become the dominant way of understanding the text. For these critics, surely it is Nabokov, through Kinbote, who determines, in Landow's terms, the 'order and principle of investigation' (112). By tracing the various clues within the novel in the hopes of 'solving' it, they read the novel as though plotted along a teleological line, which may mean diverting from the strictly linear pagination of the novel, but still obliges them to follow the text through an ostensibly predetermined series of jumps. However, what I want to suggest is that Nabokov is parodically simulating this apparent predetermination in order to ridicule those who accept and, by extension, and like Olson, to celebrate and promote the possibility of a hypertextual traversal through the novel. One is met repeatedly with dead ends within the novel so that one has the possibility to abandon and make any and all connections within the text without recourse to the unicursal structure compelled through the figure of Kinbote.

Returning to Marx's concept of self-activity, then, *Pale Fire* prefigures the anti-totalitarian and anti-coercive politics of hypertext that Nelson initially appreciated about the novel. One interesting moment within the novel that seems to coincide with this is lines 939 – 940 in Shade's poem, which read: 'Man's life as commentary to abstruse / Unfinished poem. Note for further use' (58). Kinbote's note to this line then explains: 'If I correctly understand the sense of this succinct observation, our poet suggests here that human life is but a series of footnotes to a vast obscure unfinished masterpiece' (214). The text too, I think, can be read in exactly this same fashion: it is also 'a series of footnotes to a vast obscure masterpiece', but then it is surely meant to remain so and not, as critics such as Boyd seem to want to do, complete it. Our notes are to be added to Kinbote's without end and herein lies the democratizing gesture of Nabokov's novel, a gesture which has, I argue, thus far been largely

overlooked. Such a gesture provides a clear conceptual link to Olson's notion of *'istorin*, and equally a clear conceptual distinction from writers such as Pound and Jones.

Indeed, one of the clearest and most parodic moments of pedagogy comes at the beginning of *Pale Fire* when Kinbote instructs his reader that he 'is advised to consult [the notes] first and then study the poem with their help, rereading them of course as he goes through its text, and perhaps, after having done with the poem, consulting them a third time so as to complete the picture' (23). He goes on to say: 'I find it wise in such cases as this to eliminate the bother of back-and forth leafings by [...] cutting out and clipping together the pages with the text of the thing' (23). As a point of comparison recall, here, David Jones's instruction to his readers in the introduction to *In Parenthesis*: 'I would ask the reader to consult the notes with the text as I regard some of them integral to it' (xiv). Nabokov is using the note in order to parody the same pedagogical imperative that Jones is very serious about. What is further interesting is that Nabokov's critics have misrecognised Nabokov's simulated annotative strategies as continuing, as opposed to disrupting, that same entrenched narrative. McCarthy, for example, is not too far away from Kinbote's suggestion to cut up the novel when she argues that the novel's 'separate parts [might be] assembled according to the manufacturer's directions, and fitted together with the help of clues and cross references' (McCarthy).

I would suggest this provides a microcosmic example of how the phylogenetic line explored within this essay has erroneously taken for something serious what is in fact parody, and has therefore overlooked the political intention of *Pale Fire* that I have sought to draw attention towards. By separating the note from its deictic function and making this a site of parody, Nabokov is able to critique and comment on the wider issues of coercion and authoritarianism by both seemingly compelling and ridiculing those, like Boyd, who have sought to 'solve' the novel. *Pale Fire* can thus be seen to stand in direct opposition to writers

such as Pound and Jones: both of these celebrate and encourage one to follow certain predetermined paths within a text and by simulating just this Nabokov is able to ridicule it. The real irony is that these simulated annotative strategies have proven so seductive that they have been assimilated into the dominant school of thought regarding *Pale Fire*. Critics have, in other words, based their analysis of *Pale Fire* on the principles of lumping: it was enough that the novel used notes and that it seemed to invite its reader to solve the ostensible riddles that were proposed. The liberties entailed by hypertext allows us to reassess the function of Nabokov's annotative practices.

### **The Slack-Jawed and Spittle-Chinned: The Irony of Commercial Mass Media**

As discussed earlier in the chapter, in his 1993 essay, 'E Unibus Pluram: Television and US Fiction' and the interview with Larry McCaffery published alongside it, David Foster Wallace launched a savage rebuke against postmodernism's 'self-consciousness and irony' and its 'absorption by US commercial culture', which, he argues, has 'had appalling consequences for writers and everyone else' (146). With this, the 'essay-interview nexus' (267), as it was labelled by Adam Kelly, marked a departure from Nabokov's brand of incessantly ironic and mischievously metafictional postmodernism.<sup>34</sup> Wallace's complaint, explicitly directed at writers such as Nabokov, is that 'postmodern irony and cynicism has become an end in itself, a measure of hip sophistication and literary savvy [...] Irony's gone from liberating to enslaving' (147). He continues: 'What's been passed down from the postmodern heyday is sarcasm, cynicism, a manic ennui [...] and a terrible penchant for ironic diagnosis of unpleasantness instead of an ambition not just to diagnose and ridicule but to redeem' (147). It is worth noting, here, that as well as being 'a real enemy, a patriarch for

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<sup>34</sup> It is important to note that certain writers would not fit the criteria of playful or mischievous and one might think of William Burroughs's *Naked Lunch* or *Junky* for an example.

my patricide', Wallace did freely concede that Nabokov was a 'real genius' and *Pale Fire* was 'valuable as meta-aesthetic break through' (148). The problem, for Wallace, was that their experimentation had been appropriated by the 'crank turners' (149) of commercial mass media, and, as such, that society was arguably no richer for having the legacy that they left behind.

However, whilst the inheritance of postmodern irony is Wallace's chosen battlefield, it would be a mistake to think that irony is itself the problem. Rather, Wallace uses irony as a way to navigate and diagnose a much wider crisis. What is at stake is not so much the proliferation of an ironic disposition, but what that disposition does to those who are exposed to it. At the beginning of the interview Wallace speaks of the relationship between viewers and television in much the same way that Kirby does: it is 'essentially puerile and dependent' and 'based on seduction' (127). Seduction is necessary, Wallace argues, because 'TV's *real* agenda is to be *liked*, because if you like what you're seeing, you'll stay tuned' (130). The optimal audience is the one who most readily submits to this seduction and the one who remains enamoured for the longest. The integration of irony is, for Wallace, a way for television and mass commercial media more generally to admit to its role as seducer in such a way that it in fact reinforces the seduction. Through the lens of irony, television is at once able to acknowledge its manipulation only to then, as Wallace styles it, 'wink and nudge you and pretend it's just kidding' (147) and in so doing legitimise the act itself. In other words, mass commercial media reveals to its viewers its manipulation through the playful and self-conscious medium of irony, thus reassuring the viewer that they are in on the joke and to sit back, relax, and enjoy the show.

The issue for Wallace, then, is not irony per se, but the 'ennui' (147) and complacency that is justified through the ironic admission of seduction. It is in the best interests of commercial art to cultivate an audience who are, as Wallace describes in the

interview, ‘slack-jawed’ (130) and ‘spittle-chinned’ (130). Irony is the method of delivery by which this ulterior motive can be safely and reassuringly drawn attention to whilst at the same time continuing to reinforce it. Wallace makes this same point in conversation with David Lipsky when he writes that entertainment’s ‘chief job is to make you so riveted by it that you can’t tear your eyes away, so the advertisers can advertise’ (Lipsky 79) and that ‘it gives you a certain kind of pleasure that I would argue is fairly *passive*’ (emphasis in original, Lipsky 80) whereas art ‘requires you to work’ (Lipsky 80). Wallace employs this same vocabulary when speaking about Stanley Kubrick’s *A Clockwork Orange*, writing that ‘[i]t admits passive speculation. Encourages it. TV-type art’s biggest hook is that it’s figured out a way to *reward* passive speculation’ (‘Interview’ 137).<sup>35</sup> Further, in the essay itself, he claims: ‘Television’s biggest minute-by-minute appeal is that it engages without demanding. One can rest while undergoing stimulation. Receive without giving’ (163).

Wallace’s critique is similar to the one made by Slavoj Žižek and especially his notion of interpassivity. This describes a process wherein one’s agency is relocated to an external object, thus allowing one to experience the sensation of action, but through a voyeuristic medium, such as, television. However, ‘serious art’, Wallace claims, ‘is more apt to make you uncomfortable, or force you to work hard to access its pleasures, the same way that in real life true pleasure is usually a by-product of hard work and discomfort’ (‘Interview’ 128). Similarly, one might look to Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer’s chapter ‘The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception’ in their 1944 *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, which has heavily influenced Žižek’s work. Like Wallace and Žižek, Adorno and Horkheimer characterise mass media as a mechanism by which capitalist society is able to engineer a docile citizenry. This describes a complex series of interdependent relationships where magazines, television, films and radio programmes dictate to their audiences what their

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<sup>35</sup> The choice of *A Clockwork Orange* is an interesting one not least because the film itself can be read as an equally savage indictment of forced passivity. Think, for example, of the scene where Alex is strapped to a chair, with his eye lids hooked back, and forced to watch televisual messages as a means of indoctrination.

consumptive needs are which is, in turn, magazines, television, films and radio programmes and in doing so one's attention is diverted from other socio-economic problems. In similar terms to Wallace's notion of mass media 'rewarding spectatorship', Adorno and Horkheimer describe the 'incurable sickness of all entertainment' (109) in these words: 'Amusement congeals into boredom, since, to be amused, it must cost no effort and therefore moves strictly along the well-worn grooves of association' (109). The writers admonish standardized, mind-numbing, repetitive, disengaging, and passive labour, which they argue characterise the late-capitalist age and its 'culture industry', and celebrate, as Wallace does, the intellectual effort that is able to disrupt 'the conformism of the consumers' and the 'reproduction of sameness' (109). In Wallace's vocabulary, as with Žižek and Adorno and Horkheimer, there is the re-emergence of what is by now a familiar distinction: Wallace attributes to the profiteering shallow irony of commercial culture an incubated 'passivity' whilst at the same time arguing that 'serious' art requires work.

Whilst Wallace might have shifted focus from the advent of mass print to the advent of mass media, he is still mobilising the same narratives evident at the start of the twentieth century and articulated by writers such as Pound or George Soule. Indeed, in his description of the 'spittle-chinned' and 'slack-jawed' one even senses something of the vitriol so commonly associated with Pound. However, it is not enough for Wallace to diagnose the problem; one must also try to address it. Wallace's emphasis is on 'remedying', which, he argues, a text such as *Pale Fire* does not attempt to do, instead opting only for ridicule and 'ironic diagnosis of unpleasantness'. Although not my understanding of the novel, which I have argued does contain a political agenda associated with the dismantling of coercive and authoritarian impulses, one can perhaps sympathise with Wallace, since, even on this point Nabokov does concentrate any such social critique through the lens of irony. Wallace further makes this aim clear in the interview: 'In dark times, the definition of good art would seem to

be art that locates and applies CPR to those elements of what's human and magical that still live and glow despite the time's darkness' (131). 'The problem isn't that today's readership is *dumb*', Wallace explains, '[j]ust that TV and the commercial-art culture's trained it to be sort of lazy and childish in its expectations' (128). The author's role, then, must be one of retraining. Elsewhere, Wallace states: 'And that if the writer does his job right, what he basically does is remind the reader of how smart the reader is. Is to wake the reader up to stuff that the reader's been aware of all the time' (Lipsky 82). Yet, how might one go about doing this? How might one apply CPR to the corpse that postmodernism has left behind? How might one wake up the reader? Or, to put it another way, how might *Infinite Jest* the novel help to challenge what 'Infinite Jest' the film represents? For Wallace, this is the central and perhaps only question worth answering.

Using the 'essay-interview nexus' as a starting point the second half of this chapter will demonstrate, through a close analysis of *Infinite Jest's* 388 endnotes, that in order to instigate a project of redemption Wallace attempts to redeploy certain modernist and late-modernist annotative strategies. Like Moore and Olson, Wallace uses his notes as a mechanism through which to cultivate a readership that can become reinvigorated in the process both of selecting and engaging with the cultural materials at their disposal. The figure of the note as handled by Wallace becomes a pedagogical tool through which he can enact his project of retraining. The note allows him, in other words, to instil in his reader a desire to participate and expend effort so that he might finally reject the seduction of commercial art. However, in making this argument I find myself directly opposed to one of the few other essays within Wallace studies that is solely about his use of notes. In his 2012 'Encyclopaedic Novels and the Craft of Fiction: *Infinite Jest's* Endnotes', David Letzler argues that 'we would have an awfully difficult time explaining why so many of the novel's notes seem simply to supply accurate information of the blandest kind' (305). In fact, citing *Pale Fire*, he



asks his reader to imagine ‘how *Pale Fire* would have read if Charles Kinbote spent most of his annotations telling us things such as “BPD” (307) stands for “Boston Police Department” (306).

Letzler concludes, ultimately, that Wallace’s notes are ‘basically pointless’ (307), contending that very few directly add to or propel the action of the novel with the majority comprising digressive asides, jargon-ridden definitions, and ostensibly redundant supplementary information. In order to characterise such notes he introduces the term ‘cruft’: ‘In most cases, the information dubbed “cruft” by editors is not inaccurate, but simply of minimal use, whether because it is trivial or simply incomprehensible’ (308). To give an example of the kind of note that Letzler has in mind, take note five. Wallace informs the reader that ‘Michael Premulis [...] rarely ingests any ‘drines before a match’ before then including a sub-note, which defines and lists at length the chemical properties of ‘drines, beginning thus: ‘Tenuate’s the trade name of diethylpropion hydrochloride, Marion Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals, technically a prescription antiobesity agent, favoured by some athletes for its mildly euphoric and resources-rallying properties [...]’ (983). Writing about this note and other similar ones, Letzler argues that their ‘function is difficult to explain or justify’ (307) and again that ‘I doubt anyone could make a coherent argument for their significance’ (307). On this particular point, the ‘drines note will, in fact, be discussed in more detail towards the end of the chapter where I will do exactly what Letzler claims is impossible.

Letzler’s mistake, I propose, is that he conflates the apparent redundancy and triviality of certain notes with the annotative framework in its entirety. However, as I will demonstrate, there clearly are significant notes and even those that appear superfluous serve a key purpose within Wallace’s literary and cultural project. Indeed, as Wallace concedes, the note is ‘an irritant’ that ‘requires a little extra work and so they have to be really germane’ (Lipsky 78). Unlike Letzler, my argument hinges on a recognition that they are absolutely germane, both

to one's understanding of the novel and to Wallace's wider aims. In responding to a saturated mass commercial media, Wallace argues, unlike Nabokov or Olson, that the promotion of participation alone is not sufficient enough a response. Like Eliot and Jones, Wallace establishes the need to instigate a hierarchy between valuable and non-valuable information, just as with Wikipedia. Indeed, by distinguishing between 'serious art', a term Eliot also uses, and mass commercial media, Wallace is already involved in the act of cultural discrimination in a manner opposed by the far more textually inclusive works of Olson or Moore. There must be, harking back to Eliot, an available strategy or mechanism for evaluating with what one ought to engage.

Wallace makes this clear in 'E Unibus Pluram': 'Jacking the number of choices and options up with better tech will remedy exactly nothing so long as no sources of insight on comparative worth, no guides to *why* and *how* to choose among experiences, fantasies, beliefs and predilections are permitted serious consideration in US culture' (75 – 76). In suggesting such a hierarchy, Wallace is in direct opposition to not only the user-orientated and non-hierarchical modes of *Pale Fire* and hypertext, but also their privileging of multilinearity, which is the narratological equivalent of 'jacking the number of choices and options up'. As with Kirby, Wallace is pressing upon the limits of participation and specifically the kind of facile participation that exists without direction and has produced, in Kirby's terms, 'a cultural desert'. Indeed, in his 2014 monograph *The Iron Bars of Freedom: David Foster Wallace and the Postmodern Self*, Stefan Hirt traces a line of thinking throughout Wallace's work that argues he saw a causal relationship between the pluralistic, non-hierarchical and user-defined systems privileged by postmodernity, such as *Pale Fire* and hypertext, and the addiction-ridden, superficial and populist society Wallace attacks (64 – 68). This same connection is addressed by Gilles Lipovetsky in his concept of hypermodernism, when he argues postmodernism is defined by 'machinery of excess' that, as Wallace also suggests,

produces ‘the mania for consumption, the practice of drug-taking in athletics [...] compulsions and addiction’ (159).

The purpose of the notes that Letzler so quickly and emphatically disregards is to recreate within the novel the same saturated literary and cultural landscape that exists beyond it. Wallace does this to advocate the necessity of sifting in order, like with Eliot’s notes in *The Waste Land*, to instigate a methodology of ‘comparative worth’ to determine relative value. The so-called trivial notes exist to create an annotative ‘machinery of excess’ so that the reader has to work in order to discern which notes *are* directly significant, either because they reveal an essential piece of information or propel the plot forward. In the wake of postmodernism’s cultural relativity and the privileging of local narratives, Wallace aims to persuade that such a sifting of information is required in the first instance and then provide an opportunity for the reader to enact that strategy. As with Eliot and Otlet, Wallace is reintroducing the necessity of differentiating marble from chalk. Crucially, though, unlike Jones and Pound, Wallace does not turn to the authoritarian, since he does not relapse into coercion or attempt to instruct the reader in the manner of *In Parenthesis* or *The Anathemata*. It is also significant that, again unlike Jones and Pound, Wallace does not attempt to apply his methodology of ‘comparative worth’ beyond the parameters of the novel, instead encouraging the reader to discriminate between fictional notes, with the hope, one can assume, of applying this newly trained eye to the world of mass commercial media. As such, he also utilises the same kind of oblique structure that Moore would make use of in her poetry, constructing through the figure of the note certain aptitudes, in this case the necessity of sifting, which are conducive to his artistic goals, without resorting to explicit demands or instructions.

Thus, in his rejection of postmodern irony and by placing him alongside Eliot and Jones, on the one hand, and Moore and Olson, on the other, I agree with Marshall Boswell’s

description of Wallace as a ‘nervous member of some still-unnamed (and perhaps unnameable) third wave of modernism’ (1). Critics have conceded that locating Wallace in a wider contextual net such as this is necessary for his continued analysis. In his review of the 2011 collection of essays titled *Consider David Foster Wallace*, Stephen Burn makes the case that Wallace critics operate within an insular framework by which he means there has as of yet been no concerted attempt to situate Wallace in a wider literary framework. Burn thus suggests that ‘a richer sense of Wallace’s achievements and importance is likely to arise from an approach that puts him back into a larger literary and cultural matrix’ (468). Through a discussion of his annotative strategies, this is what I hope to supply. *Infinite Jest*, then, represents a bringing into focus of the multiple phylogenetic lines and branches that this dissertation has sought to trace. It is a gargantuan and barely manageable meditation on what it is possible to do with the literary note, and, in this, it is a comprehensive simulation of the various epistemic directions and quirks evident in Eliot, Moore, Jones, Olson, and Nabokov. There is, then, no better and more fitting end to this project than David Foster Wallace’s annotative practice.

### **Answering the Door: The Post-Nabokovian Note**

‘Having to read footnotes’, playwright Noel Coward once mused, ‘resembles having to go downstairs to answer the door while in the midst of love making’ (qtd. in Zerby 23). Coward is employing the imagery of lovemaking, here, to chastise and discount annotation in much the same way that critics throughout the twentieth century have done. The narrative is by now well-known and is evident in the above discussion of Letzler: notes are not conducive to pleasure, but, and especially in Coward’s case, a supremely disagreeable interruption. Yet, in the context of Wallace’s views on seduction and passivity, Coward’s image, tongue in cheek

as it may be, provides a useful starting point for discussing Wallace's attempt to confront the malaise he attributed to contemporary society and further the role that annotation plays in this. If the note represents, for Coward, the abandonment of lovemaking then the prose to which the notes are attached, in this case the main body of *Infinite Jest*, become the embodiment of the sexual congress that has been temporarily deserted. To put it another way, if following a citation is the textual equivalent of forsaking one's seducer then, it follows, the text to which they are appended is the temptress to whom one desires a swift return. This is, as I will demonstrate, an apt description of how Wallace's prose functions. In a similar manner to that of *Pale Fire*, as such exposing the postmodern baggage that Wallace could not escape, the main body of *Infinite Jest* is a simulation of the seduction of its reader that is eschewed in the essay-interview nexus. Through techniques such as piecemeal storytelling, cumulative clauses, excessively long paragraphs, the suspension of essential narrative details, and the frequent use of analepsis and prolepsis, Wallace attempts to compel his reader to continue reading and turning pages at all costs, as he becomes more and more invested in the fictional world being described. Wallace has inherited from *Pale Fire*, then, the strategy of simulating that which he wishes to rebuke: he is constructing his narrative in such a way as to compel his reader to enact and become complicit in the very thing that he wishes him to challenge. This rhetorical technique relies on the reader recognising the disjunction between the main body of the text and its notes and as such acknowledging the self-imposed collusion before then censuring it.

Reading the novel becomes an addictive process just as watching 'Infinite Jest' and taking drugs were for its characters. The reader becomes ensnared in a reading experience that, at over 1000 pages long, might last weeks, months, or even years, and he is all the time chasing the thrill of finally seeing its various and disparate threads tied together, only for this ultimately to be withheld. There is no climax in the conventional sense and the reader closes

the novel's final page still seeking a sense of closure that he worked so hard to attain. In this, the novel is attempting to dramatize the nature and condition of addiction and as such, it is able structurally to reinforce its thematic content. Through these structural techniques, the novel is able not only to describe the consequences of addiction, but it also seeks to replicate them and to inject into its reader a sense of what it might mean to be addicted. *Infinite Jest* is not simply *about* addiction, it is also an embodied textual experience of it. This fact is gestured towards throughout the novel when its characters attempt to grapple with the nature of the habit they have acquired. At one point, for instance, the narrator describes 'substance-addicted people' (203) as suffering from 'Analysis-Paralysis' (203), which means they are unable to engage in any meaningful way with the world around them. The ability to pause, reflect and critically examine what has been read or said is closed off from those afflicted by addiction. This is the same disposition that Wallace attacks in the essay-interview nexus and that the main body of his novel attempts to cultivate, only to then, through the figure of the note, challenge it. Continuing, then, with Coward's observation, Wallace's notes provide the opportunity and the textual environment for the rejection of this seduction and as such, the host/parasite relationship between notes and main body is inverted. The notes become a structural and thematic antidote to the intentionally and ironically seductive quality of the text to which they are attached and, as such, it is within them, and not the main body, that Wallace's cultural and pedagogical aims are fulfilled.

In his 1995 'The Rhetoric of Drugs' Jacques Derrida grapples with drug addiction in much the same way that Wallace does in *Infinite Jest*. The addict, Derrida contends, 'may at once seek repression and a release from repression [...] and to this end the addict uses a "technique", a technical supplement' (235). In the context of *Infinite Jest*, this 'technique' or 'supplement' takes the shape of an endnote and it is through the figure of the note that Wallace is able to confront the culture of addiction that he describes in order then to attempt

to ‘remedy’ it. As such, Wallace has engineered, through the figure of the note, an opportunity for the reader to overcome the ‘passive spectation’ that the main body of the novel simulates. However, as will become clear, such participation is only the first step. When one arrives at the notes, Wallace then encourages and insists upon the necessity of sifting between the valuable and non-valuable information he finds there. The chapter will now proceed by examining instances where the novel seems most complicit with the seduction of its reader. I will then discuss how its annotative practices, in the name of modernism and late-modernism, provide the opportunity for one to stop this seduction whilst all the time being attentive to how this is a simulation and satire of the cultural dynamics denigrated in the essay-interview nexus.

One need only glance at the plot of the novel to see how the issue of seduction becomes one of its major thematic concerns. With the action primarily revolving around the Enfield Tennis Academy and the Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House, *Infinite Jest* tells the story of a newly merged USA and Canada now known as the Organization of North American Nations (ONAN) and presided over by ex-Las Vegas crooner Johnny Gentle. With Gentle’s master plan being to transform north-eastern USA and parts of Canada into a hazardous waste dump Quebecois terrorists seek what is known throughout the novel as ‘The Entertainment’ or, by its given title, ‘Infinite Jest’. This is a film created by tennis extraordinaire come avant-gardist James Icardenza, founder of the ETA and father to the novel’s protagonist, which is apparently so enthralling that its viewers would rather die watching than tear themselves away from the screen. Hoping to stop Gentle’s plan various anti-ONAN groups seek the tape with their aim being to create a weapon of mass distraction; death, quite literally, by infinite jest. The culture of addiction that is articulated through ‘The Entertainment’ is mirrored by and runs parallel to the subplot concerning drug addiction and, in fact, this is a point that Gately explains towards the end of the novel: ‘A drug addict’s

second most meaningful relationship is always with his domestic entertainment unit, TV/VCR or HDTP' (834). Indeed, it is said in the novel that the power of 'The Entertainment' comes from an ability to neurologically replicate the effects of drug abuse and as such it becomes 'an optimal dopamine-cue' (233).

It does not require too much imagination, then, to read 'Infinite Jest' as an allegory for the passive and seductive relationship between television and its viewers that Wallace depicts in the 'essay-interview nexus'. This is further made clear in one of the more transparent exchanges of the novel between Remy Maranthe and Hugh Steeply, the former a member of the most prominent anti-ONAN sect (the Wheelchair Assassins) and the latter a government agent who goes undercover in the guise of 'Helen' to find out about 'The Entertainment' from James's eldest son Orin. In this exchange, Maranthe deliberates on the kind of society that would both create and be pleased by something such as 'The Entertainment'. He begins with this observation: 'This is a USA production, this Entertainment cartridge. Made by an American man in the USA. The appetite for the appeal of it: this is also USA. The USA drive for spectation, which your culture teaches' (318). Immediately, one notices the use of 'spectation': the exact same word that Wallace used in his interview. Maranthe continues: 'A USA that would die – and let its children die, each one – for the so-called perfect Entertainment, this film. Who would die for this chance to be fed this death of pleasure with spoons, in their warm homes, alone, unmoving' (318). The use of the 'spoon' image, here, has clear resonances with the administration of narcotics and especially heroin use, but, crucially, also the notion of information being 'spoon fed'. Wallace is establishing a connection between the two where commercial mass media, taken to its logical conclusion in the form of 'The Entertainment', is little different to addiction and the 'ennui' it produces in the addict. At this point, Maranthe reveals that his strategy will not be to force the video on to people, but to rather allow them to choose: 'Us, we will force



nothing on USA persons in their warm homes. We will make only available. Entertainment. There will be then some choosing to partake or choose not to' and later on in the same exchange '[t]his appetite to choose death by pleasure if it is available to choose – this *appetite* of your people unable to choose appetites, *this* is the death' (319).

Furthermore, by virtue of the employment of various narrative techniques the novel is able structurally to reinforce this thematic concern with seduction. Katherine Hayles draws attention to the possibility that *Infinite Jest* is in collusion with that which it appears to satirise when she writes: 'If part of the text's project is to explore the US fascination with Entertainment and offer alternatives to it, what of the text's own status as Entertainment?' (185). Take, for instance, the opening of the novel. From the nonsensical subtitle declaring the date to be the 'Year of the Glad' (3), the novel plunges its reader *in media res* as we enter a scene that has little to no contextual markers: we have no idea who Uncle Charles, CT, or Mr DeLint is, or, more crucially, who the narrator is. This sense of unfamiliarity and disquiet is only heightened by the wonderfully vacuous description of the speaker being 'surrounded by heads and bodies' (3) and that 'three faces have resolved into place about summer-weight sportcoats and half-Windsors across a polished pine conference table shiny with the spidered light of an Arizona noon' (3). However, one's continued reading is soon ostensibly rewarded when one of the heads, speaking to the as yet unknown narrator, reveals: 'You are Harold Incandenza eighteen, date of secondary-school graduation approximately one month from now, attending the Enfield Tennis Academy, Enfield, Massachusetts, a boarding school, where you reside' (3). Despite its matter-of-fact delivery, this revelation only serves to tease the reader even more: it appears to give the reader the assurance that he wants, but says nothing of *who* the narrator is, what he is doing in a room populated by 'heads and bodies', and perhaps most intriguingly *why* he describes them in such a manner. The description of the

narrator at once acknowledges the reader's thirst for narrative detail whilst at the same time it avoids providing anything of real importance.

This pattern of simultaneously recognising what the reader desires and then refusing to satiate it continues throughout the opening scene. After being repeatedly asked by the Dean to answer questions about his academic ability Hal at last responds with a lengthy monologue, punctuated by a story of his eating a mouldy sandwich: 'I *read* [...] I study and read. I bet I've read everything you've read. Don't think I haven't. I consume libraries. I wear out spines and ROM-drives. I do things like get in a taxi and say, "the library, and step on it." My instincts concerning syntax and mechanics are better than your own, I can tell, with due respect' (12). The irony of this last sentence is soon made clear. Upon delivering his speech, Hal is met with cries of disbelief and anguish from the Dean and his staff as they pin him to the floor before demanding to know why Hal's speech was in fact comprised of 'subanimalistic noises and sounds' (13) declaring him to be 'communicatively challenged' (14). Just as Hal is shipped away in an ambulance and it appears the reader might at last discover the nature of his ailment and find something to co-ordinate our reading, the novel skips to an unrelated narrative of a drug addict eagerly awaiting a shipment of marijuana that, significantly, does not arrive. Like the expectant pot smoker, we too are left waiting for a textual high that will never come. Reading these opening sections, one becomes like the Dean, with the novel coming to resemble the grimacing Hal: *Infinite Jest* too is 'communicatively challenged' and despite our best interpretative efforts, it seems to remain so. However, what makes this all the more fascinating is that the novel appears to be aware of its own compromised status. It purposely denies its reader textual gratification and as such draws him further and further into the novel, forcing him to be seduced and in the process to become addicted.

That the novel is itself an act of seduction is, in fact, implied by its title. By manipulating a recursive loop between the title of the novel and the title of the video Wallace draws a connection between the two: what the eponymous video does to its viewer perhaps the novel also does to *its* reader. As a case in point, one needs look no further than the video's first victim. Described as an 'ear-nose-throat consultant to the personal physician of Prince Q\_\_\_\_\_, the Saudi Minister of Home Entertainment' (33) the medical attaché discovers the film, a 'standard black entertainment cartridge' that is 'wholly unlabelled and not in any sort of colourful or informative or inviting cartridge' (36), whilst deciding on his evening's entertainment. At this point in the novel the attaché's story arc is left with him watching the video and then, over forty pages later, returned to with the attaché now described as having soiled himself whilst 'the expression on his rictus of a face nevertheless appeared very positive, ecstatic even' (79). Breaking away again for several more pages, the arc finally concludes with the reader being informed that several other people, all of whom were looking for the attaché, have also become hooked: 'all were watching the recursive loop the medical attaché had rigged on the TP's viewer the night before, sitting and standing there very still and attentive, looking not one bit distressed or in any way displeased, even though the room smelled very bad indeed' (87). In this, the supremely ironic gesture of the attaché sub-plot is that the reader is encouraged to become exactly like him. Wallace has organised the story in such a way that gratification is suspended across almost one hundred pages and in each case the particular segment ends with the reader wanting more. One is compelled, like the attaché and further like the 'slack jawed' and 'spittle chinned' specimens of the essay-interview nexus, to continue reading and to remain tuned in.

The technique of forcing the reader of *Infinite Jest* to act in a similar manner to the viewer of 'Infinite Jest' is further reinforced by the typographical location of its endnotes. The vast majority of numerical callouts throughout the novel are located in the middle of a

sentence despite the convention across all style guides to place it after the terminal punctuation. Using the first sixty callouts as a test case one discovers that only nine are at the end of the sentence meaning that a total of fifty-one or 85% are placed in the middle. Take, for example, callout 24 located in the following and much longer sentence in which James meets his future wife and Hal's mother, Avril: 'The tall, ungainly, socially challenged and hard-drinking Dr. Incandenza's May-December\* marriage to one of the few bona fide bombshell-type females in North American academia, the extremely tall and high strung but also extremely pretty and gainly and teetotalling and classy Dr Avril Mondragon [...]' (64). The sentence continues for almost a whole paragraph and it is another 100 words before it reaches a full stop. This pattern is replicated across all 388 notes. Perhaps more so than with any other text discussed in this dissertation the decision of whether or not to consult a note is weighted against the reader here. In other words, the novel is written in such a way as to attempt to dissuade the reader from consulting its notes.

To explain this further, take the 150 word sentence cited in part above, which includes the callout for note 25. Despite the length of the sentence, the callout appears after only thirteen words. What this means is that at the thirteenth word the reader is presented with a choice: turn to the back of the book and read the note or continue the sentence to its end. Had the note come at the end of the sentence the reader might have been inclined to choose option one, but given that the sentence has only just started it is perhaps hard to believe that even the most dedicated reader would stop mid-sentence. This is only compounded by the nature of the sentence. The sentence is structured around a description of James and Avril with several modifiers attached to the two subjects. James is described, for example, as 'tall, ungainly, socially challenged and hard-drinking' and Avril as 'one of the few bona fide bombshell-type females in North American academia, the extremely tall and high strung but also extremely pretty and gainly and teetotalling and classy'.

The tempo of the sentence, then, dictates that one continues reading it to the end: to do otherwise and so to read the note would mean breaking away from an incrementally developing description of either James or Avril. The further consequence is that because of the sentence's length when it *is* completed, when one arrives at a position where the note might be consulted there is the risk that the reader might no longer recognise the benefit of removing himself from the story to consult a note that was specified over 100 words earlier. No sooner has one noticed Wallace's callout whilst in the process of finishing the sentence that it runs the risk of becoming redundant: the gap between registering the existence of a note and arriving at a point in the novel where one might break away from the main text is too large, and the temptation to continue onto the next sentence can become too much to warrant revisiting the note.

This argument is especially relevant to the section titled 'Autumn – Year of Dairy Production from the American Heartland'. One of the most exhilarating passages in the novel, this section details Don Gately's accidental murder of a Canadian VIP with connection to various anti-ONAN groups during a robbery. The section contains a total of nine callouts beginning with note 12 on page 55 and ending with note 20 on page 59. The callout for each note is located mid-sentence. The section begins by charting Gately's criminal career and then describes his robbery of the VIP including how he tied him to a chair, gagged him, and the man, afflicted with a cold and blocked nostrils, slowly suffocating once Gately had left. The highlight of the section is a sentence that is over a page and a half long and contains three of the nine notes. In this sentence, Wallace masterfully suspends for its whole length knowledge of whether or not the VIP has actually died by persistently adding modifiers and clauses. No description I can offer, though, can truly capture the scene and thus it is worth quoting at length:

[...] this homeowner, unquestionably a VIP, although admittedly rather a covert VIP, or probably more accurately a ‘PIT’\* in French, this meek-looking Canadian-terrorism-coordinator – bound to his chair, thoroughly gagged, sitting there, alone, under the cold fluorescent kitchen lights,\* the rhinovirally afflicted man, gagged with skill and quality materials – the guy, having worked so hard to practically clear one clotted nasal passage that he tore intercostal ligaments in his ribs, soon found even that pinprick of air blocked off by mucus’s implacable lava-like flow once again, and so has to tear more ligaments trying to breach the other nostril, and so on; and after an hour of struggle and flames in his chest [...] (59).

Aside from admiring the majesty of the prose, the point is that Wallace presents an addictive and seductive prose and he juxtaposes this with the implicit requirement for the reader to remove himself from the passage and to go to the notes. However, the lure of the passage and the compulsion to discover the fate of the VIP, I contend, completely subjugates the structural draw of the note. Thus, Wallace is manipulating the typographical convention of annotation exactly so that it does not provoke effort, but, in fact, entices the reader to submit to the passage’s supremely seductive prose.

This, however, is precisely the genius of *Infinite Jest* and further the genius of the annotative strategies that it employs. Despite the persistent narrative cajoling *not* to read the notes, for the novel to make any sense one *must* turn to the back and do so. Without the notes, one’s understanding of the novel would be impoverished, since, as quickly becomes apparent, they contain vital information. Timothy Jacobs, for instance, describes the novel as having a ‘participatory aesthetic’ where readers ‘take valuable information from the notes and come away with the sense that they have actually participated jointly in the game’ (226). Similarly, investigating the existence of temporal gaps in the novel, Iannis Goerlandt has argued that the notes provide a way for the reader to realign the chronology as they supply ‘information

needed by readers later on to understand the narrative'. In the pursuit of understanding, Goerlandt argues, the reader is forced to consult the notes and to construct with their help the correct timeline (322). Like Jacobs, Toon Staes speaks of the novel creating an 'aesthetics of interactivity' (416) in which the 'the Notes and Errata that make up the novel's final ninety-six pages [...] are further indications that *Infinite Jest* reinforces the idea that the reader has to put in a fair share of work in order to keep track of narrative events' (415). Without rejecting the seduction of the prose and fixing one's attention on the note, one would not know, for instance, how the Wheelchair Assassins came into being, as detailed in the two page note 304. The reader would also not fully appreciate the poignancy of Avril's relationship to her children, as explored through letters and supplementary dialogue in the four page note 110, and one would have to read half the novel before realising who the director of 'Infinite Jest' is, rather than finding it out within only a few pages in note 24. Given that certain notes are required for a full understanding of the novel, there is clearly a distinction between Wallace's annotative strategy and that of *Pale Fire* or hypertext. As with Wikipedia, there is not the same promotion of a non-hierarchical and user-defined system, since certain notes are essential and, as such, forging one's own pathway through the text in a multilinear fashion becomes highly problematic for the reader of *Infinite Jest*.

As a further example, take note 18 that is included in the long passage quoted from above. If one were able to overcome the seduction of the passage and answer the door of the citation then one would be met with one of the first moments where the up until now disparate elements of the plot are brought together. In this note one discovers that on top of the VIP's safe is a 'top-hole genuine InterLace state-of-the-art TP/viewer ensemble [...] with a cartridge-dock and double-head drive [...] and several shelves crammed tight with upscale arty-looking film cartridges' (985). The note continues to describe how Gately's college 'just about drooled all over the parquet flooring at the potential discriminating-type-fence-value of,

potentially, if they were rare or celluloid-transferred or not available on InterLace Dissemination Grid' (985). In other words, what has been discovered here amongst these artsy-looking videotapes in the home of a VIP planning an insurgency is none other than the weapon of that revolution: 'Infinite Jest'. After reading about the attaché only a few chapters earlier and the potent affect that the tape has on its victims, an attentive reader would almost certainly not overlook the lexical choice of 'drooling'. Nor, would one overlook the connection between addiction-fuelled pursuit of money that the passage describes and the addiction-inducing video glanced at in its note. Thus, not to read the note, here, would be to limit one's experience of *Infinite Jest*, not least because one would miss one of the rare moments where narrative strands seem to come together, albeit only for the space of a single footnote.

In this way, Wallace is simulating in the main body of *Infinite Jest* the structural seduction of his reader and the notes become the space in which this narrative might be challenged. The novel demands of its readers that, like Coward's Lothario, they must overthrow their seducer by encoding into this notes vital informational and this is the fault line along which Wallace's stated aims in the essay-interview nexus are played out. If 'TV-type art's biggest hook is that it's figured out a way to *reward* passive spectatorship', as Wallace contends, then *Infinite Jest* has discovered a way to reward active participation. Writing about the significance of 'Infinite Jest' the film, Boswell makes a similar point: 'The film reverses the Genesis archetype in that choosing to eat of the fruit – that is, to watch the film, consigns one to infantilism, whereas refusing the temptation grants one adultlike control over one's will and affirms one's obligation to something other than one's own pleasure' (135). This is precisely the choice that the reader is confronted with when reading the novel's main body: to succumb to its seduction and continue reading or refuse temptation and follow a given citational path and, as such, cultivate a 'participatory aesthetic' and regain 'adultlike control



over one's will'. As Eugenio Martinez, a staffer at Ennet House, points out, 'your personal will is the web your Disease sits and spins in [...] The will you call your own ceased to be yours who knows how many Substance-drenched years ago. It's now shot through with the spidered fibrosis of your Disease' (357). Wallace is providing his reader an opportunity, through the figure of the note, to reclaim his agency.

In his essay 'Consider the Note' Ira Nadel argues that Wallace's notes 'demonstrate the active intellectual and creative energy of Wallace on and off the page while also exhibiting the double consciousness of the text' (219). Nadel qualifies this by arguing that Wallace's notes 'confirmed and justified his fractured consciousness' and that they 'disrupt the surface of his text' through 'unleashing additional vectors of thought at the same time they corroborated a statement' (218). Patricia Dunker makes a similar comment about annotation more generally when she describes notes as 'the unconsciousness of the text. It's buried there producing all its dream because the footnote sometimes contains the text that the author didn't dare to write and those are the best. It's always the nether regions that give you away' (qtd in Boswell 154 – 155). To build on these suggestions, one can say that the notes provide an alternative textual environment to the imposed seduction: they exhibit a 'double consciousness' *because* they run counter to the main narrative of the text.

Further, it is only once one has rejected the seduction of the main body and showed a willingness to participate that Wallace is able to complete his cultural project by also encouraging the necessity of sifting and determining notes of value and non-value. As an example of how Wallace has achieved this, recall note 18. Surrounding this highly significant note, there are also notes that Letzler would undoubtedly designate 'cruft'. Note 12, for example, contains a taxonomic breakdown of meperidine hydrochloride and a fictional account of its legality under O.N.A.N (984). Moreover, note 15 explains that the ATF is The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, despite being very obvious from the

text what it would designate (985). Similarly, note 23 defines ONR as the Office of Naval Research (985). Examples such as these are plentiful across the novel. The previously mentioned note 304 is surrounded by notes such as 295 that explains BHA means the Boston Housing Authority (1054), which is again implied by the surrounding context, or note 299, which informs the reader that GIGABUCKS (714) is copyrighted by the Commonwealth of MA's Lottery Authority (1055). Even those notes that are themselves highly important often require internal sifting. Note 24, for instance, is a highly detailed filmography of James Incandenza, which includes roughly 100 entries and runs to nine pages of text. Each entry includes details on camera and production specifications, film length, release date and other pieces of information. Of these 100 or so entries, only a couple are arguably of significance, which are those that reveal Incandenza as the creator of 'Infinite Jest'. This strategy, repeated across the novel, achieves two things. First, it encourages one to expend labour, since the reader must continue going back to the notes repeatedly as it is impossible to determine which will be important without reading them. Second, the reader is encouraged to recognise and perform, in Otlet's words, a procedure of distinguishing between chalk and marble. Wallace is training his reader to be attentive to what holds 'comparative worth' within the context of the novel and in this, unlike Nabokov, he is resisting the postmodern promotion of value being user-defined and existing within a non-hierarchical system that encourages participation without direction.

Thus, if the main body of the novel is a corollary to the Entertainment, then, the notes are, in both their provocation to participate and by necessitating a strategy of sifting and delineating 'comparative worth', a corollary to the DMZ that was created to counteract the seduction of James's creation. The notes come to be the rehabilitation programme to the addictive compulsion of the text, its AA. Wallace uses 'The Disease' in order to come to terms with a much wider cultural crisis concerning seduction and addiction and in both the

case of drug addiction and the ‘The Entertainment’, the note is held up to be the interruption of that abuse. The notes encourage a renewed need for participation as opposed to the ‘passive spectation’ of mass commercial media and they also augment that participation by inculcating a necessity of discovering ‘comparative worth’. That the notes function as an antidote to the addiction described is also true at a thematic level. Let us return for a moment to note 5, about which Letzler claimed ‘I doubt anyone could make a coherent argument for their significance’. In a fictional world where everyone is addicted to something be it crack, cannabis, alcohol, tennis, TV, or Demerol, the substance of the novel and what most distinguishes it from the playfulness of *Pale Fire*, is its visceral and unyielding depiction of addiction. What is significant about the above note, in response to Letzler, is that it captures and extrapolates the material conditions of the addiction that the novel’s characters battle against. The reader is confronted, here, with the reality of ‘The Disease’ as addiction is often labelled: the note serves to peel back and lay bare the ingredients of addiction in such a manner as to strip away any residual glamour or excitement that one might ascribe to it. What Letzler sees as pointless is the stylistic culmination of this attempt to make clinical what otherwise might seem to be alluring: Wallace has taken the exhilarating outcome of drug addiction and then, through the note, rendered it tedious and unpalatable.

Despite the novel ostensibly having no resolution, Wallace himself made it clear that such a conclusion could and indeed should be found. In an online interview conducted May 17 1996 a user named Herb asked the following: ‘Is there no “ending” to *Infinite Jest* because there couldn’t be? Or did you just get tired of writing?’ Wallace replied:

There is an ending as far as I’m concerned. Certain kinds of parallel lines are supposed to start converging in such a way that an “end” can be projected by the reader somewhere beyond the right frame. If no such convergence or projection

occurred to you, then the book's failed for you ('Interview with David Foster Wallace').

Further still, Wallace responded to his editor's concern that the novel lacked an ending by stating that 'the answers all [exist], but just past the last page' (qtd. in Boswell 64). Arguably, Wallace is referring to the novel's notes, here. The ending of the novel reveals that James created 'Infinite Jest' in order to draw Hal out of himself: whereas Hal is physically active, but unable to experience emotional attachments, the victims of the movie are physically incapacitated, but they *do* at least feel the exhilaration of watching the film. James's intention was to allow his son to feel the joy of infinite jest in order to disrupt what he elsewhere describes as 'a bona fide intensity-of-interior-life-type emotion' (694). However, it had the opposite effect and Hal becomes just like those 'spittle chinned' and 'slack jawed' viewers that Wallace chastises in the essay-interview nexus.

The DMZ is thus intended to propel Hal out of this imposed stagnation. Described by Pemulis as being 'synthesized from a derivative of fitviavi, an obscure mould that grows only on other moulds' the substance, when finally delivered by the wraith to Hal by way of a toothbrush, has the effect of finally allowing Hal to feel. Thus, in the very first scene of the novel Hal appears to be unable to communicate but it is in fact the first time that he no longer feels like a robot: 'I'm not a machine. I feel and believe' (12). The ending is not only told through the notes, as the story of the DMZ is revealed, but it is also about the notes. What the DMZ, the mould that grows on mould, does to Hal, the notes do to the reader: they force one to break free of the seduction imposed by 'Infinite Jest' in the case of Hal and *Infinite Jest* in the case of the reader.

Throughout this chapter, I have explored the competing annotative projects of *Pale Fire* and *Infinite Jest*. In addition to relying on an ironic citational structure in order to continue Olson's project of anti-authoritarianism by providing the reader with an opportunity

to reject what the novel otherwise compels, Nabokov also promotes a multilinear traversal of his novel. As with Nelson's hypertext, this further augments the novel's political agenda by creating a non-hierarchical and user-directed textual experience. However, whilst similarly promoting participation and even simulating seduction in order to reject it, *Infinite Jest* fundamentally differs from *Pale Fire* because Wallace resists Nabokov's attempt to cultivate a textual space that is, as above, non-hierarchical and user-directed. Instead, Wallace highlights the necessity of sifting through material and distinguishing between what is valuable and non-valuable, which involves enacting a cultural project of deciding on 'comparative worth'. This is Wallace's response to what he perceives, harking back to Eliot and Pound, as the denigrating force of commercial mass media. In comparing these two writers, I have also traced a path from Nabokov's postmodernism to what might be tentatively labelled post-postmodernism by arguing that Wallace reanimates certain modernist and late-modernist strategies in order to confront the legacy left behind by novels such as *Pale Fire*.

## Conclusion

Throughout the course of writing this dissertation, my aim has been a relatively straightforward one: to draw attention to and emphasise the significance of the literary note in twentieth-century literature. As stated in my introduction, the dissertation was borne out of a severe dissatisfaction with the current critical models and the available scholarship for dealing with and examining those end- and footnotes that one finds attached to some of the most enduring works of literature of the last century. It has been my object throughout to redress this grievance. For each of my chosen writers I have aimed to demonstrate that the note is integral to the wider cultural, political, and literary debates that each text both constructs and enters into, and, in fact, one might push this assertion even further: were it not for the figure of the note then poems such as *The Waste Land* and novels such as *Pale Fire* would have been inconceivable. In other words, the capacity for each of my chosen texts to fulfil their literary project is entirely dependent and intertwined with the structural mechanism of annotation. If a statement such as this now appears tenable or carries with it critical justification then this dissertation has achieved its goal. It is my ultimate aim that upon my reader next picking up a copy of one of the text's discussed, or indeed any annotated text, then rather than his eyes skipping over the notes, as may before have been the case, they are now instead determinedly affixed either to the bottom or the back of the book.

However, whilst the strength of my dissertation has been to provide a full reevaluation of the use of notes in, say, Eliot or Moore or Olson, it would be an error to think that the project is now complete. In order to make my case for a reconsideration of the note I have concentrated my analysis on six texts that I consider, for reasons of critical significance, to be the most immediately deserving of such attention. However, the consequence of this is that I have been obliged to disregard the hundreds of other texts that might well have been

examined. If the primary purpose of this dissertation has been to raise the status of the note in critical discussion and to demonstrate that there is the potential for a serious engagement with the literary note then my hope is that other annotated texts might, in the future, be investigated along similar lines. One might discuss, for instance, the role that notes play in Flann O'Brien and see a text such as *The Third Policeman* in a similar manner to how Brian McHale sees *Pale Fire*. Here, as in Nabokov's novel, the note is used to register the ironic dismantling of scholarly labour: as one is compelled to read the philosopher de Selby's increasingly inane and digressive asides and in the course of doing so expend effort in an attempt to reconcile his often impenetrable interpretation of the fictional world with the one presented in the main body of the text. The point for O'Brien is to simulate through the figure of the note the interpretative patterns of scholarly endeavour and at the same time to hold them up to ridicule. This argument reaches its logical conclusion at the end of *The Third Policeman* when one realises that the characters as well as the reader are doomed to repeat the novel again and again.

Whilst I have attempted throughout this dissertation to remain within the historical parameters of the twentieth century subsequent work on the note might usefully consider the rich body of annotated fiction released in the last decade: *House of Leaves*, *The People of Paper*, *The Selected Writings of TS Spivet*, *The Raw Shark Texts*, *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay*. *House of Leaves* is especially worth mentioning for both personal and literary reasons. The original idea for this thesis and my disappointment with attempts to discuss the note can be traced back to my B.A. dissertation in which I examined how the notes to *House of Leaves* typographically mimic the epistemic strategies that one is forced to perform when reading the novel: as the eponymous house becomes ever larger so too does the leaves within which it is described as notes enclose notes that enclose notes. Irrespective of the future directions such studies might take, they will, I hope, demonstrate what I have

aimed also to demonstrate: the figure of the note is not only interesting or valuable, but, in fact, essential to any consideration of an annotated text. It is with a sincere sense of expectation and excitement that I wait to see such examinations take place.



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