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*THE CANTOS OF EZRA POUND: THE CANTOS PROJECT**

Abstract: This article evaluates the theoretical and historical underpinnings underlying the design of The Cantos Project, a digital research environment dedicated to *The Cantos of Ezra Pound*. It critiques annotation as conceived in print culture and investigates possibilities offered by the digital medium to correct its shortcomings, abuses and limitations. The electronic medium cannot change the aggressive stance of annotators towards the poem they gloss but can considerably alleviate its intrusive aspect by strategies of website management. Readers are thus empowered to make use of the critical apparatus on the website to the extent they need, without being overwhelmed, or even disturbed. The editor of The Cantos Project, Roxana Preda, has learned from the reception history of her predecessor, Carroll F. Terrell: the article spells out her conclusions, which are not only operating in her current annotation of *The Cantos* but give suggestions relevant for a general theory of annotation in the digital age.

Keywords: *The Cantos of Ezra Pound*, digital humanities, annotation, The Cantos Project, Pound studies, Carroll F. Terrell.

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Роксана ПРЕДА

«КАНТОС» ЭЗРЫ ПАУНДА
В ОНЛАЙН-ПРОЕКТЕ «КАНТОС»*

Аннотация: В статье обсуждаются теоретическая основа и исторический контекст создания исследовательского онлайн-проекта «Кантос», посвященного эпической поэме Э. Паунда, дается критическая оценка сложившейся в условиях письменно-печатной культуры традиции научного комментирования, рассматриваются возможности, которые открывают для комментария цифровые технологии, позволяющие преодолеть существующие ограничения, исправить ошибки и восполнить недостатки. Электронный ресурс не может изменить агрессивную природу комментирования, вторгающегося в художественный текст, но способен значительно смягчить ее благодаря стратегии сетевого администрирования. Сетевая форма позволяет защитить читателя от опасности «утонуть» в комментариях, от помех, которые может создавать комментарий, и предоставляет свободу пользоваться критическим аппаратом по мере необходимости. Редактор проекта Роксана Преда опиралась на опыт своего предшественника, Кэррола Ф. Террела; тезисы и идеи, сформулированные в ее статье, касаются не только практики комментирования «Кантос» в данном конкретном случае, но значимы для общей теории и практики научного комментирования эпохи цифровых технологий.

Ключевые слова: «Кантос Эзры Паунда», цифровые гуманитарные науки, научный комментарий, онлайн-проект «Кантос», Кэррол Ф. Террел.

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* Выражаю глубокую признательность Леону Сюретту за обсуждение теории научного комментария, в особенности за концепцию герменевтического круга, на которую я в настоящее время опираюсь в своей собственной практике комментирования.



THE CANTOS PROJECT

is dedicated to the study of

THE CANTOS OF EZRA POUND

(1917-1969)

There are the Alps. What is there to say about them?
They don't make sense. Fatal glaciers, crags cranks climb,
jumbled boulder and weed, pasture and boulder, scree,
et on l'entend, maybe, le refrain joyeux et léger.

(Basil Bunting. On the Flyleaf of Pound's Cantos)

I still remember my first Pound conference at Brunnenburg, 1997: scholars were buzzing about Kybernekia, a little website that glossed canto 81. A senior researcher, Angela Elliott, commented that it was high time we finally got down to verifying and supplementing Carroll F. Terrell's *Companion to The Cantos of Ezra Pound*, published in two volumes in 1980 and 1984. I was a fresh postdoc at the time and had learned with the *Companion*, as every student did. I found it slightly odd that someone more experienced should find it in need of verification but did not question the statement and still remember it very well more than twenty years since.

Kybernekia was only an experimental student-work that showed what possibilities existed in 1997: the project of re-annotating *The Cantos* had to wait until technology was ripe for the more complex website architecture that could do justice to the poem. The technology underlying The Cantos Project owes everything to the emergence of general use platforms like Joomla, WordPress or Drupal, bundles of software that can perform all the functions needed in matters of architecture of the site, search capabilities, annotation, and inclusion of multi-media. The project was finally made possible by the rise and development of digital humanities as an academic discipline after 2010. Universities and research councils started routinely sponsoring digital projects, editions, archives of correspondence, and databases, ensuring not only the high quality of internet platforms in the humanities, but also their perfectibility, sustainability, and security over time. This favourable context indicated that the time had come for the task of translating both *The Cantos* and the studies around it into the electronic medium.

I took up negotiations with New Directions for permission to present *The Cantos* digitally in open access in September 2011: the discussions lasted for more than a year. The result was uninspiring – I was permitted to show just six cantos in full text at any one time, so as not to compete with the print edition of the poem. It was a narrow ledge to stand on, but I found it was firm enough to proceed.

This initial permission set the overall framework for the website design: it was going to be a digital research environment (DRE) for *The Cantos* rather than an electronic annotated edition. Readers could have a record of the research on the poem, a gathering together of all the dispersed sources of information and interpretation, a virtual place where they could enjoy and/or study the poem on their own. The Cantos Project was designed as a “go to” place for anyone wishing to find out all the available information there is on any canto, together with new digital annotation to it appearing on the site serially, at the rhythm of approximately one canto a month. My priority was to concentrate on new annotation and publish results immediately, so that the website grows under the public eye and becomes usable from day one. Even with these main concerns, it took five years from the first copyright negotiations in 2011 to the start of full-time annotation work in February 2016, when the project was hosted by the University of Edinburgh and funded by the Leverhulme Trust. The essential requirement was to present the text of the canto with glosses appearing on the same page. Once I reached the seventh canto, I unpublished the first and replaced it with a *Companion* page that included just the annotation. While a canto in full text would be online for just six months, the *Companion* pages were always there, open to general users, students, and scholarly scrutiny. When New Directions reviewed the website in 2017, its directors were sufficiently impressed to allow me to display twelve cantos. That was a tremendous improvement: it meant that I could show a canto with full text and annotation for a full year before moving on.

The Cantos Project took the individual canto as focus. The goal was to create a study center for each poem in and for itself, trusting the search function of the website to provide the necessary indexing for the review of relationships. If for example, a student needs to know where “Circe” is mentioned in the poem or in available scholarship, the search function can at present display 29 occurrences on the site, showing the keyword in context, from Ur-I to Canto 41, which is the stage of development at

the moment of writing. The list naturally extends as the annotation work proceeds. The glosses to each canto are submitted to a board of scholars for peer-review before publication on the site. After that, they are open for critique and supplementation from its readers.

Taking account of *The Cantos* as a whole, providing full access to Pound's sources, connecting the poem to his journalism and correspondence were confident advances at spanning a bridge over the thirty-five years that had passed since the publication of Carroll F. Terrell's *Companion to The Cantos of Ezra Pound* so as to create what Terrell himself would have wished, an integrated and updatable system of information on the poem, which would include annotation but not stop there (as he had been forced to do by the constraints of print), but offer a definite framework where the editor is able to supplement and emend the critical apparatus by the cooperation of a myriad of scholars in time.

Before sailing: theoretical dilemmas

The decision to write online annotation had to rest on theoretical foundations that gave answers to various dilemmas: what was annotation exactly and what was expected of it? Did digital-born annotation obey different constraints than the print one? Could the digital medium correct the defects of print and did it create new problems as it solved old ones? Did annotation rest on a different or extended type of research? What principles should govern the annotation of poetry in general and Pound's *Cantos* specifically?

Annotation, as a method of research and criticism, has been understood for centuries to be a form of mediation between writer and reader, a tool for self-study and a prerequisite of interpretation. The annotators' professional attention is focused on every line, every word, indeed every punctuation mark – ideally, they are bound to foresee problems of interpretation and pre-empt them by providing background information. Annotation thus provides a foundational deep reading that is the starting point for every other hermeneutic effort.

Apart from its concentration on detail, annotation has a social dimension, since it constitutes the meaning of the text for the reader – as such, it is based on assumptions held by communities at a particular historical period.

However strongly the annotators might consider themselves individuals, they are educated by cultures at a specific time and respond to the unwritten assumptions operating in them. As foundationalists, they are not only the ripened fruit of a scholarly community, but also help constitute and confirm it, by encoding the writer or the text they deal with into a textual form the community understands and approves of [Hanna 1991: 181].

However, as the cultural assumptions, vocabularies, forms of education and technologies change, so do the requirements that we load onto this activity. Like a translation that might become obsolete because it enacts language particulars we no longer use, or a performance which gradually turns dated and unnatural, annotation can similarly be found incomplete, unattuned to scholarly research, full of errors, verbose, and itself in need of explication. When that time comes, the texts are re-encoded according to what cultural communities think they need and if the annotator is not a maverick with a personal agenda of cultural protest, these activities are made to speak the present.

As a form of scholarly mediation, annotation has been particularly maligned. As it has always been considered in its relationship to specific texts, it is seriously under-theorized, since it is hard to sever it from a practice tied to a particular work. Though generalizations can and have been drawn on an empirical base, the theory of annotation has been the validation of a sum of reasonable practices rather than a description of fundamentals. It might be considered, as indeed translation has been, a servant and a doormat. Its usefulness has been routinely called into question.

From an author's point of view, annotation is alienated and alienating thought wedged between the author and the reader [Hanna 1991: 179]. It is a form of aggression, which assumes that in exchange for promotion and canonization, it can claim to understand authors better than they understand themselves and moreover completely elucidate even suggestive passages that may have been left intentionally obscure or ambiguous for emotional effect. The situation is particularly difficult for poetry, which creates oases of mystery potentially open to endless interpretation. If prose works submit better to the process, it is clear that the annotator and the poet have to be on war terms. A poet might justly complain that the annotator spoils the poem, misunderstands through lack of imagination and misdirects reading by substituting the poetic texture by scholarly pedantry. Annotators sin against the poet by assuming that the glosses they graft onto the text will

provide an understanding that is correct, relying on facts and well-nigh complete. Moreover, annotation is aggressive towards the text itself, since it invades the poet's page space, whether by foot- or endnotes. The page is crowded by the scholar's various interventions, whether in the form of references, sources, or glossaries. Between a poet and his intended reader, there is a third presence, whose writing can potentially drown or crowd out the poem.

Annotation is thus nominally "helping" the reader who has now to read two texts at once and to readjust attention in a pendulum movement from poem to annotation and back. If the reader happens to be a student, he will possibly have a third form of writing, his own notes, to engage his attention. Pound's case is classic: a diligent student of *The Cantos* has traditionally had three texts to deal with at one sitting: Pound's, the annotator's and his own. The effects of this situation are obvious. The diligent student has spent hours, even days on a single canto. The unity of aesthetic experience is smashed to pieces; the enjoyment of the poem is nil and even more dangerously, after heeding the annotator's promise that the notes will lead to complete understanding, he finds himself at the end of this work in need of further elucidation. Students drown in still unrelated details and the fragile theoretical constructions they might make are threatened by links that are stubbornly obscure and ruptures they are unable to mend.

The question of usurpation is particularly grave in the case of poetry. A reader's attention is easily captured by the gloss, which, if interesting and well written, may very well distract from the poetry and become an independent discourse, taking the reader away from the poetry completely. If we go a step further and apply Jerome McGann's notion of "radial reading," [McGann 1993: 122], which is a necessity in coping with *The Cantos*, the place of poetry in the reader's attention risks getting completely lost within the background ramifications of contextual information. In the best situation, readers might balance a line of verse with elucidating information, but if they were to go from link to link, the poem's coherence is broken, attention slips away, aesthetic enjoyment is replaced by scholarly interest. Poetry annotators can do nothing right, whether they write well or badly, whether they understand correctly or wrongly, whether they explain too much or too little. Whatever they do, they will have destroyed the readers' enjoyment of the poem and substituted the gloss for the line.

To make matters even worse, the print annotator creates a spectrum of possible readers that is very reduced and homogeneous. This effect is due to the print medium itself – a book is usually focused on a category of readers and has by its very nature difficulty in serving several kinds. In writing his *Companion to The Cantos*, Carroll F. Terrell found himself in this predicament. Due to the restrictions on length of the print medium, his work had to be limited to 800 pages and became not what it potentially could have been – a complete analytical environment – but only a “handbook for students”: it was not addressed to the general reader (who would have found too much information) or to the scholar (who would have required much more contextualizing information in the form of sources and poem drafts than the format could possibly have provided).

There is finally what we could call a scholarly argument against annotation, which is every bit as damning as the author’s and reader’s. Annotators promise understanding and elucidation, yet do not provide them. They are condemned to be the servants of the interpreting scholars, who might use their data as foundation for further analysis. The annotators’ primary task is to track the use of sources, reconstruct the allusions to people or events that have become obscure, and explicate unfamiliar terms by contextualizing them historically. It is not for them to provide documentary analysis, add an interpretation of the whole meaning of a poem, or make a more elaborate commentary of local passages without fear of abusing both author and reader. This of course influences the quality of the glosses, since it is the annotator’s interpretation of the canto that should govern what is being glossed or how far the research behind a footnote is supposed to go. A gloss is by its very nature fragmented and local – it outlines a very limited range. Loading onto a local gloss too much information will be useless to readers, especially in the enforced sequentiality of the print medium. Say a gloss will throw a filament to later cantos and generalize a local idea – the reader will forget this information by the time it reaches those later passages. Say a gloss makes a cross-reference to a passage of an earlier canto – the reader will be annoyed to be taken out of the actuality of what he is reading in the moment to be reminded of cantos he has already read. Pace McGann, a responsible annotator has to put a limit to the bifurcations and refinements of radial reading if the student is to have a reading of the poem at all.

Bearing in mind all these difficulties and looking at them unflinchingly, annotators of *The Cantos* have to find solutions. Annotate we must –

there is no way out, if we want to ensure the continuity of readership and the survival of the poem. *The Cantos* is Pound's own very personal dialogue with myth, history, and the present, his own virtual reconstruction of civilization and himself. Though his animus against continuous narration, description and commentary was strong, Pound provided reading assistance within the poem: translations, transcription into Latin alphabet, names of his sources, reinforcement of his meaning by ideograms, capitalization and layout. He also provided a running framing discourse in his articles, essays, prose books, anthologies. The first task of an annotator of *The Cantos* lies in the corroboration of Pound's tools for the reader; only then can he or she go farther into the large territory of the unsaid and of the myriad correlating details. In a way, Pound condemned us to theorizing, supplementing and describing – there is no way in which we can disregard or neglect this task.

In this sense, the digital medium offers a few correctives to the predicament of the author, reader and scholar working in the print medium. The digital gives us a palette of options in designing the page so that the annotator's mediation becomes quasi invisible. In the case of The Cantos Project, the page is structured as a one-to-one encounter between reader and the poem, the critical apparatus is moved away in the title- and overview pages. Glosses are hidden, links are a hardly visible underlining in grey, top menu on white background does not assert its presence. The only "invasive" element the webpage has, is the element of line numbering, but even that is moved farther away from the text, so as not to be obtrusive. Moreover, since the poem is displayed on one webpage, the poem is not cut by the arbitrary segmentation of book pages. In a collage poem like *The Cantos*, where both "cuts" and "continuities" are units of design, the print medium interferes with the poetic texture, going against both the concept and the formatting effects intended by the poet.

The reader's difficulties in managing the balance between poem and gloss are also alleviated. The gloss appears only on demand, when the user hovers with the mouse over its link. The reader does not need to leave the poem: since the gloss appears as a pop-up, it still has the canto page as a general background, as an implicit reminder of the need to return. Digital glossing per definition encourages radial reading: annotation may contain images and links that do take the reader away from the page in the quest for more contextual information. But bifurcations cease after the first link,

casual browsing and hopping from canto to canto are not encouraged; the reader, while at any time able to choose to interrupt reading a canto to try another, has to use at least two links to switch. While browsing and searching across cantos is both possible and easy, the whole architecture of the site is designed to encourage readers to read and study a canto in and for itself.

All heavy with sleep, fucked girls and fat leopards,
 Lions loggy with Circe's tisane,
 Girls leery with Circe's tisane
 κακά φάρμακ' ἔδοικεν
 kaka pharmak edoken
 The house of smooth stone that you call
 λύκοι ἦσαν ὀρέσπεροι, ἠδὲ λέοντες
 lukoi oresteroi ede leontes
 wolf to curry favour for food
 — born to Helios and Perseis
 That had Pasiphae for a twin

λύκοι ὀρέσπεροι, ἠδὲ λέοντες

5. **λύκοι ὀρέσπεροι, ἠδὲ λέοντες** – H. lukoi oresteroi ede leontes (“mountain wolves and lions”) *Od K: 212*.
 “Within the forest glades they found the house of Circe, built of polished stone in a place of wide outlook and round about it were mountain wolves and lions, whom Circe herself had bewitched; for she gave them evil drugs. Yet these beasts did not rush upon my men, [215] but pranced about them fawningly, wagging their long tails.” *Od X: 210-3*.

Victor Bérard calls Circe “la déesse des fauves, la nymphe des bêtes féroces” (“the goddess of wild cats, the nymph of predators”) (279), which naturally brings her into consonance with Artemis/Diana, an analogy that Pound also touches on in the canto. Bérard’s statement might also explain why the cat at the start of the canto is “desolate,” having lost its world of magic and patron goddess.

The information within the gloss is managed according to invisible guidelines: essential information is provided at the top; further down, an interested reader might find a source, or a comment. This division responds to the need of addressing several categories of readers: the informal poetry lover will choose to open a gloss or not; the student will choose to read the text at the top only, so as not be overwhelmed; the passionate professional will follow the links, read all the material provided and possibly return for a second reading without assistance. Such readers might even choose to write the editor to point out an error or add a new item of information.

Addressing the needs of the reader leads to a different method of managing information than Terrell’s *Companion*. To minimally impede the reading flow, a gloss should be short: it is therefore reasonable to separate large chunks of information from the gloss and build them into a framing architecture in the antechambers of the canto: its “title page” has an image and an introductory paragraph, a calendar of composition, audio readings, images from first editions and canto bibliography; overviews, sources, resources and references are placed in the side menus. The framing architecture includes Pound’s own effort to repeat, explain and point out: articles from the press, passages from earlier and later poems, translations, music. In this way, The Cantos Project is not aimed to be Terrell’s “handbook for students” – rather, it aims to respond to the needs of every conceivable reader.

Carroll F. Terrell and his *Companion*

It is in the context of the theory of annotation that we have to evaluate and re-evaluate Carroll F. Terrell's contribution to the understanding of *The Cantos* and his monumental *Companion*, which underlies every contemporary effort at understanding the poem. After ten years' work, 1975-1984, the *Companion* was stretching the resources of print culture to the limit. In his introduction, Terrell pointed out what the two volumes, hemmed in by the constraints of the 800-page ceiling he had set himself, had not been able to include: extensive quotations from sources, variant readings, detailed glosses, uncertain dates of composition [Terrell 1980: x].

The *Companion* was not widely reviewed, but criticism was not late to arrive. While generally recognizing that the work was fundamental and supremely useful, reviewers pointed out errors, doubted and questioned just about everything. In the *Sewanee Review*, William Harmon issued the most trenchant rejection. The front praise was transparent enough to leave the devastating criticism plain to see:

I think that a warning label ought to be put on all guides, indexes, and companions, lest readers think that that is the only way to read. Poems ideally ought to be celibate and isolate: if they need companions they're either archaic or just plain bad. But we have Terrell's *Companion* now, and there's no use complaining about it. [Harmon 1986: 633].

Harmon concluded that what readers should strive for is a poetry liberated from scholarship: "The center of Pound is poetry, on its own, free of biography, ideology, and annotation; away from that center the reader encounters a phalanx, all marching to the beat-beat-whirr-pound-thud of an indifferent drummer" [Harmon 1986: 639]. Other reviewers, like Jim Powell, while being far more charitable, suspected that the poem is irreducible to its exegesis: after every allusion had been clarified and all the sourced studied, the poem would continue to have zones of shadow that will not be amenable to explication [Powell 1982: 13]. That was another way of saying that the *Companion*, while being the result of a laudable intention missed its target, that the very idea of explication through annotation was misguided. Peter Makin, in *Modern Language Review*, clear-headedly observed that the *Companion* was a work in progress, a body of knowledge that no sooner published will need to be updated. While correcting a few errors he had discovered, Makin did not lump them together, but distinguished among

Terrell's contributors: Hesse and Gordon better than Grieve, the Greek by Peachy, which Terrell had taken over from Edwards and Vasse, better than the translations from Latin. As if to corroborate Powell's observation, Makin stated that "the worst fault is a recurrent imprecision of thought: thought about what the poem's words mean, thought about what the reader needs to be told in order to make him understand them, thought about the meanings of the words the commentator himself is using" [Makin 1988: 435]. Finally, Sally Gall in her review questioned the very ideology that had stood at the foundation of Terrell's activity as an annotator: his interpretation of *The Cantos* as a great religious poem. Gall warned readers to be patient with glosses that looked "overly long or skewed" [Gall 1986: 595]. While it was evident that every scholarly project of this kind had to have a unifying ideology behind it, it was not evident that Terrell's integrative theory about the *Cantos* was the right one and thus produced an accurate balance of information across the whole *Companion*.

The critical objections to the *Companion* were right: indeed, we should not read a poem with annotation in hand, should not constrain it by a unifying theory, should not freeze it to our state of knowledge at a particular time. We have to reassess the purpose of the annotating activity as technology changes from print assumptions to digital. For Terrell's generation, the main task had to be explication of terms in foreign languages, an elucidation of annotator's resources, and a clarification of obscure names. The sources are often encyclopaedias and dictionaries, the print predecessors of Wikipedia and Google Translate. But due to Pound's own erudition and imaginative-ness, a name as standardly defined in a dictionary entry has limited relevance for the understanding of the poem and it collapses altogether when Pound invents mythological figures, introduces obscure historical figures, dramatizes personal conversations, and hides his meaning behind pseudonyms and Aesopian language. Looking at the exegesis Terrell included in the front matter of every canto, we see the dearth of material he could appeal to. In the past thirty years since he published the *Companion*, the work of research and interpretation has grown exponentially. Rearticulating the annotation to the current research and taking advantage of technology to provide a complete picture of scholarship for the next generation have become primary tasks.

So, what remains for us to do and how can we improve on the situation we have inherited? First, a contemporary annotator working in the digital medium will recognize that a pioneering approach, clearly a

requirement in Terrell's time, has become both a useless and potentially harmful methodology in ours. Contemporary annotation of this sort is already done, not only by Terrell, but also independently of Pound research by Google and Wikipedia. This standard, general sort of information is inappropriate because in time, and by myriad scholarly efforts, we have come to recognize that Pound rarely used standard information: he always selected, modified and reshaped it to fit what he wanted to say in the poem. Pound's "source" is only a starting-point: the annotator has to chart the poet's changes to elucidate its role in the poem. This of course presupposes that the annotator has views on the meaning of the whole canto – contextualization is only possible if the annotator already has done interpretive work, correlated partial commentaries with sources and Pound's own collateral comments and reached a conclusion about the meaning of the whole canto. The task of glossing *The Cantos* is thus a hermeneutic circle, going from the elucidation of detail to the view of the whole and back. General information is almost in all cases irrelevant or insufficient to the poem and gives the impression that Pound's fragments are unrelated, assuming, as Terrell seemed to do, that fragmentation in the poem is arbitrary and insurmountable. The pioneer approach is therefore insufficient in providing assistance to a meaningful reading. By concentrating on local passages without an insight about the links between them, we will be unable to read a canto, any canto as a unified whole. We have been led to assume, by our own particular fragmentary understanding, that a canto's ideogram (unity of meaning) does not even exist, that all we have is a grab bag of details. Even worse, our inability to provide correlations has led to our views of Pound as a sort of intellectual harpy, a collector of exotica who put into his poem whatever happened to strike his fancy. A silly poet, with a scattered mind.

Yet the digital medium presupposes a culture of correlating details. Google does this in mechanical way by pointing out proximities of keywords. Contemporary digital research makes it not only easier, but unavoidable that we look for relationships and spaces where a certain item of information becomes meaningful. This leads to delicate points of balance, redefinition and adjustment in the position of the annotator vis-à-vis the commentator and theoretician. An annotator's responsibility is to provide a foundation for interpretation, an integrative view that not only identifies particulars but also works to provide a rationale for how they are correlated.

In this sense, our world is much richer than Terrell's: Pound's *Contributions to Periodicals* are accessible, electronic copies of rare books Pound read are published by Internet Archive and Project Gutenberg; drafts of the cantos at the Beinecke Library have been digitized – this electronic accessibility makes the work of integration possible. As these new diverse sources of information are at hand, the information in the glosses becomes more specific: the annotator is like a photographer adjusting his camera lens to get from a blurry impression to a sharp picture. Generality was a necessary evil at the time of pioneers, so was speculation; both can become a thing of the past.

In being sensitive to the annotation activity as perceived in the tradition of print culture, we may thus shift our understanding of annotation in the digital age to correct the shortcomings and negative implications of this work as it was embedded into the print medium. We need to balance the potential hyperabundance of information that the digital makes possible with the requirements for validity and relevance traditionally associated with ideal annotation. Hypertext and framing architecture enable the annotator to respond to various categories of readers and provides the platform for a flexible reading geared to individual preference. It helps the scholar withdraw from an aggressive stance towards author, text and reader and teaches her the additional skills of managing information, as well as strategies of placement and deferral. In the question of annotating Pound, we stand on the shoulders of giants – our task is huge and consists in reassessment, complexity and refinement.

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