14.

Beyond representation: some thoughts on creative-critical digital editing

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I would like to pose two propositions: that scholarly editing is a practice that is fundamentally tied to creative-critical experience, and that editorial practice constitutes a form of aesthetic attention. Both of these propositions need elaboration, for they raise important issues about the critical payoffs and the publication formats of scholarly editing in the twenty-first century. Editing, as an activity that revolves around practice, is a pragmatic enterprise.

By 'creative-critical' I primarily mean an activity of co-creation with the text that produces 'enjoyed meanings' and aesthetic experiences (to borrow John Dewey's pragmatist terminology). I do not necessarily mean 'ekphrastic' – for example, a creative-critical editor creating a cento of variant readings – nor do I mean 'undisciplined'. Rather I am starting from a position that the editor in the twenty-first century has the means to engage in a process that is similar to what textual scholar G. Thomas Tanselle noticed about 'creative' modes of editing – namely, when a literary editor works alongside the author to prepare a text (Tanselle 1995). I am not suggesting an equivalence to that mode of working alongside an author for commercial publication, but my revision of Tanselle's thinking comes with a similar spirit of literary adaptation, using aesthetic judgements to create new editions with the potential of facilitating 'enjoyed meanings' and creativity.

Textual editing and digital publishing could consider what Peter McDonald has called 'creative criticism' that is ongoing and incomplete, partaking of a process of close reading and distant analysis, learning and unlearning, and redescriptions of textual criticism that are embedded in the creative process and other aesthetic experiences (McDonald 2021, 95–7 and 101). McDonald states that creative criticism 'engages experientially with innovative forms of literary writing' in order 'to emerge from the experience with a transformed critical language attuned to, as well as expressive of, the new ways of writing, reading, thinking, and knowing' (2021, 95). McDonald's idea recalls Dewey's principle that art is 'nature transformed by entering into new relationships where it evokes a new emotional response', and it is the purpose of creative criticism to be embedded in the elements of these relationships (Dewey 1987, 85). Editions can facilitate these experiences because they show the traces of artistic and editorial intentions in texts that require attention (see Greenberg 2018). What matters, then, is not the distinction between 'intellectual' scholarly editions and 'aesthetic' works of literature, but rather aesthetic and anaesthetic forms of editorial engagement (Dewey 1987, 47). Now that computation is embedded in editing and publishing, we can also create better theories that combine creative-critical experiences with technology.

A significant moment in computational history illuminates the necessity of a technological attentiveness to critical-creative experience. In 1972, computer scientist Alan Kay introduced his Dynabook prototype (anticipating what would become the laptop computer and tablet). In his opening statement he claimed he was about to show the 'freewheeling investigation' of artists, musicians, writers and computer scientists (a DH Lab before marketing manifested such a thing, you could say). His primary aim was to use the ideas of Jean Piaget, Seymour Papert and John Dewey to give children an environment for active learning – namely, to improve thinking skills through making, creativity and critical self-reflexiveness.[1] He foresaw

1   For more on Kay and this period of computational history, see also Chapter 2 of Emerson 2014.

a personal computer as a means for achieving better thinking about thinking through creative and dynamic activities.

I have always thought that editing is a dynamic activity, not a discipline, recalling Wittgenstein's saying that 'Philosophy is not a body of doctrine but an activity' (Wittgenstein 1974, 29, § 4.112). Editing is the kind of activity that thrives on the particularities of individual texts and their conditions of creation and production. These conditions are so full of contingencies that it would be impossible to reduce them to a *Fach* (an overarching discipline). As a pragmatic enterprise, it both demands a working theory – or what I like to call a 'passing theory', which I will describe below – which may fall apart as soon as the editor encounters a different textual condition, as well as a set of digital tools to facilitate the appreciation of texts.

While editing has always been creative-critical, the traditional approaches to publishing have obscured that vitality. Scholars tend to focus their energies on publishing texts in a book- or document-like form on a website, rather than foregrounding editorial work with data analysis tools. Scholarly editing may have been revitalised in the digital era owing to a boom in digitisation in the early 2000s and the proliferation of funded projects alongside the expansion of formal encoding guidelines of editions from the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI). However, after nearly three decades of digital scholarly editing, it is still challenging to publish digital editions, and even more challenging to discover and to sustain them in a way that rivals the stability of the printed book. The utopian dreams of a universal library or an 'infinite archive' have been undermined by austerity (particularly when limited grant funding ends) and by a lack of clarity as to the format of these new scholarly tools (Hitchcock 2013). The responses to this conundrum have been varied. Some (myself included) have called for 'minimal computing' approaches to lower the barriers to data modelling, publication and maintenance.[2] Minimal

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2　Alex Gil, Jentrey Sayers and Roopika Risam were at the forefront of this approach, which I have since endorsed (see Chapters 4 and 5 of Ohge 2021). See also the special section of *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 16.2 (2022) on Minimal Computing:

computing does not mean *easy* computing, as Patricia Searl of the University of Virginia Press once reminded me at a conference. Every editorial decision entails gains and losses: this calculation is another principle I learned from Christopher Ricks, who always brought editorial discussions back to this simple, yet challenging, idea. The gains and losses framework is as true of editorial methods as it is of publishing choices, especially in the digital age. Minimal computing has the gain of more sustainable data and publications, but the losses are evident in the lack of features that can be achieved by more complicated technology stacks.

Others have dismissed these publishing issues; some have even suggested that we do not need traditional publishers and others are well supported to create bespoke publishing systems. Some of these dismissals also come from people who simply exist in a different publishing context. In North America and the UK, for example, the gold standard of publishing continues to be print and monograph-based research from academic presses and journals, whereas in continental Europe there is more support for open access, independent publishing, and therefore it garners more respect and support. One unfortunate result of well-funded scholarly editions as exemplars is that they give the impression that their digital methods ought to be replicated, but of course the resources required to do their kinds of projects cannot scale – they are simply not achievable for many underresourced scholars and institutions.

My purpose here is to intervene in these debates about publishing by changing our thinking. Editorial theorists have continued to pursue different kinds of depth models. I would contend that this kind of textual criticism is running out of steam. I do not have another theory to offer – rather than seeking out a new theory for editing, we should start with the question, 'what does this material require of editors?' and from there we should use a more transparent, pragmatic and reader-oriented method to create effective digital tools and editions (Ohge 2021, 14–16). As Mathelinda Nabugodi and I put it

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http://digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/16/2/index.html.

near the end of the Introduction to our 'Provocations Toward Creative-Critical Editing':

> Even the editor who aims to do no more than capture the author's final intention must make choices that are, ultimately, grounded in the editor's interpretation of the textual evidence. Though they might have recourse to a set of editorial principles that keep subjective preferences in check, no such set of principles can obviate the need to exercise editorial judgment. Seen in this light, accentuating the editor's creativity and their interventions in the text is a way of being transparent about how texts are made and how they live on over time (Nabugodi and Ohge 2022, 8).

This is to emphasise a complementary approach, and one that is particularly suitable to digital publishing. Emily Orley and Katja Hilevaara have creatively written, in dialogue format, that digital technologies 'offer alternative ways of responding, prompting changes in the ways that scholarly writing happens, opening up new processes of collaboration and experimentation. As text becomes unfixed from the page and other media gain equal weight, the act of writing as a means of inquiry and presentation becomes a choice' (Orley and Hilevaara 2018, 14). The text is not a given but a choice; the editor enters into a relationship with a set of choices.

Editing would benefit from a postcritical moment; it is asking for a way to intermingle with artistic practices, and to develop a deeper awareness among editors and readers of the fact that editing is a critical venture, and that editions are creative products. With digital tools, editing also is well placed to evince what Wittgenstein called 'the understanding that consists in seeing connections' – both the discovery and the interpretation of facts about texts. Such understanding may show that 'critical and creative editorial practices function as research' (Nabugodi and Ohge 2022, 3). But research of what? I am inclined to say 'the fluid text', following John Bryant's formulation of the textual condition that emphasises the energies of the writer writing over the 'author'. But we also require a more

nuanced understanding of those energies in relation to media. To quote John Guillory:

> we need first of all to acknowledge that literature is a medium and that what is at stake in literature as a medium is the whole history of the medium to which literature by definition belongs: writing. Writing is not going away, and writing is still enormously important in our society. In my view, our first theoretical task in the current media environment is to clarify the lines of relation between the study of literature and the general domain of writing (Guillory and Swoboda 2022).

Those 'lines of relation' between texts, writing and readers amount to a creative process that is registered in discourse. It relates to an idea that John Bryant offered to me recently: that editing is a kind of biography of the text, and biography is an 'inquiry into the creative process'. He adds, 'By "inquiry into the creative process" I mean that expressions are discussable as they relate to creative events'.[3] Those discussions become editorial decisions, and those decisions can be rendered into open narratives with digital tools.

Building a critical and creative editorial approach starts with a panrelational model that emphasises textual practice and the role of 'experience'. What digital publishing can ideally do, then, is to give space to competing and alternative discourses and processes of the same text and to facilitate experiences of other aesthetic contexts.

Digital pan-relationalism, practice and experience

As I have argued elsewhere, scholarly editing has operated under a 'depth' model that overlooks the role of experience, and I suggest pan-relationalism as a complementary approach (Ohge 2022). Depth models are valid and important means for establishing reliable

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3 Email communication, 1 November 2022.

texts, but they come with a double bind: the single-minded pursuit of representing documents limits the reader's ability to form aesthetic and critical judgements about the creative process. By providing representations of their version of the best text, whether that is a critical text based on a conflation of many versions (with some conjecture) or a 'faithful' rendering of a historical document, editions use a representational depth model to render textual objects as accurately as possible. Yet that method, in its quest for the 'true' representation, assumes problematic binaries between objective and subjective, and essential and accidental properties of the fundamentally unstable means of communicating words on material media (Rorty 2021, 87; McGann 2022). Depth models are therefore *teleological* accounts, attempting to publish the truest representation or description of the textual condition. These models have been reflected in prevailing digital methods: editors encode text with hierarchical markup, 'going deeper' into the text by enriching it with layers of complex interpretations embedded within semantic markup. However, editors can use only one depth model per document, and no one depth model can capture all available interpretations. Even after an editor finishes these time-consuming markup tasks, they are left with myriad difficulties for publishing them (Ohge 2021, 108–12; Cummings 2019, 190–1). The problem with privileging a 'vertical' or 'depth' model of textual essentialism (in print and digital) is that it forecloses varieties of aesthetic experience and interpretation by focusing its energy on creating a correspondence between material text and data.

Pan-relational editing aims to be a pragmatic complement to these dominant modes of critical editing. There are as many contexts as there are purposes for literature, and no depth model can fulfil all of those aims. Different methods are therefore required to deal with these aims. Creative-critical editing then offers new ways of creating new connections by undertaking new descriptions of texts which are tethered to whatever purposes are needed for a given situation or audience. Instead of only seeking the correct description, representation or data model of texts, creative-critical editing can focus on connecting texts to new contexts and aesthetic experiences with

new tools and new publishing agendas. The textual condition is a debate and editors need to bring readers into the debate. Digital tools can achieve this new relationship, if publishing practices also accommodate creative-critical approaches.

The notion of 'experience' is central to editing. It calls for a methodological pragmatism that is attentive to the central role of experience in editorial choices and publication. By 'experience' I am grounding myself in Pragmatist philosophy (particularly Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Dewey, Richard Rorty and Paul Grimstad) that concerns composition, not only as a recording of perceptions but also as an experimental, interdependent circuit of creative writing and reading (Ohge 2021, 18). Dewey argues that 'experience' refers to the transaction of human beings with their environment; it 'is not a veil that shuts man off from nature', but 'a means of penetrating continually further into the heart of nature' (1919/1981, 5). In *Democracy and Education*, Dewey states that communication 'modifies the disposition of both the parties who partake in it' (1916/1985, 12). In this sense, if education is a creative practice, and if editing is a form of education about the text, then editing is also a creative practice that can engender aesthetic experience. These ideas have not gone unnoticed by computer programmers: as I already mentioned, they influenced Alan Kay, but more recently the functionalist accounts of technology offered by John McCarthy and Peter Wright as well as Alan Blackwell.

Yet it is composition, for the editor, that takes precedence, as it not only concerns the 'energies' of writing – as John Bryant aptly writes in *The Fluid Text* – but the nature of text making itself – creation, publication, editing and reading. Tying experience to composition opens up the editorial enterprise to include the full range of creative-critical practices. Digital editing in particular can provide an environment that facilitates competing and alternative 'interpretive consequences' and processes of the same text and to connect that text to other creative contexts (Shillingsburg 2006).

The affordances of digital editing continue to be shown, whether it is in the form of what Georg Vogeler calls 'assertive' editions of

historical texts or the recent successes of IIIF and co-creation with tools such as From the Page (https://fromthepage.com/). However, these developments still have the old problem of high barriers to entry and an overly technical orientation which is not at all unwelcome by scholars, critics and students otherwise eager to profit from the benefits of digital scholarship but risks becoming scientistic to many who do not or cannot devote time to technical mastery. Assertive editing is a promising approach, but there are other ways to open up editing. Let me return to a basic idea of practice.

'The practice gives words their meaning,' Wittgenstein said (*Remarks on Colour*, §317). He also famously said that 'meaning is use'. Or, as Hamlet puts it: 'For use almost can change the stamp of nature' (*Hamlet*, Act 3, scene 4). By 'use' Shakespeare is gesturing towards the same phenomenon Wittgenstein obsessed over: habit, and the ways that language shapes habits, and the ways that language shapes reality, and vice versa. Hamlet's next line offers both a puzzle to textual scholars as well as a creative-critical opportunity: 'And either [...] the devil or throw him out / With wondrous potency.' The second quarto of the play reads 'either the devil', and the brackets above (provided by the Shakespeare Folger text, which uses the second quarto as copy text) assume a gap in the text where a verb or a preposition presumably should have appeared. The third quarto added a word into the phrase: 'either maister the devil or throw him out'. The First Folio omitted the entire phrase. How might digital textual editing highlight these practices of textual fluidity? The Folger edition's textual note does little to explain the problem presented by this phrase:

188–91. the . . . potency] Q2; omit F

It does not explain the supplied [...] that presumes the missing word, nor does it offer more variants in Q3 nor conjectures by previous editors. For example, the Oxford edition adds a preposition – 'either in the devil or throw him out', and the Arden edition adds a verb – 'either shame the devil or throw him out'. Given that the Folger edition is the first complete digital edition of Shakespeare,

I would hope for more, but then again I cannot fault the editors – firstly, because the digital editing of Shakespeare is a massive undertaking, and secondly, they are essentially replicating a (print) tradition of the *apparatus criticus*. The question that this approach raises is whether this tradition works in this form of digital media. Scholarly habits can also change the imprint of our intellectual nature, and one way to do that would be to consider the range of possibilities and express them as if they were creative exercises.

> And either in the devil or throw him out
> and either master ev'n the devil or throw him out
> and either entertain the devil or throw him out
> and either shame the devil or throw him out
> and either master the devil or throw him out
> and either the devil or throw him out

It almost feels like a found poem itself – or something rendered in poetry that operates like a Philip Glass or a Steve Reich composition. Steve Reich once said about his minimalist compositions in his essay 'Music as a Gradual Process' (1968) that he puts the focus on 'perceptible processes' instead of a finished 'composition': 'I begin to perceive these minute details when I can sustain close attention and a gradual process invites my sustained attention.' These ideas seem appropriate to pan-relational editing. Attention to the repetition, and to the possibilities of language, nonetheless has an inviting effect that no textual apparatus could provide.

At the very least, giving readers the choice to toggle between variants in an edited reading text would be very useful. And yet you could also easily imagine a dynamic edition in which a user could engage in situated creativity: the editor might throw the problem back to the reader and ask, 'how would you complete the line, and why?' or, even more provocatively, 'how would you rewrite or edit it to make it better?'

Another possibility concerns the variants and 'revision narratives' that the Melville Electronic Library offers for its edition of Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*. In chapter 132, 'The Symphony', when Captain Ahab

ponders the nature of his revenge against the White Whale before engaging in his final hunt, he asks, in the first American edition:

> Is Ahab, Ahab? Is it I, God, or who, that lifts this arm? But if the great sun move not of himself; but is as an errand-boy in heaven; nor one single star can revolve, but by some invisible power; how then can this one small heart beat; this one small brain think thoughts; unless God does that beating, does that thinking, does that living, and not I.

The British edition adds 'it' after the first 'Ahab', thereby matching the syntax with its previous and subsequent sentences, 'What is it' and 'Is it I, God . . . ?' Now the creative-critical question, as in the *Hamlet* example, turns on conjecture. In this case, it is the addition of a single word, 'it', which changes the meaning of the original 'Is Ahab, Ahab?' Because it is impossible to know whether Melville or the British publisher made that change (Melville's original manuscript and his corrected and revised American copy do not survive), the editor can (and for the sake of editorial clarity, must) engage in a creative-critical exercise because the meaning of the line is inconclusive. The Melville Electronic Library (MEL) digital edition, on the other hand, also uses the first American edition reading in the 'base version' of its *Moby-Dick* reading text. In the spirit of its print prototype, namely, John Bryant and Haskell Springer's Longman Critical Edition of *Moby-Dick* (2009), MEL gives immediate access to the crux and highlights the problem – and its attendant critical consequences – of the American and British versions.

REVISION NARRATIVE: Who Adds an 'It'?

A famous textual puzzle involves the change in Ahab's self-searching question from its American version ('Is Ahab, Ahab?') to the British ('Is it Ahab, Ahab?'). The American reading has Ahab question his entire identity at this crucial moment before he then asks the more specific set of questions regarding who motivates his actions: 'Is it I, God, or who, that lifts this arm?' The British reading, with the inserted 'it', creates a more direct

link between the two sets of questions. But its repetition of 'Ahab' seems superfluous and may be taken as Ahab either directly addressing himself or dramatically stressing himself (perhaps with a gesture of disbelief) as his own motivator.

One possible explanation for the British version is that Melville intended the British reading all along, but that the 'it' was inadvertently omitted in the American edition and then replaced by Melville in the revised copy he sent to England. Another possibility is that Melville intended the American reading, then changed his mind and revised the text for the British. Also possible is that a British editor, not comprehending the American reading, added 'it' to make Ahab's self-questioning parallel with the second question. Whether the result of a correction or revision, and whether authorial or editorial, the separate readings have their own logics and are equally meaningful. To compare American and British pages, click the thumbnails in the right margin.

"Oh, my C… ay one give chase
to that hat… and child, too,
are Starbu… thine, sir, are the
wife and cł… tant let me alter
the course… ay to see old
Nantucket… Nantucket."

REVISION NARRATIVE: Who Adds an "It"? // A famous textual puzzle involves the change in Ahab's self-searching question from its American version ("Is Ahab, Ahab?") to the British ("Is it Ahab, Ahab?"). The American reading has Ahab question his entire identity at this crucial moment before he then asks the more specific set of questions regarding who motivates his actions: "Is it I, God, or who, that lifts this arm?" The British reading, with the inserted "it," creates a more direct link between the two sets of questions. But its repetition of "Ahab" seems superfluous and may be taken as Ahab either directly addressing himself or dramatically stressing himself (perhaps with a gesture of disbelief) as his own motivator.

"They have… ut this time—yes,
it is his no… ells him of me, of
cannibal ol… him again."

One possible explanation for the British version is that Melville intended the British reading all along, but that the "it" was inadvertently omitted in the American edition and then replaced by Melville in the revised copy he sent to England. Another possibility is that Melville intended the American reading, then changed his mind and revised the text for the British. Also possible is that a British editor, not comprehending the American reading, added "it" to make Ahab's self-questioning parallel with the second question. Whether the result of a correction or revision, and whether authorial or editorial, each reading has its own compelling logic. The NN, Longman, and MEL editions retain the American version; the 3rd Norton emends its NN text to the British version. To compare American and British pages, click the thumbnails in the right margin.

"Tis my M… be carried to the
hill to catcl… ead for
Nantucket… boy's face from
the window…

But Ahab's… , cindered apple
to the soil.…

"What is it… idden lord and
master, an… /ings and
longings, I… ecklessly making me ready to do what in my own proper, natural heart, I durst not so much as dare? **Is Ahab, Ahab?** Is it I, God, or who, that lifts this arm? But if the great sun move not of himself; but is as an errand-boy in heaven; nor one single star can revolve, but by some invisible power; how then can this one small heart beat; this one small brain think thoughts; unless God does that beating, does that thinking, does that living, and not I. By heaven, man, we are turned round and round in this world, like yonder windlass, and Fate is the handspike. And all the time, lo! that smiling sky, and this unsounded sea! Look! see yon Albicore! who put it into him to chase and fang that flying-fish? Where do murderers go, man! Who's to doom, when the judge himself is dragged to the bar?

Figure 14.1 Reading Text View of Chapter 132, 'The Symphony', of *Moby-Dick*, with the Revision Narrative note after 'Is Ahab, Ahab?' Courtesy the Melville Electronic Library.
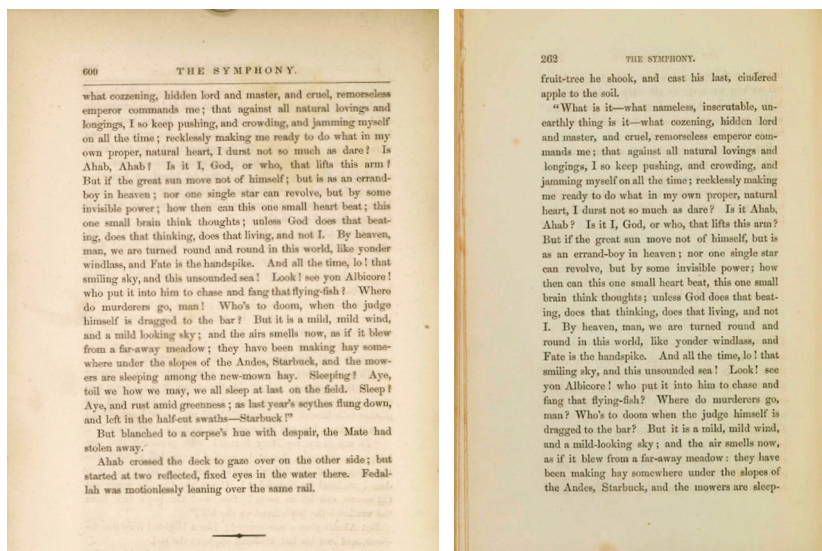
Figure 14.1a Left: First American edition of *Moby-Dick*.
Right: First British edition of *Moby-Dick*. Courtesy the Melville Electronic Library.

Users can then assess the material granularity of the original book page images from the first two editions. What can be learned by this book-historical element of creative-critical editing? Notice how the first American edition reads 'Is | Ahab': the new line after 'Is' does seem to reinforce the idea that the American printer may have simply neglected, in a classic typographical error, to add 'it' on the next line. Maybe Melville did intend what was in the British edition all along. As I said, though, we can really never know; we can only set up a discourse about what we cannot know. The creative-critical practice, however, is more fruitful than simply engaging in theorising, as one is recon-structing in one's mind the nexus of Melville's creative practices, the preparation of texts for a nineteenth-century printer and the aesthetic and book-historical sensibilities of the careful reader and editor.

In both the *Hamlet* and *Moby-Dick* examples, the attention to language asks for critical and creative judgements and practices. The design of any edition, print and/or digital, should facilitate those judgements to generate better theories about how readers experience a text.

Intersubjective triangulation and passing theories of text

What is creative-critical editorial attention in digital editions, then? Donald Davidson's model of intersubjective triangulation is a good place to start (Davidson 2005, 177). Following Peirce's triadic relation of signs in language, Davidson articulates how we interpret the noises and symbols we hear and see and make adjustments to our understanding of them. These adjustments constitute 'passing theories'.

According to Davidson, all utterances – whether oral or written – come with an intention to be understood by both speaker and listener. Each person who utters thoughts wants to communicate something meaningful, and in doing so they bring with them a lifetime's worth of background knowledge. (Davidson calls this their 'prior theory'.) The receivers of the message also intend to understand the message and apply them to their own prior theories. In any utterance, then, these reciprocal and interpenetrating activities generate what Davidson calls 'passing theories'. To comprehend the uttered text, scholars and editors are obliged 'to construct a correct, that is, convergent, passing theory for speech transactions' (Davidson 2006, 264). Applying the intersubjective triangulation model into editing balances the writer, the reader and the text, with a 'common background' shared among them. This exchange is modelled not on a one-to-one correspondence between texts and readers' meanings but on the reciprocal effects of recoverable documentary traces of thought on interpreters, the reactions of interpreters. Such exchanges illuminate the constructive and generative nature of communication itself, constituting what Susan Greenberg has called a kind of *poiesis* (Greenberg 2018).

Davidson's schematic also approximates the important function of criticism, as articulated by Samuel Johnson, 'to improve opinion into knowledge'. Such an opinion, though, must be rooted in some documentary fact – some intention to be understood – and this form of criticism is an enactment of our experience of writing, reading and

text. Similarly, Laura Riding and Robert Graves posited that 'criticism, unlike taste, ... can be tested'. The testing brings further into the foreground the 'common background'. The editor forms judgements, not based on idiosyncrasies and time-bound taste but rather on what can be verified from various perspectives. 'The criticism of one person thus accepted can become another person's taste,' Riding and Graves add.[4] This dynamic understanding of making taste versus making critical judgements has profound implications not only for the philosophy of language but also for textual editing.

In a similar vein, Paul Eggert has suggested that a fully realised edition 'implicitly builds the reader into itself' (Eggert 2019, p. 7). This is a wise pronouncement that would be all the wiser if it could be effected in *digital* editions. The problem is that the digital reader becomes a different kind of agent in the current shop-window environment of tools: hyperlinks are one-way exits from commentary, and important relationships, say, between the first and last editions of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* remain siloed in their own de-racinated space. Jerome McGann therefore suggests a design-focused approach to effecting the Reader and the Work in a productive edition (McGann 2022, pp. 56–7).

Creative-critical publishing of editorial networks

... 'we're not solving anybody's problem here, because we don't know what the problem is' – Alan Kay (1972).

Arguing that we should have a creative-critical approach to reading and editing is one thing; designing and publishing in a creative-critical way is another. My comments so far are philosophical and theoretical in nature, but the theoretical must adapt to the practical realities of digital publishing. How can scholarly editors in the twenty-first century accomplish more creative-critical modes of active engagement with editions? This question is pressing because digital

4 *Pamphlet Against Anthologies*, p. 36.

scholarly editors still struggle to define for publishers what forms digital editions take, what they look like and what tools they need. The reason for this lack of clarity is owing to the fact that digital editions have tended to be bespoke web publishing projects, so there is no ideal model that could conform to the (admittedly limited) capacities of academic publishers today. Even though scholarly editors have a keen awareness of the 'publishing problem', they have largely failed to articulate what the real problem is.

Digital editors create models for the texts they are working on, but for several decades they have been tied to the document paradigm. The depth model would suggest that we represent a text with semantic tags which explicitly name various textual phenomena for the purpose of replicating as closely as possible the original source. As a result, much labour has gone into richly encoded TEI XML representations of documents, but it is still needlessly difficult to publish TEI projects. However, despite TEI being 'descriptive', we cannot still gauge from the data model what is interesting or significant or generative about textual phenomena. The meaning, the intentions – the aboutness – of the data remain abstruse. A pan-relational model of editing would mean different publication strategies that focus on the meanings of texts through narratives.

Editors could rethink editions as exhibitions of creative processes and textual relationality. By 'exhibition' I mean moving beyond the constraints of the passive edition – namely, page-by-page transcriptions, or long texts without sufficient framing showing how they were made. To paraphrase Ted Nelson, this is the 'shop-window' aesthetic of editing.[5] It is also the kind of editing that expects readers to read the text on the screen the same way they read books. The *Moby-Dick* example from MEL does exactly this, in its minimalist way, by offering revision narratives attached to a reading text, facsimiles of the first editions of the book and a separate Projects section for doing creative-critical work on the project's open data.

5 See Nelson 1999.

Editors could also take an atomistic and dynamic view of textual editing using a 'database' paradigm to render words and any meaningful part of any text into myriad combinations, hierarchies and pathways (Schloen and Schloen 2014; Prosser and Schloen 2021). As scholars at the University of Chicago's CEDAR project explain about their OCHRE graph database, the 'database paradigm' organises highly 'atomised' data (not just sentences, words and letters, but also half-letters, blank spaces and graphemes) that can 'be interconnected in more complex ways, allowing for a multidimensional representation of texts' (https://voices.uchicago.edu/cedar/rationale/). Using this paradigm, editors reveal nuances of text and composition through exploration with the database and its textual elements, or 'a multidimensional space of possibilities' existing in a network. One can tell a story in multiple ways and with multiple pathways. Creative-critical editing must therefore open up the text to aesthetic experience. At this moment MEL editors (including myself) are using a pragmatic approach: we are creating a new edition of Melville's *Typee* with the OCHRE database, but we are also working with Nicholas Laiacona on Performant Software's new EditionCrafter software to create static (that is, minimalist) pages of TEI XML transcriptions alongside IIIF images of the manuscript of Melville's 'Mosses from an Old Manse'.[6] Such an approach makes use of innovative graph database technology as well as minimal computing to offer lightweight reading interfaces. My recent edition of Mary Anne Rawson's anti-slavery literature anthology *The Bow in the Cloud* (1834) uses similar technologies to evince 'textual paths' through manuscripts and printed versions of texts.[7] Thinking of the edition as a graph model allows us to track authorial, editorial and adaptive versions of a work from source to revision to adaptation. The design of the data model itself becomes the new creative-critical exercise, for we will not only model traditional modes of editorial attention (such as insertions and deletions in a manuscript, or collating variants between texts) but we will also be modelling

6 For more on EditionCrafter, see https://github.com/cu-mkp/editioncrafter-data.

7 See the project in development at https://antislavery-anthologies.org/books/bow-in-the-cloud/index.

aesthetic queries – a new model for revision narratives that can be connected to other narratives of the creative process in a multi-dimensional, creative-critical network.

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