

MARGINALIA & PATRON SERVICES



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USING MARGINALIA TO UNLOCK PATRON NEED



- We are always looking for ways to help our patrons.
- How can Marginalia help us understand what patrons want?
 - What is marginalia?
Underlining, highlighting, encircling/boxing, brackets, parentheses, symbols, writing in a book.
 - Historically only marginalia of famous people was studied. But is there something to be learned from the marginalia of regular people like the students and faculty of Queensborough Community College, CUNY?
 - Patrons share what they need in their marginalia.
 - Some sharing is plain while other sharing must be deciphered.
 - More work to be done in deciphering the marginalia.

RESEARCH PLAN



- **Would I find marginalia?**
- **Would there be enough marginalia?**
- **What would the marginalia reveal?**

HOW WERE BOOKS CHOSEN?



- **Random**
- **In Library of Congress classifications**
 - PR English Literature
 - PS American Literature
 - PT Norwegian Literature

WHAT BOOKS DID I CHOOSE?



- **A Doll's House by Hendrik Ibsen**
- **A Tree Grows in Brooklyn by Betty Smith**
- **A Wuthering Heights Handbook by Lettis & Morris**
- **A Mirror of The Ministry in Modern Novels by Horton Davies**
- **Charlotte Bronte by Margaret Blom**
- **Do Androids Dream of Electric Sleep? By Philip K. Dick**
- **Frankenstein or The Prometheus by Mary Shelley**
- **O Pioneers! by Willa Cather**
- **Waiting for Godot by Samuel Beckett**
- **Walden Two by B.F. Skinner**

THE CAPTURE TOOL



- **Num**
- **Title**
- **Call**
- **Author**
- **Publisher**
- **Location**
- **Date**
- **Marginalia Type**
- **Page**

MARGINALIA TYPE



- **Underlining/1 Word**
- **Underlining/Phrase(s)**
- **Highlighting**
- **Encircling/Boxing**
- **Bracket/Brackets**
- **Parenthesis/Parentheses**
- **Symbols**
- **Writing**

MARGINALIA TYPE DATA



Marginalia Type	Bk 1	Bk 2	Bk 3	Bk 4	Bk 5	Bk 6	Bk 7	Bk 8	Bk 9	Bk 10	Total
Underlining I	NA	NA	7	3	3	29	20	9	10	3	84
Underlining/ Phrase	292	NA	95	8	46	282	261	73	30	45	1132
Highlighting	6	NA	64	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	129	NA	199
Encircling/ Boxing	6	NA	1	1	NA	61	5	53	7	3	137
Bracket/ Brackets	21	NA	37	NA	39	74	6	2	31	23	233
Parenthesis/ Parentheses	35	NA	16	NA	4	NA	NA	NA	2	9	66
Symbols	119	NA	106	2	25	51	99	7	109	18	536
Writing	7	NA	7	2	26	181	77	49	158	67	574
Total	486	NA	333	16	143	678	467	193	476	168	2961

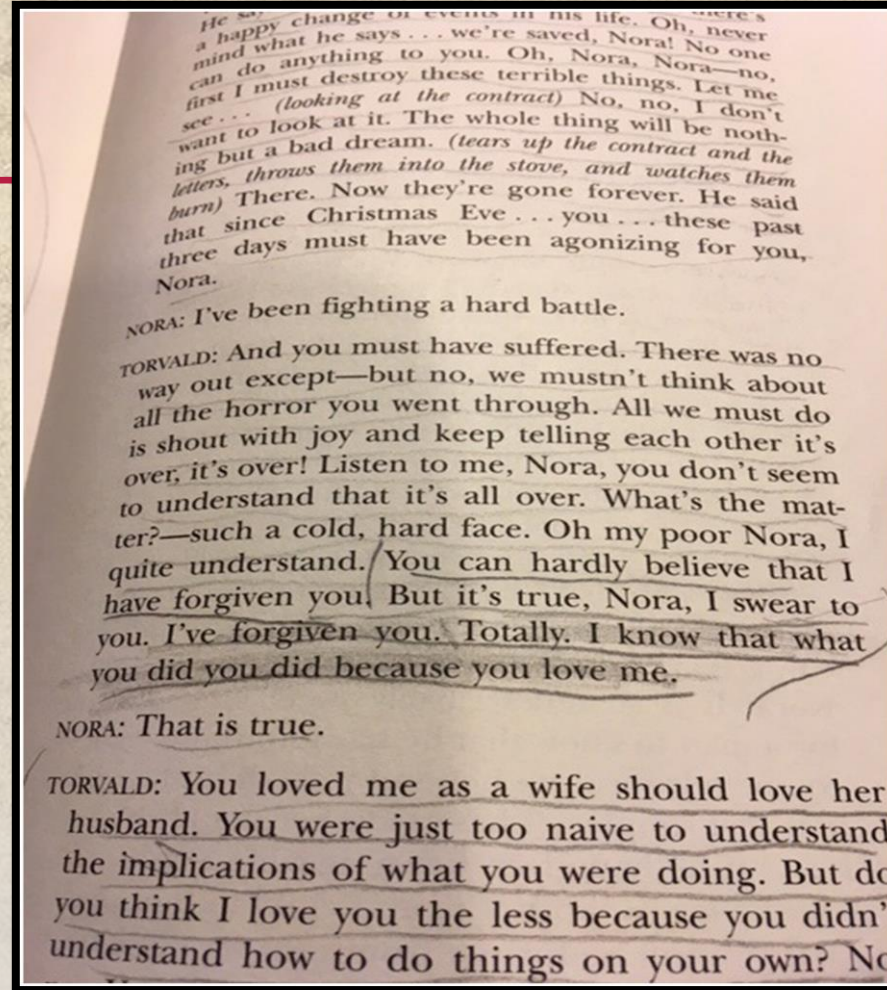
OBSERVATION



- **Many of the books were filled with marginalia.**
 - Multiple Authors
 - 3000 examples in 10 books.
- **Language of underlining, highlighting, encircling, boxing, bracketing, parentheses, symbols, writing.**
- **What did the marginalia say?**

OBSERVATION

- Examples of Marginalia
Extensive marginalia in “A Dolls House” including underlining, highlighting and the use of a pencil.



He says there's a happy change of events in his life. Oh, never mind what he says... we're saved, Nora! No one can do anything to you. Oh, Nora, Nora—no, first I must destroy these terrible things. Let me see... (looking at the contract) No, no, I don't want to look at it. The whole thing will be nothing but a bad dream. (tears up the contract and the letters, throws them into the stove, and watches them burn) There. Now they're gone forever. He said that since Christmas Eve... you... these past three days must have been agonizing for you, Nora.

NORA: I've been fighting a hard battle.

TORVALD: And you must have suffered. There was no way out except—but no, we mustn't think about all the horror you went through. All we must do is shout with joy and keep telling each other it's over, it's over! Listen to me, Nora, you don't seem to understand that it's all over. What's the matter?—such a cold, hard face. Oh my poor Nora, I quite understand. You can hardly believe that I have forgiven you. But it's true, Nora, I swear to you. I've forgiven you. Totally. I know that what you did you did because you love me.

NORA: That is true.

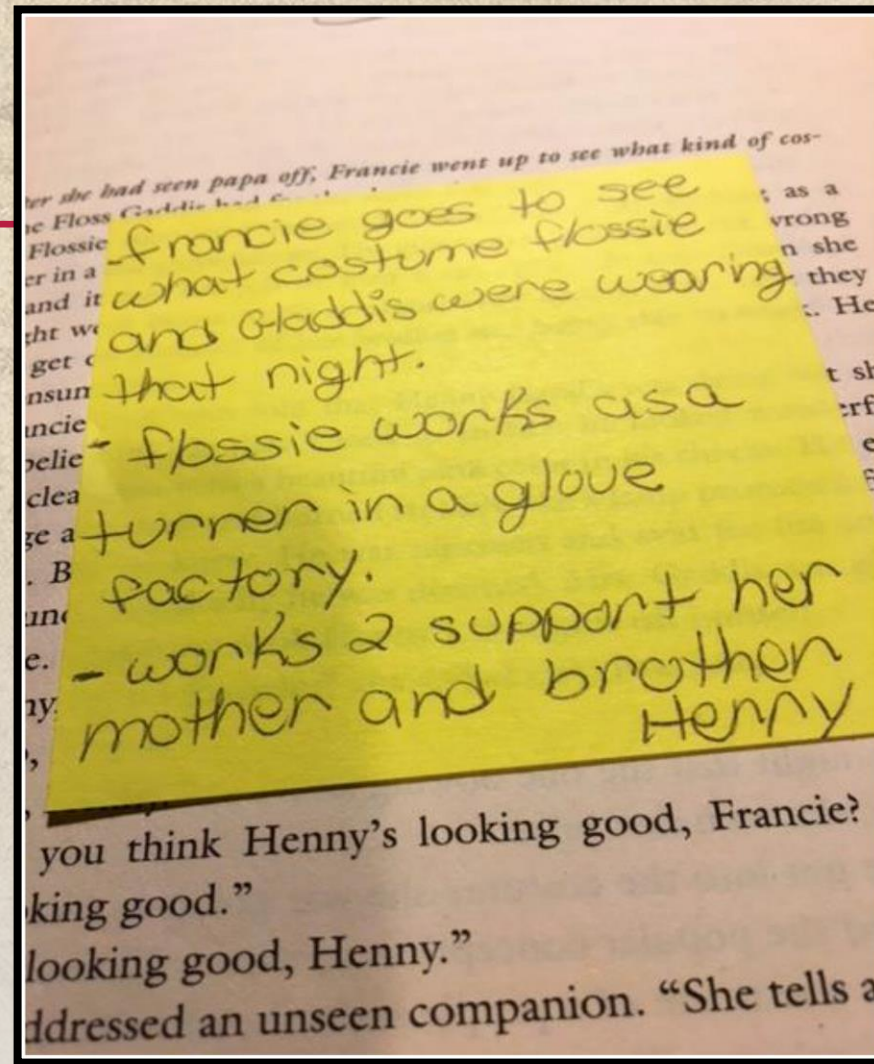
TORVALD: You loved me as a wife should love her husband. You were just too naive to understand the implications of what you were doing. But do you think I love you the less because you didn't understand how to do things on your own? No



OBSERVATION

- Examples of Marginalia

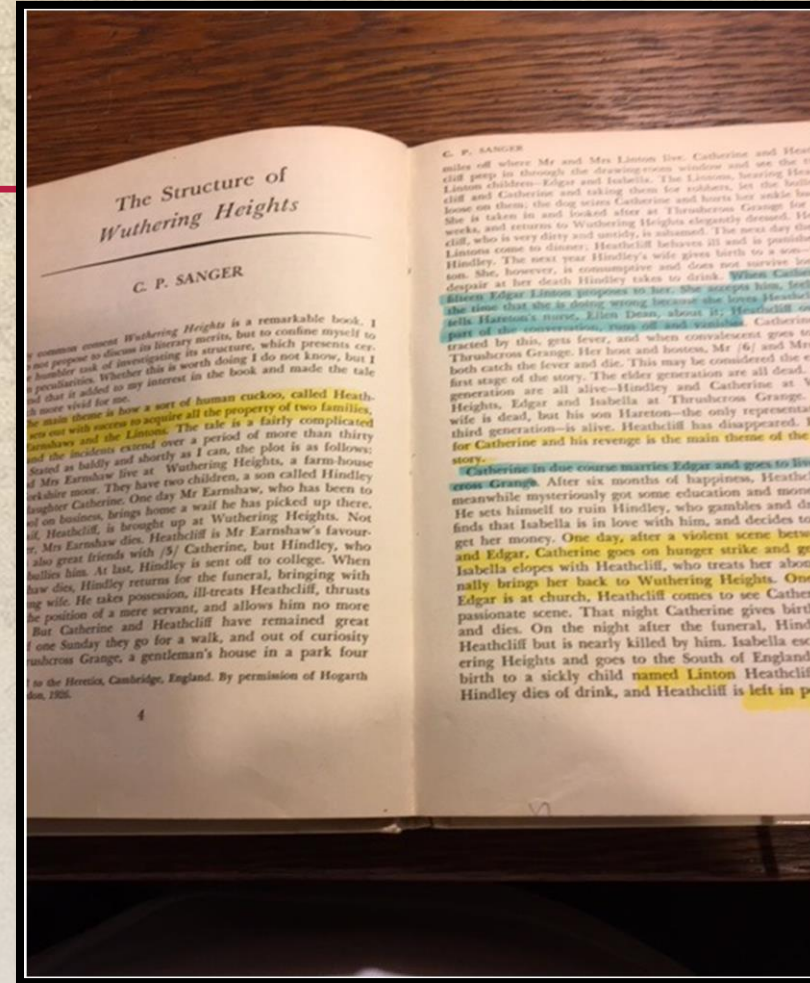
Marginalia in “A Tree Grows in Brooklyn” including Writing marginalia on *Posted Notes* added to the book.



OBSERVATION

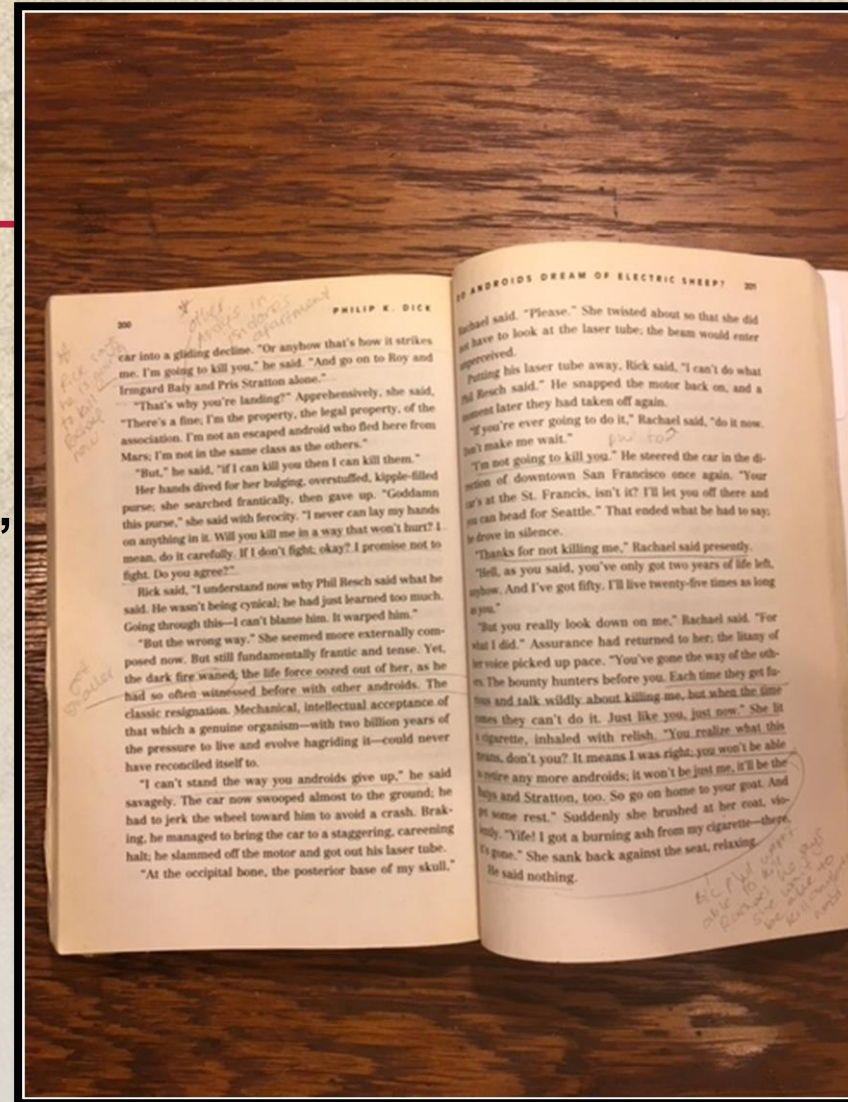
- Examples of Marginalia

Extensive marginalia in “Wuthering Heights” including highlighting and the use of color.



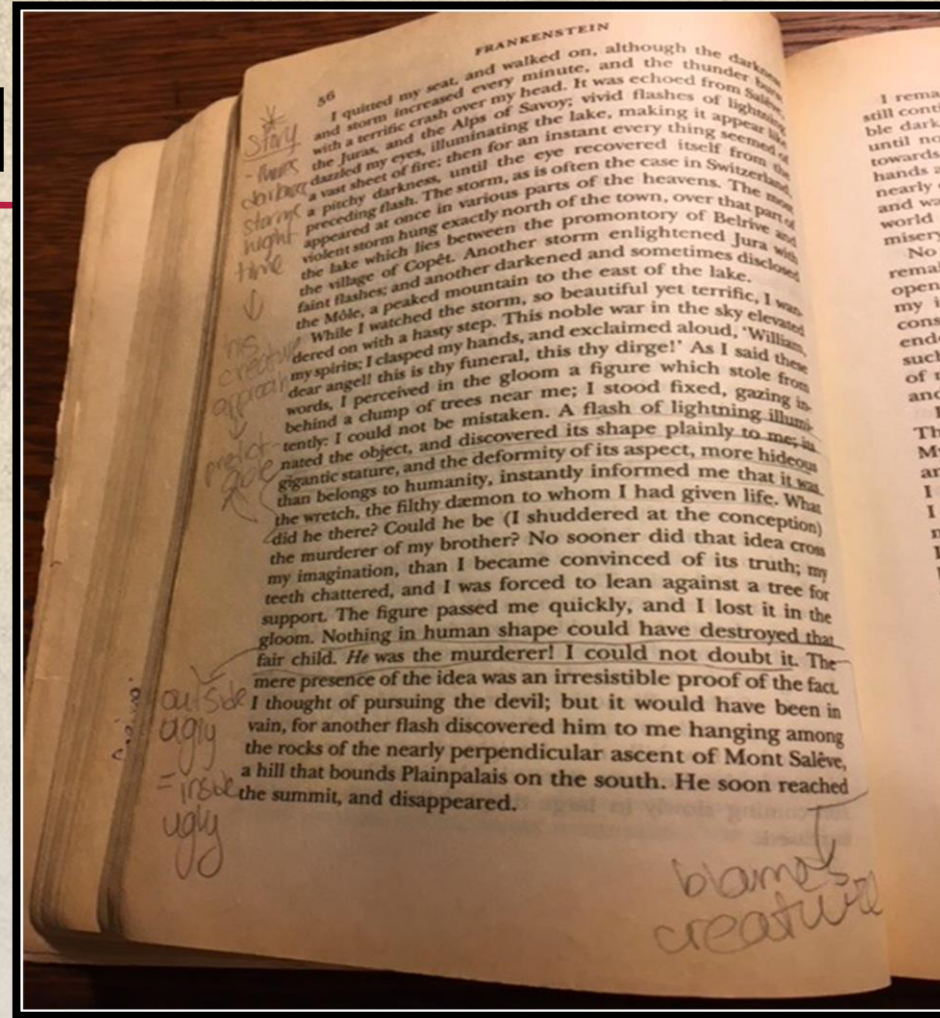
OBSERVATION

- Examples of Marginalia
Extensive marginalia in “Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep” by Phillip K. Dick including extensive writing and underlining.



OBSERVATION

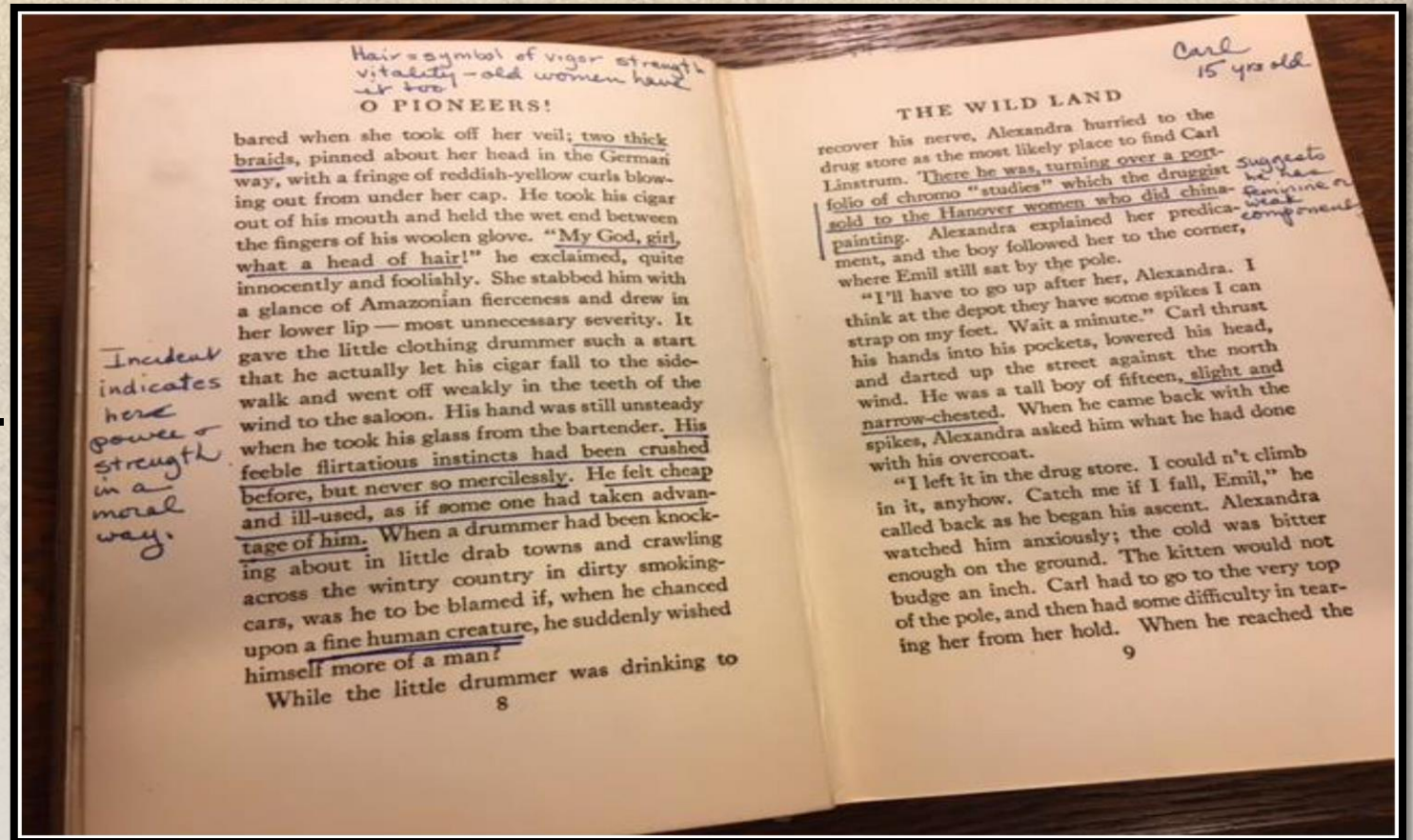
- Examples of Marginalia
Extensive marginalia in “Frankenstein” including extensive writing and underlining.



OBSERVATION

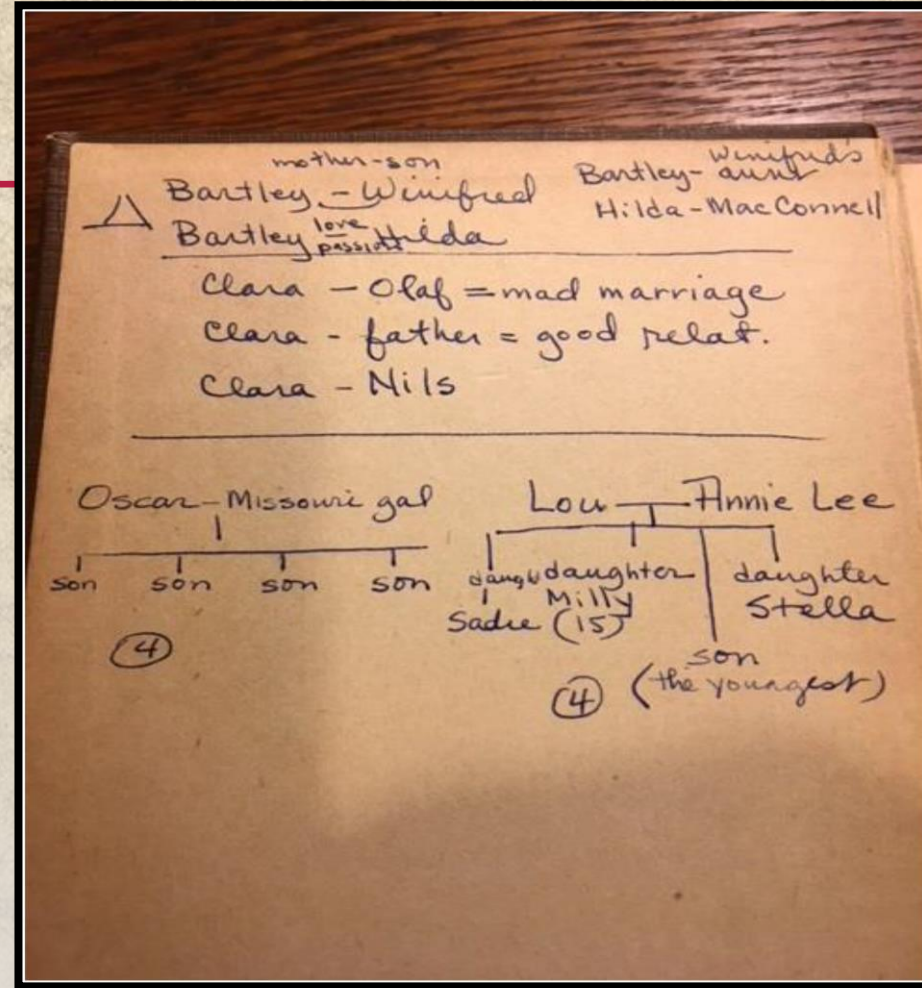


- Examples of Marginalia
“O Pioneers!” with extensive marginalia including underlining, vertical line and writing.



OBSERVATION

- Examples of Marginalia in Extensive marginalia in “O Pioneers!” including creating a family tree to understand the characters and relationships.



OBSERVATION

- Examples of Marginalia
“Waiting for Godot” with extensive marginalia including underlining, boxing and writing.

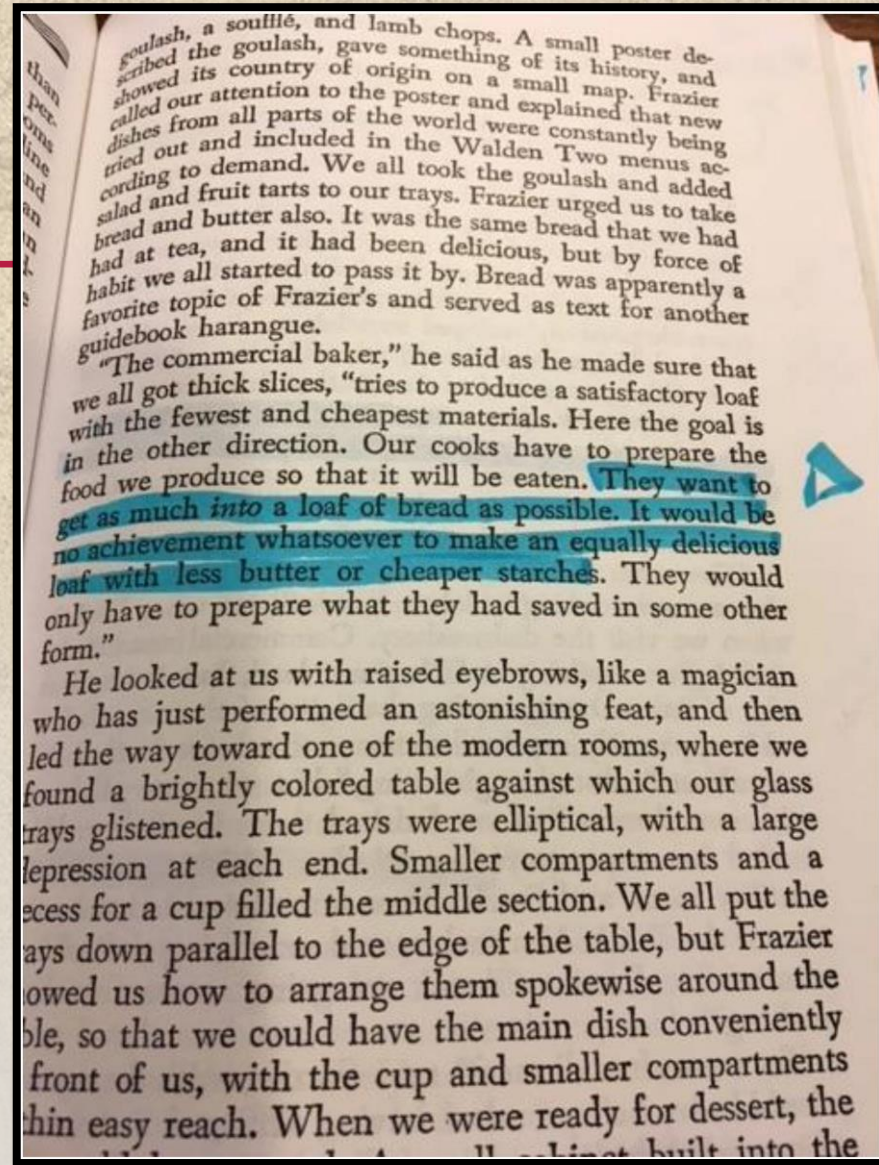
otherwise. To each one
VLADIMIR: You waagerrim?
POZZO: I beg your pardon?
VLADIMIR: You want to get rid of him?
POZZO: I do. But instead of driving him away as I might have done, I mean instead of simply kicking him out on his arse, in the goodness of my heart I am bringing him to the fair, where I hope to get a good price for him. The truth is you can't drive such creatures away. The best thing would be to kill them.
Lucky weeps.
ESTRAGON: He's crying!
POZZO: Old dogs have more dignity. (He proffers his handkerchief to Estragon.) Comfort him, since you pity him. (Estragon hesitates.) Come on. (Estragon takes the handkerchief.) Wipe away his tears, he'll feel less forsaken.
Estragon hesitates.
VLADIMIR: Here, give it to me, I'll do it. *nicer!*
Estragon refuses to give the handkerchief.
Childish gestures.
POZZO: Make haste, before he stops. (Estragon approaches Lucky and makes to wipe his eyes. Lucky kicks him violently in the shins. Estragon drops the

He treats lucky like a DOG!



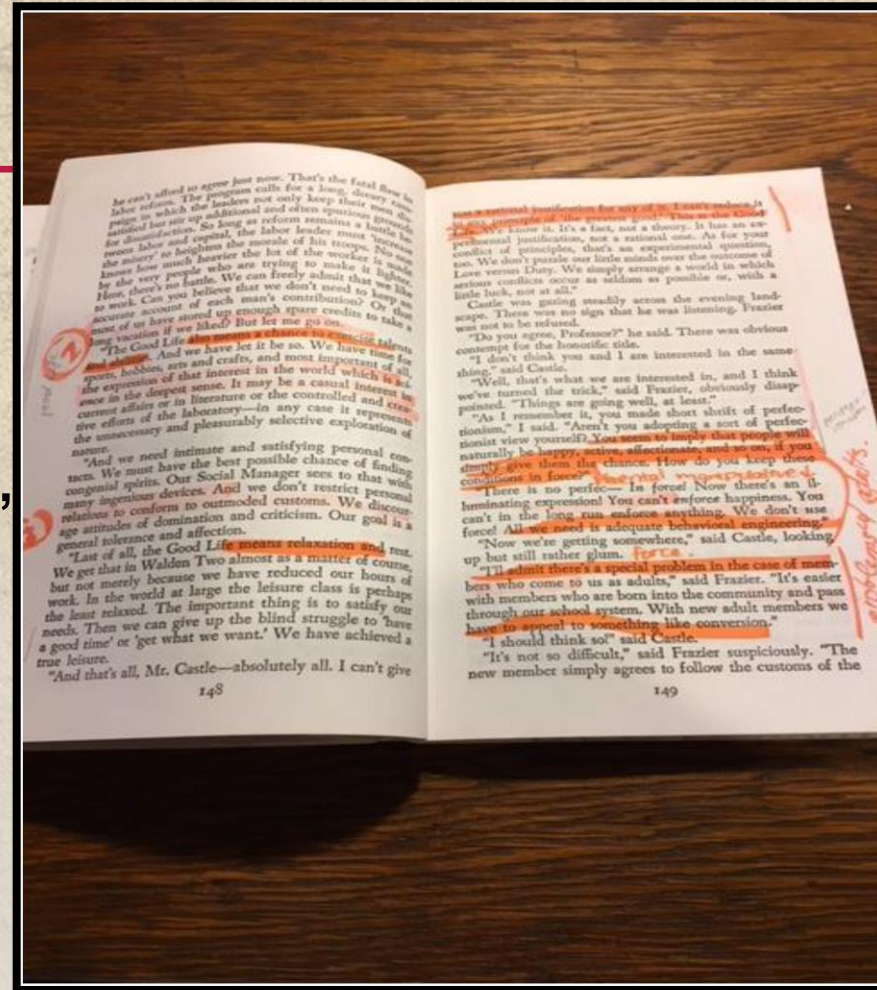
OBSERVATION

- Examples of Marginalia
“Walden Two” by B.F. Skinner
with extensive marginalia
including highlighting, and use
of a triangle.



OBSERVATION

- Examples of Marginalia
“Walden Two” with extensive marginalia including highlighting, writing, symbols and numbering with possible significance.



ANALYSIS



- **Words and Phrases are Underlined**

- It may have significant meaning within the story or just because the reader is unfamiliar with the word or phrase. The reader may not have encountered the single word or group of words previously and determines that now is the time to consult a dictionary. Was the reader indicating an unfamiliarity with the word or possibly a cultural challenge as with “company truck?”
- ***Some hardcore vocabulary drilling of a few hundred words or phrases most encountered in the American vernacular might be exactly what will help readers understand just what the author is referring to.***

ANALYSIS



- **Why Does The Reader Choose Certain Symbols?**

- There is the use of many symbols, but the use may be just for emphasis, or the reader may have a code such as an x is important, but an asterisk is very important. We often see the use of one asterisk, two asterisks, three asterisks and even four asterisks by the same marginalia writer. Are we to conclude that they are a form of rating like for films?
- Or is it possible that a patron is more likely to have an affinity with a certain symbol based on country of origin? There is the accepted meaning of a symbol and then what it means to the patron. There is what the symbol means in the USA that differs in other countries in the same way that the same word means something different in one country and differs in meaning in other countries.
- ***Is symbol meaning solidified enough in USA to teach in the same way we teach vocabulary?***
- ***I am confident that symbols and their use in marginalia warrants additional research.***

ANALYSIS



- **Marginalia Makers Desire To Know The Author**

- Time after time I saw proof of the marginalist's desire to know more about the writer's development of character and to fully understand what the writer was trying to say. The maker pressed and prodded employing marginalia as guideposts to see more and understand more.
- ***Perhaps the reader would benefit from a workshop in literary criticism to understand proven and accessible ways to analyze a work and delve into its meaning, how do critics and scholars apprehend a work and move from casual reader to unlocking understanding at a level that sates and even excites? A workshop or two offered by the library as a tool for the reader might be interesting and help the reader understand all the more. Librarians could lead the way.***

ANALYSIS



- **As Printed Books Pass Away**

- Finally, as we watch print books diminish and electronic books and databases rise are we troubled that the creators of marginalia, and especially on the magnitude of Dick's work and Cather's work, where they are writing on every page and in many cases many times on a page, will be duplicated in the electronic device? Or will there be a gap in which marginalia is lost for a period and then regained in the future with new and better solutions? Or is it really lost and never to be regained again? Of course, this loss is already accepted in common weeding. Books are weeded and chosen for the trash and marginalia lost..