3. Grammatical Complexity in Standard English

I was sitting on the bus going to work, annotating George K. Anderson's The Legend of the Wandering Jew. My mind drifted away from the text, to my act of annotation, and from there to the grammatical form of the word "annotation." It's a simple word, a noun. And of course, a noun is a person, place, thing, state, or quality; or more fully, as most dictionaries will remind you, the subject or object of a sentence that can be modified into plural and possessive. But that definition hardly begins to describe the grammatical function that the word "annotation" implies.

Consider. It's root is "note", which can be either a noun or a verb, but in this case I'll call it a noun. However, by adding the prefix "an-" it is transformed into a verb, which is thence re-transformed back into a noun with the suffix "-tion"! Those ambiguities and transformations are all processed instantly by our minds, and are equally instantly ignored as we read a sentence with the word "annotation" in it.

Now, I ask you, is "annotation" a noun, and if so, what is a noun?!

The more I explore steevspell, the more I realize that the apparently strange and foreign grammars and constructions embedded in it, such as noun-verbs like "annotaten", are neither strange nor foreign. We simply choose to ignore the complexity that already exists in the language. In actuality, like the quantum mechanical electron, our words are constantly changing forms and states, and we are hard-pressed to know when they're particles and when they're waves and when they're something else entirely.