

BOOK:LOGIC 2013

Many and various were the takes offered by presenters at the annual book:logic symposium on that long continuum between writing and revising to producing, publishing and reading. The one-day event was held at the University of Queensland on 4 October 2013, and rejoiced under the title: *Editing, Reading Studying: A symposium of the affordances of the (im)material book*. It was convened by Roger Osborne and David Carter

What is the work? was a common implied question in many of the papers as was the question of the material *or* immaterial (digital) form that scholarly editions and analysis of reception might take henceforth. 'Text' was no longer good enough, with each stage of a work's journey able to be inspected from historical and discursive perspectives, or materialised, agented and timebound ones.

Tim Dolan got the event off to a heady start with his paper 'Wonders taken for signs: digital texts and close reading'. Accepting the argument of John Frow that the history of literature is the history of its uses, Dolan argued that historicist analysis allows us to challenge the symbolic capital ('the regime of reading') that institutionally valued literary works bring with them. But, on the other and speaking from his experience of recent years in editing Thomas Hardy's *Return of the Native*, he argued for the counterbalancing need to allow room for the study of the present moment of writing, revising and reading always in response to material documents. Will literary studies change, he asked, given that its methods tend to reflect the medium?: a nice doffing of the cap to the term 'book:logic', with its cleverly medial and unspaced colon. No two presenters seemed to spell this umbrella neologism identically in their PowerPoints, as nearly all explored the widening gap between the material and digital forms of textuality.

The question of the sociality of literature as a component of reception study was dealt with by Julieanne Lamond. She used algorithm-driven cluster analysis of borrowing records at the Lambton miners' library to try to establish tastes shared by borrowers there. Tully Barnett surprised us with her contention: 'The binding of this book is social: Google Books and Kindle Social Highlighting as Modes of Reception.' She talked about books, perhaps with marginalia, being disbound for scanning and digital distribution. The material book's history is thereby frozen, and yet this scan will come to represent the work for the great majority of its readers in future. Such books are

are effectively rebound within apps and within the ‘social binding’ around the edges of the book: readers’ evaluations or shared highlighting of passages or annotations of them, lodged at the site, alongside others exploiting of a site’s functions as a means of social networking. (Strange but true!) So how should we undertake in future a digital bibliography so as to take account of readers’ new forms of encounter with books?

In more familiar bibliographical climes, Nathan Garvey showed us the need to understand the editorial mediation and rewriting in convict narratives published in the nineteenth century (which often nevertheless profess to present the convict’s authentic voice). This raised the question of the applicability to such narratives of literary or documentary scholarly editing. Bryony Musgrove drove the wedge deeper by showing that the Rachel Henning letters in the early 1950s allowed those texts to attain to a social authority by virtue of the nine editions in 80,000 copies that have appeared over the 50 or 60 years since. The digital environment, which seems to give priority to documentary presentation rather than editorial intervention, could do this for the original letters in the Mitchell Library, which were themselves, ironically defaced by the processes of the 1950s editing. Two historical moments here?, as well as the third of digital presentation?

Several other papers, each enlightening and welcome, were given to this enjoyable gathering: Jocelyn Hargrave on editing educational books on screen; Brigid Magner on the emergence of interactive digital travel guides especially for dead authors’ house museums (where happens to the authorial real thing in this digital form?); and David Large on studying and accounting for Malcolm Lowry’s heavy borrowings in his novel *Ultramarine*, and revisions of its published forms. It is consequently in need of an annotated scholarly edition. Mark Byron filled us in on the progress on his collaborative digital edition of the manuscripts of Samuel Beckett. Genetic criticism and editing, as applied to modern manuscripts, are becoming a growth industry, especially but only in Europe. Finally, Ros Smith provided an update on the mixed formats (both archival and editorial) that the collaborative early modern women’s writing project has been adapting for the resources it gathers, a variety of approach possible only because of the digital medium that it uses.

The next book:logic meeting, to which all BSANZ members are warmly invited, will be at the University of Newcastle in 2014 (convener: Ros Smith); updates will appear at <http://hass.unsw.adfa.edu.au/ASEC>

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