Making the Archives Talk': Towards an Electronic Edition of Joseph Furphy's Such is Life
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Abstract

The first edition of Such is Life, published in 1903 by the Bulletin Publishing Company, was the last step in a protracted period of composition, revision, and correction that produced several legitimate versions that are visible among the fragments of extant manuscripts and typescripts. When Furphy died on 13 September 1912, the possibility of any further authorial changes to his published and unpublished work died with him. His death did not stop publishing initiatives abridging his works by commissioning editors to do the job, and it did not stop the loss of other unpublished material as family members dealt with the author’s papers in the best way they could. As recent theory has demonstrated, the compilation and interpretation of the archive is unavoidably subjective, and so the contingencies of historical and critical interpretation form a very unstable view of the past. It is the job of a scholarly editor to confront this instability and provide a representation of the work that is useful to future enquiry. In this article I describe one approach, among several legitimate options, that I believe is the best way to represent, for current and future readers of Australian literature, the complicated and fragmented condition of the work we know as Such is Life. Informed by recent arguments in editorial theory and inspired by the possibilities of delivery in digital formats, an electronic edition of Joseph Furphy’s Such is Life will provide greater access to the major elements of extant archival record, and provide an environment where readers can contribute to the edition with annotations and commentary. Unlike the closed format of print-based alternatives, the electronic edition will remain open to critique, correction and debate, providing an environment that better accommodates the contingencies of archival preservation and historical interpretation.

Keywords

Joseph Furphy; scholarly editing

Full Text:

PDF

Refbacks

There are currently no refbacks.

For my electronic edition of Joseph Furphy’s Such is Life, I am currently working through a period of checking transcriptions and will soon upload the available page images and connect them to the relevant pages in the transcriptions. This will make checking the transcriptions much easier, and so, sometime in November, I’ll be extending an invitation to Furphy scholars and enthusiasts to help me. Generously provided by SETIS. This will eventually be superseded by a transcription of the ca 1905 typescript. In addition to providing greater access to the pre-publication versions, the abridged Such is Life (1937) and the full-length Rigby’s Romance (1946) are available here for the first time in electronic form. Joseph Furphy’s Such is Life is widely regarded as ‘one of the great masterpieces and challenges... Academic journal article Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature : JASAL. ‘Making the Archives Talk’: Towards an Electronic Edition of Joseph Furphy’s Such Is Life. By Osborne, Roger. Read preview. Article excerpt. Joseph Furphy’s Such is Life is widely regarded as ‘one of the great masterpieces and challenge As the 2011 Nancy Keesing Fellow, I presented a work-in-progress talk at the Mitchell Library Hail Fellows Evening earlier in 2012. The video of that presentation is now available. The presentation provides a general description of the approach I am taking towards an electronic edition of Such is Life. Updates to that approach will be posted here in 2013. Advertisements. Like this: Like Loading Related. This entry was posted in Uncategorized. Bookmark the permalink.