

“For Australia”: Joseph Furphy and Australian Literary Culture, 1889-1912

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Declaration

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Abstract

This thesis re-examines the Australian literary field of the 1890s by focussing on the life and times of the novelist Joseph Furphy. He had only one book, Such is Life, published during his lifetime but in addition produced a small volume of literary work. All of his works have been published or re-published since his death in 1912. To better appreciate why Furphy struggled to secure publication of his writing requires understanding not only of the author himself but also of Australian society and culture at the time he was writing. To this end this thesis considers the ideas of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and his concepts of capital, habitus and field as a useful frame of reference. The ensuing analysis uses this framework for the interrelated dynamics within a social space – a literary field – to explain the production of literary works.

Using Bourdieu's idea that the social space in which works were produced is the proper starting point for interpreting literary works, the first section of the thesis defines a relevant literary field. The next section analyses Furphy's confrontations within this literary field as he proceeded in his life as an author. An essential part of a Bourdieuan analysis depends upon recognising that a literary field is a microcosm of society where outside events are mediated through the particular autonomy of the field. In considering this, the remainder of the thesis analyses Furphy's writing as he engaged with the topics of education, religion, language and identity as they were retranslated through the specific logic operating within an Australian literary field of the 1890s.

Introduction

Shortly after Joseph Furphy's novel Such is Life was published in 1903, his editor at the Bulletin, A. G. Stephens, remarked that it was a modern classic but tempered his enthusiasm by declaring it "a book that everyone praises lest he be convicted of ignorance, but which no one ever reads through" (Barnes, Order 255). What relation had this brilliant, 'unreadable' book to the field of its production, its author, and its educational and literary institutions? Although Furphy ranks highly among the writers associated with the Bulletin school of writers of the 1890s, his novel was unlike any other produced in Australia at that time. Furphy too was different from other writers of the time. Unlike Henry Lawson and Banjo Paterson (the writers to whom Furphy is most frequently compared) Furphy was almost fifty years of age when he began writing for the Bulletin magazine. Sylvia Lawson has provided an apt description of Furphy as a "bush-bound creator whose isolation at once turned him to much reading and cramped his ability to assimilate it". The outcome was a "long, allusive, ironic, pre-modernist novel, a narrative for several voices, into which the author put all of himself and his colonial outback world" (175). A central concern of this thesis is an attempt to unravel the relational dynamics of the authorship and publication of Furphy's texts within the historical context of their creation. In this endeavour the ideas of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and his concepts of habitus, capital and field provide a useful frame of reference. This involves an attempt to negotiate the division between 'internalist' and 'externalist' modes of relating text and culture. Understanding Furphy's position in relation to other authors through this

framework allows for a new interpretative perspective on Such is Life: one that incorporates authorial biography as part of a cultural field in a way that revises current uses of biography in relation to this text. It also illuminates wider cultural questions surrounding authorship and the history of the book as writers struggled to publish and have their works acknowledged during the turbulent period that was the Australian literary field of the 1890s. In this Bourdieu's concepts – his thinking tools as he calls them – emphasise the difference and utility of this approach compared to other schools of literary criticism such as New Historicism, Cultural Materialism and Marxism, theories which have also been prominent since the 1980s.

At the outset it is important to emphasise that Bourdieu does not claim his concepts of habitus, capital and field are specifically engendered towards espousing a complete theory of literary criticism. He developed his concepts over a number of years, beginning with an intense interest in understanding what underpins people's practices in society. This is best demonstrated in probably his most influential and best-selling book Distinction by his formula which relates how: [(habitus) (capital)] + field = practice (101). While this may at first sight be an empirical formula that can be simply applied to the study of what people do in society, this is not the case. For Bourdieu, what people do, how they respond to different circumstances, is dependent upon their own particular historically acquired habitus and the specific capital at stake within cultural fields.

Although John Frow is a critic of Bourdieu's theories he nevertheless considers Distinction as his "major work" essentially it seems because it "synthesises" his earlier studies (29). This is particularly relevant because his concepts of habitus and capital predate that of field. For other critics, however, and Loïc Wacquant in particular, Distinction is a work that still needs to be read "together" with his earlier work Outline

of a Theory of Practice (56). Outline is an important work, based as it is on Bourdieu's anthropological field work in which he explicates his theory of practice related to habitus and capital (field is not listed in the index as a concept in this work and is rarely mentioned in the text). Nevertheless, it is the development of Bourdieu's concept of field that enhances his methodology for the study of literary texts. His Field of Cultural Production is a collection of articles brought together in an attempt to unify and emphasise his particular relational approach to culture and power relations through habitus and field.

Bourdieu refers to his concepts as thinking tools that allow for the study of society, with literary culture being one among a number of discourses on which he published, including art, education, linguistics and distinction, judgement of taste, in society. It is this continuing development across a number of discourses which has inherent difficulties for anyone intent on understanding and applying a Bourdieuan methodology. As Wacquant has pointed out, for the beginner, finding an appropriate entry into Bourdieu's work "poses the thorny problem of where to start", essentially because any starting point would be arbitrary at best because Bourdieu rarely separated "epistemology, theory and empirical work" (55). Wacquant provides an outline for the study of Bourdieu; however, his model is not prescriptive, and its value depends on an approach suited to the field under examination. What is particularly relevant is Wacquant's advice that one must "understand Bourdieu in his own terms" – the key terms of habitus, capital and field – before attempting to translate him into "more friendly lexicons" (55).

In his Outline of a Theory of Practice Bourdieu relates how practices, what people do, are essentially a product of a habitus which he posits is a "durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations" (78). That is, practices are a

relationship of forces operating from objective conditions and their motivating structures. Essential in this is that habitus is the product of “history turned into nature” in which a person’s unconscious is simply the “forgetting of history” (78). This means that in each and every one of us there is part of “yesterday’s man” who “inevitably predominates ... since the present amounts to little” when compared to the long past from which people result (79). To put this in a friendlier lexicon, habitus is a practical sense, whereby agents act or react in ways that are not necessarily calculated or in “conscious obedience to rules”. Habitus is a collection of “dispositions which generates practices and perceptions” which begins early in life to become second nature (Johnson 5). As Webb (et al) state,

habitus is the values and dispositions gained from our cultural history that generally stay with us across contexts (they are durable and transposable). These values and dispositions allow us to respond to cultural rules and contexts in a variety of ways (because they allow for improvisations), but the responses are always largely determined—regulated—by where (who) we have been in a culture. (36-37)

This regulation does not rule out agents developing strategic choice in their actions but it is the habitus which “commands this option”; that is, although a conscious strategic calculation is possible it merely reflects what the habitus “carries out in its own way” (Wacquant 50). This emphasis on habitus being the product of an earlier existence is important for it brings into play the need to consider author’s biographies when interpreting their texts within the historical context of the time the works are produced and published. This is especially so if one wants to try to make sense of why Furphy did not pursue a literary life until later in his life. This does not mean that habitus allows one to relate literary texts directly to an author’s biography, but it does have a significant part to play. This is different from a position espoused by one of Bourdieu’s contemporaries Roland Barthes, for whom a writer’s private life may have anecdotal interest in explaining how and why a book came to be written but is not relevant to the

literary quality of his or her books (Thody and Course 107). However, as Macdonald argues, for Bourdieu an author's biography has value "in so far as it adds a further external dimension to what is happening in the field ... so [for example] a writer's social origins can influence his or her conduct as a holder of a specific position" (17). Furthermore, it is when the habitus, as a socially learned second nature, meets with a particular field that biography affects how natural a writer feels occupying a particular position in the field (17).

For Bourdieu, there are two types of capital to be considered when describing a literary field. The first is cultural capital, which he refers to "as a form of knowledge, an internalized code or a cognitive acquisition which equips the social agent with empathy towards, appreciation for or competence in deciphering cultural relations and cultural artefacts" (Johnson 7). Like habitus, this cultural capital is "accumulated through a long process of acquisition or inculcation" and includes family, social and institutional education (Johnson 7). This capital is what the author first brings with him or her as he or she enters a literary field. The second type of capital described by Bourdieu is symbolic capital. This may be considered as prestige, celebrity, consecration or honour based on knowledge and recognition (Johnson 7). These basic items of symbolic capital can be extended to include the very basis of the capital itself. Within the Australian literary field of the 1890s Furphy wanted to write, promote and be recognised for his 'indigenous' Australian literature, by which he meant a literature written by native-born Australians. In his writing, therefore, he was positioning himself against what he called Anglo-Australian writers.

An important point to remember in understanding Bourdieu's ideas is that having "economic capital does not necessarily imply possession of cultural or symbolic capital, and vice versa" (Johnson 7). For Bourdieu what is significant about a literary field is

that it is the reverse of the economic world whereby in some circumstances commercial success in writing a bestseller could act against the author in denying him “consecration and symbolic power” (Johnson 8). While Furphy did not actively pursue the life of a professional writer he nevertheless still wanted to be recognised as contributor and producer of what he believed was an authentic Australian literature.

Bourdieu is clear that his methodology offers no ready-made template: “The literary field is itself defined by its position in the hierarchy of the arts, which varies from one period and one country to another” (Field 47). In an interview with Wacquant he also claims that he does not set out to construct theory but instead emphasises that the theory in his work is best seen as a “set of thinking tools visible through the results they yield, but it is not built as such”, and is “a temporary construct which takes shape for and by empirical work” (Wacquant 50). Richard Jenkins maintains that Bourdieu attempts to construct a theory of social practice and society. He has argued that it is not a “temporary construct” subordinate to the needs of empirical research (67). He is attempting to develop a discussion centring on what he calls Bourdieu’s “body of social theory”. However, Jenkins perhaps misses the most relevant point in that fields in Bourdieu’s methodology for social research are specifically defined and developed by the researcher. Moreover, what Bourdieu means in relation to theory is that his “scientific theory” based upon empirical research has

more to gain by confronting new objects than by engaging in theoretical polemics that do little more than fuel a perpetual, self-sustaining, and too often vacuous meta-discourse around concepts treated as intellectual totems. There is nothing more sterile than epistemology or theory when it becomes a topic for society conversation and a substitute for research. (Wacquant 50)

The key concept to grasp in relation to Bourdieu’s use of field is its relational aspect:

“to think in terms of field is to think relationally” (Wacquant 39).

This brings into play the problem of just how one defines the limits of a field under investigation. For Bourdieu the literary field is the space of a continuing dynamic struggle between agents and institutions for dominance of the field. This field

is a veritable social universe where, in accordance with its particular laws, there accumulates a particular form of capital and where relations of force of a particular type are exerted. This universe is the place of entirely specific struggles, notably concerning the question of knowing who is part of the universe, who is a real writer and who is not. The important fact, for the interpretation of works, is that this autonomous social universe functions somewhat like a prism which refracts every external determination: demographic, economic or political events are always retranslated according to the specific logic of the field, and it is by this intermediary that they act on the logic of the development of works. (Field 164)

Therefore, “one can only understand what happens there if one locates each agent or each institution in its relationships with all the others” (Field 181). Texts are therefore analysed “both in relation to other texts and in relation to the structure of the field and to the specific agents involved” (Johnson 17).

Moreover, Bourdieu believes that “[f]ew areas more clearly demonstrate the heuristic efficacy of relational thinking than that of art and literature” (Field 29): because of interpretative freedoms art and literature allow for the complexity in their production and reproduction of cultural discourses. His concept of the field “lies in research, in the practical problems and puzzles encountered and generated in the effort to construct a phenomenally diverse set of objects in such a way that they can be treated, thought of, comparatively” (Wacquant 50). This requires what Randal Johnson calls an “extremely demanding analytical method” that encompasses the “set of social conditions of the production, circulation and consumption of symbolic goods” (9). Just what these demands are involves a procedure in studying a literary field, which in many respects is empirical, in that one must initially analyse the literary field as it is situated within the field of power. This then allows one to emphasise the positions occupied by agents within the field who are competing for the specific stakes or capital. And just as

importantly “one must analyse the habitus of agents” themselves as they seek to actualise their opportunities (Wacquant 40). According to Johnson, for Bourdieu,

The theory of the field [leads] to both a rejection of the direct relating of individual biography to the work of literature or the relating of the “social class” to the origin of the work and also a rejection of internal analysis of an individual work or even of intertextual analysis. This is because what we have to do is all these things at the same time. (9)

As Peter McDonald has stated, the first task of any literary analysis using a Bourdieuan approach is not to “interpret their meaning but to reconstruct their predicament ... the primary task, then, is to reconstruct the field” (13).

Only by describing the particular laws operating within the field does it become possible to attribute meanings to a literary text and its author.¹ As Bourdieu states, a literary field is a “universe of belief”. That is, textual production not only includes its “materiality” but also its value which is “the recognition of artistic legitimacy” (Field 164). For Bourdieu, this is “inseparable” from the production of the writer as a writer, that is, as a “creator of value” (Field 164). This also raises questions for Bourdieu as to who is the “true producer of the value of the work ... the writer or the publisher” (Field 76). A writer’s relationship with his publisher or editor is not merely one of marketing his literary output. The publisher is the “person who can proclaim the value of the author he defends ... and above all he ‘invests his prestige’ in the author's cause, acting as a ‘symbolic banker’ who offers as security all the symbolic capital he has accumulated”, which he is liable to forfeit if he backs a ‘loser’ (Field 77). However, this

¹ This is quite different from what Roland Barthes says of attempts to find significance in the life of an author.

To give an Author to a text is to impose upon that text a stop clause, to furnish it with a final signification, to close the writing. This conception perfectly suits criticism, which can then take as its major task the discovery of the Author (or his hypostases: society, history, the psyche, freedom) beneath the work: once the Author is discovered, the text is “explained.” the critic has conquered; hence it is scarcely surprising not only that, historically, the reign of the Author should also have been that of the Critic, but that criticism (even “new criticism”) should be overthrown along with the Author. (“The Death of the Author” para.6)

Therefore, for Barthes, literary texts do not reflect reality nor do they express the ideas of the author.

is not as straightforward as saying that publishers would not publish works which would not produce a return on investment. There can be more subtle nuances at work. On the one hand, Stephens' argument to Archibald to get Such is Life finally published had as much to do with promoting what he believed was an example of truly 'indigenous' Australian literature as it did with ensuring a profit. Stephens' influence as 'symbolic banker' on Furphy's behalf can be seen from two extant letters from 1899. In the first, dated 15 July 1899, Stephens writes to his publisher Archibald to extol the virtues and merits of publishing Such is Life. "This book contains all the wit and wisdom gathered in Furphy's lifetime. It is himself. It is thoroughly Australian; a classic of our country". He goes on to declare that the book would make a worthy addition to the Bulletin's list and he anticipates an English edition (ML MSS 3467/2). On 17 August 1899 he wrote to Furphy emphasising that he had placed the typescript with the manager but was meeting resistance despite his "strong recommendation" and urged Furphy to write to the manger to enquire whether publication was proceeding (NLA MS2022/5). The limits of Stephens' influence can be gauged from his inability to persuade Archibald to publish the novel without being shortened substantially. On the other hand, Furphy's limited output of published literary works can be attributed to his attachment to the Bulletin to the exclusion of other publishers: Stephens' favourable comments (in 1897) of the manuscript of Such is Life arguing that it merited publication meant Furphy never approached other publishers until it was too late. A seemingly unreadable novel which sold poorly along with the loss of his 'symbolic banker' meant he failed to influence the field to accept his indigenous Australian literature.

II

In a Bourdieuan approach to literary criticism one faces a number of challenges that need to be considered, especially if one is going to deviate from or limit the scope of analysis. One difficulty centres on collecting the data needed for using Bourdieu's sociological approach. As Toril Moi has stated:

To gather the relevant data for a Bourdieuan analysis of a text, a writer, or a specific cultural field is extremely time consuming. In order to produce his remarkable investigation of L'Education sentimentale, for example, Bourdieu mobilized a huge team of researchers, and it still took him over ten years to finish the Rules of Art. Without such data, however, the “thick” phenomenological and sociological descriptions that Bourdieu promises literary criticism simply cannot be produced. (6)

Although there are obvious questions to ask—for example, why did Furphy chose the Bulletin to be his publisher, and what significance is the literacy of his parents to his life as a writer—deciding just what is relevant becomes difficult if one is not to become tied down by the minutiae. The solution pursued in this thesis to the problems of the independent post-graduate researcher using Bourdieu as a frame of reference is to focus on discourses related to an author's writing within its historical context that utilises his main concept of a field. In this I am basing my approach on a current orthodoxy of literary critics using Bourdieu's method with discourse analysis: Brigid Rooney, Elizabeth Harries, Peter McDonald and Kirsten McLeod. All have different approaches that highlight the difficulties in using a Bourdieuan analysis.

One must not, however, fall into the trap of simply using a thematic approach without considering as much data as possible. As Moi sees it, by not collecting relevant data, Bourdieu's sociological approach can become simply thematic (7). Literary critics “will turn one or two favorite Bourdieuan terms into closely defined ‘themes’ of close reading” (7). And therefore the thematic approach often selects habitus, field or capital without reference to the other terms which can lead to “impressionistic readings of the

representation of social themes in the literary text or of the competition for prestige in literary history (7). One approach to lessen the impact of impressionistic readings of a literary text, and the approach followed in this thesis, is to begin the Bourdieuan analysis not with the writer nor with the text but with the “social universe” – the literary field. One can then contextualise Furphy’s writing within this field, where as Moi points out, the “field-specific competition generates its own habitus in agents competing for field-specific symbolic capital” (8).

It is not only the data needed for a Bourdieuan analysis that is a challenge. For Brigid Rooney, writing an article on Christina Stead, Bourdieu is useful for literary and cultural studies, but his writings seem “wilfully obscure” (76). To get past this seeming difficulty in Bourdieu’s writing one can use Bourdieu’s own methodology on Bourdieu. That is, one needs to understand Bourdieu’s position within the French intellectual field of the 1960s, 70s and 80s. As David Schwartz has argued, Bourdieu’s prose style can be understood as a reaction against the French idea of “clarity of expression” being a national virtue (13). More importantly, Schwartz also raises the quite reasonable point that Bourdieu’s inventive “writing style” is his “strategy” to distinguish himself within the intellectual field as did the other French intellectuals Foucault and Barthes with their own distinctive writing styles (13).

Of course, this idea of distinguishing oneself within a cultural field not only applies to French intellectuals. As Rooney acknowledges, her purpose in applying Bourdieu to Australian literary culture is to position herself differently from other writers within the academic field (76). That is, in her article one can readily see how she seeks to distinguish herself by rejecting what for her is a somewhat narrow autobiographical and psychoanalytic approach in favour of a broader psychoanalytic approach based on a “social space needed to understand how Stead’s fiction, persona

and politics intersected” (77). What this neatly encapsulates is Bourdieu’s method for literary analysis, whereby internal and intertextual analysis is combined with biographical detail within a field of study, by focusing on a single author through a specified discourse, in this case politics. By just focusing on a single political discourse in this instance in her short article Rooney is able to use Bourdieu without becoming overburdened with what she rightly identifies is the “sheer weight of empirical and sociological data” needed for analyses (78).

Elizabeth Harries, like Brigid Rooney, also used Bourdieuan techniques within the confines of a journal article and was therefore limited in the amount of description she could give. Harries adopted the same approach to late eighteenth-century English literature in defining a historical literary field of study in which to analyse, like Rooney, a particular author’s text using discourse analysis. Harries, as a feminist writer, is particularly critical of Bourdieu because he does not engage sufficiently with gender (459). Nevertheless, for Harries, Bourdieu is still useful, for his methodology allows one to see “how the cultural field was constituted and how women writers entered it in the late eighteenth century” (459). And here Harries uses Charlottes Smith’s prefaces for signs of the struggle within the cultural field and the extent to which Bourdieu’s concepts can help analyse Smith’s position-takings and strategies (460). One of the shortcomings that Harries points to in this article is that there is “a great deal more that we need to know” (464). Of particular importance and particularly relevant is Harries’ desire to know the earnings of Smith compared to other authors of the time as well as the relationship between earnings and status in the field (464). In short one can infer that Harries is saying her article adds one more piece to the puzzle that would provide a more detailed description of the cultural field of the 1780s and 90s. One can also add that both Rooney and Harries in using a Bourdieuan approach recognise the limitations

of not being able to provide the analysis required by the weight of empirical evidence required to do justice to Bourdieu's sociological method. Nevertheless, by limiting themselves to a single discourse, politics in Stead's writing for Rooney, and gendered responses in Smith's prefaces for Harries, in each case combining textual and biographical detail with the context of a defined social field (although limited in scope), both authors show the value of Bourdieu's ideas as a useful framework within psychoanalysis or feminist approaches to analysing literary texts.

Both Rooney's and Harries' analyses are constrained by the scope of their rather short journal articles. This is less of a problem for both Peter McDonald and Kirsten McLeod who provide a more detailed analysis in monograph form by analysing the British literary field of the 1890s from differing perspectives. On the one hand, McDonald, in focussing on the careers of three authors (Joseph Conrad, Arnold Bennett and Arthur Conan Doyle), uses Bourdieu's theory of the field in an attempt to transcend what he sees as divisions between cultural and literary studies. That is, a Bourdieuan approach for McDonald overcomes the division between "purely internalist" and "externalist modes" modes of reading and analysing texts. Therefore, Joseph Conrad's The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'

can be read as a manifestation of the literary field of the 1890s. Its impressionistic style and reactionary political allegory, its intertextual liaisons with the journalism and criticism of the Henley circle, its anxiously self-legitimising preface, its material and symbolic embodiment as a New Review serial or a limited first book edition by Heinemann, its reception by contemporary reviewers and readers, and its place in Conrad's literary career – all this 'internal' and 'external' evidence conjointly marks it out as an 1890s-style purist text. (172)

To enable such an analysis requires, McDonald argues, evidence from "literary critics, sociologists, economists, biographers, bibliographers, and book historians, all of whom have an independently insufficient but collectively necessary part to play in any history of the intricately structured field of the 1890s" (172).

Kirsten McLeod, on the other hand, uses a genre of decadence in fiction writing to explore the relationship – the “positioning and manoeuvrings of writers” – in what she calls the “battle for cultural authority” in the British literary field of the 1890s. This battle in essence was waged between Decadents and their opponents and involved questions of “ethics, aesthetics and economics” (39). As McLeod argues, the 1890s was a time of “social and technological developments that contributed to the transformation of the field”. Moreover:

Just as the Decadents were in the process of constructing a social identity in opposition to the dominant middle-class ideology, the literary field they were entering was becoming ... increasingly commercialized. Developments in printing technology, the repeal of duties on advertising, stamps and paper, an increase in the disposable income of the middle-class families, and social reforms, such as the Education Acts of the 1870s and 1880s, created the conditions for a massive expansion of the periodical press, an increase in the amount of cheap fiction published, and a larger reading public. (39)

These changes opened up avenues for writers who were writing for this new mass market – a “crass commercialism” – something against which the Decadents were opposed in their positioning of themselves as part of “highbrow culture”(40) . And it was not just Decadents who were opposed to the changes in the literary field. Literary culture was seen by many intellectuals as being degraded by the “spectre of mass readership and the wealth of cheap popular reading material” (40). As John Carey argues in the Intellectuals,

As an element in the reaction against mass values the intellectuals brought into being the theory of the avant-garde, according to which the mass is, in art and literature, always wrong. What is truly meritorious in art is seen as the prerogative of a minority, the intellectuals, and the significance of this minority is reckoned to be directly proportionate to its ability to outrage and puzzle the mass. (18)

What is distinctive about this avant-garde intellectualism are its attempts to “counteract” the educational reforms of the late nineteenth century by denying access to literacy and culture to the masses (18).

While the focus of both McDonald’s and McLeod’s analysis is on the British literary field of the 1890s this thesis applies a similar approach to Australia in the 1890s. However, it is no straight-forward matter to analyse Furphy’s literary life in an Australian context. In essence this is because an Australian literary field is essentially an adjunct of the British literary field. Or to put it another way, an Australian literary field needs be considered as subsumed within a transnational field of English speaking peoples with centres of power and influence in Great Britain and America. This in no way invalidates using a Bourdieuan approach but it does create problems when attempting to apply fully his field concept. One can still speak of Furphy occupying a position within an Australian literary field but at the same time the outside influences which are refracted within this field emanate from a broader spectrum than simply Australia itself.

This highlights one of the difficulties in applying a field approach that may draw criticism. As Toil Moi outlined above, a Bourdieuan sociological approach requires a large amount of data to satisfactorily explain its operation. Moreover, as the field under consideration is essentially manufactured by the researcher, this may lead to rather narrow and too specific descriptions of the field under analysis by researchers in their attempts to explicate their critical endeavour. For example, a more comprehensive sense of the literary field in Britain and Australia could perhaps provide a more productive context for an analysis of Furphy. This is quite a valid point and one that needs to be recognised if one is going to limit the scope of the analysis. The approach adopted in this thesis is to pull back from the extensive amount of data required to fully comply

with Bourdieu's methodology and quite deliberately limit the scope of the field under consideration. In effect the field is described from 1889, the year Furphy had his first article published, to 1912, the year of his death. In this way Bourdieu's field becomes a useful frame of reference to analyse Furphy's literary life. The description then is of 'a literary field' which could be quite different from another defined literary field although both could be covering similar timeframes.

This does not mean that the British literary field is ignored – it is still helps to explain some of the difficulties Furphy faced – but rather a more comprehensive assessment of the role of British influence is not considered here. That is, the body of work dealing with the predicament of Australian writers in Britain and the subsequent failure of Australian authors, especially Furphy, to interest a British public could be approached using an alternate thesis from an 1890s British literary field perspective. As Martyn Lyons states, Australia's book trade and readers were part of an "imperial cultural space, dominated and defended by London publishers, and shared with Canadians, South Africans, Indians, New Zealanders and other readers of the Empire".² Complicating this domination was that imports from America infiltrated Australia and other areas of the Empire ("Britain's Largest" 22). To do a fully Bourdieuan analysis and construct a comprehensive literary field one would need to consider the British publishing domination within its entire Empire.

Also outside the scope of this thesis is a comprehensive study of Furphy's reputation as a product of particular people and institutions, throughout the twentieth century, determined to assert a distinctive national literary culture. Rather, by using the

² As Nile and Walker state, the geographical distribution of the book trade was a result of the 1886 Berne International Book Copyright Agreement. Because Australia at that time was still a colony it was therefore incorporated within the framework of the British Empire. The resultant trading blocs were almost impregnable until the rise in the twentieth century of multinational corporations (9).

literary field as a frame of reference, and not an expansive comprehensive item of study, this thesis is limited to explicating the difficulties for Furphy in establishing, with partial success, a literary career from the perspective of his social origins, education and particular interests (his habitus) and the precarious nature of the Australian literary field for authors during the 1890s.

Also limiting the scope to satisfactorily provide a comprehensive description of Furphy's position within the literary field is the problem that some data are no longer available. While there are a large number of extant letters written by Furphy there are few extant letters written to Furphy. In particular, although there are a number of letters from Furphy to his friend and confidante Kate Baker, only one survives from Baker to Furphy. As Barnes has recorded:

Furphy himself did not keep letters, but occasionally he passed them on to other correspondents instead of throwing them out. As a result the only letters addressed to him that survive are those which he forwarded to correspondents who kept his own letters. (Letters xiii)

Living in comparative isolation, in Shepparton and later in Fremantle, away from the big cities of Sydney and Melbourne with their literary circles, letters for Furphy can be seen as providing a substitute for a literary circle. However, as Furphy did not keep many of the letters addressed to him, the exchanges among his circle of friends, which may have provided a rich source of information, are unfortunately one-sided. When it comes to the extant manuscripts of Furphy's writing, here also the data are incomplete. Only a few pages of the original 1125 page handwritten manuscript of Such is Life survive and only about two-thirds of the 1897 typescript is extant. There is no surviving 1901 typescript of the final version for the 1903 edition of the novel. Without these missing, or incomplete, versions the description cannot be fully detailed. Given the protracted time it took to publish the novel and the considerable rewriting done for the

1903 version, the time taken and eventual changes are relevant to an understanding of the dynamics of the literary field itself.

Furphy's biographical details need to be similarly analysed to avoid simplistic or even inaccurate representations of him in the production of his literary works. For example, in the entry for Joseph Furphy in the Australian Dictionary of Biography Manning Clark has recorded that when "Furphy arrived in Sydney to discuss publication, the Bohemians of the Bulletin found him a very naive man. An anonymous wit published this description of him.

Tom Collins
Who never drinks and never bets
And loves his wife and pays his debts,
And feels content with what he gets. (ADB "Furphy")

Furphy made his one and only trip to Sydney in 1901 and taken as given this verse might well be an accurate description of Joseph Furphy/Tom Collins. The line of enquiry then proceeds to determine if possible just who the anonymous wit might have been. My own research uncovered that the above quoted verse lines were published in the pages of the Bulletin in 1893 and are included in Banjo Paterson's collected works ("Tom Collins"). No record can be found to indicate Paterson had ever met or corresponded with Furphy. Moreover, in 1893 Furphy's only contribution for the year – a short paragraph on the meaning of the name 'warrigal' – was his first to be published in the Bulletin using his new pseudonym. Thus this potentially significant line of enquiry remains necessarily incomplete.

A second example can be seen as more relevant because it concerns the number of copies of the 1903 edition of Such is Life that were sold. Jennifer Alison in a brief article on Joseph Furphy and the Bulletin has remarked that "the book was a commercial failure, selling only about 400 copies" (59). While not disputing Alison's comment that the book was a commercial failure, one might still wonder where she gets

the figure of 400. As with the previous example, my research revealed that in 1901 A. G. Stephens wrote to Furphy saying that he was proposing to print 2000 copies with an additional 50 for review purposes (ML MSS 364/67). In June 1903, just two months before the novel was released, Stephens again wrote to Furphy and declared that he was at “long last” sending him three complete copies and that “2000 copies” were awaiting binding ready for release (NLA MS2022/5). Furthermore, in April 1904 Furphy wrote to his mother to inform her that his latest statement from the Bulletin showed sales of 240 copies for the previous six months making a total of 845 since the novel’s release (NLA MS2022/5). In 1904 Furphy wrote to Miles Franklin remarking that the sale of Such is Life though “very slack” was now in its second thousand (Letters 182).

Although he does not say so Furphy most likely got this figure from the Bulletin for May 1904 advertising the second thousand. In 1917, 800 remaindered copies of the novel were purchased by Kate Baker and issued as a second edition. In his preface to the 1921 edition of Rigby’s Romance Stephens remarked that when he left the Bulletin in 1906 two-thirds of Such is Life remained unsold. It appears therefore that Alison has used Stephens’ two-thirds comment along with the 800 figure for the second edition to arrive at a figure of “about 400 copies”. This example might seem a trivial exercise.

After all whether 400 or 1000 copies were sold the novel was still a commercial failure. However, the poor sales of Such is Life are relevant data in this instance for it goes to the very heart of why the Bulletin would not consider publishing Furphy’s other two novels. Moreover, the two examples presented aim to show, not only the time-consuming effort required in gathering relevant data, but also how biographical data needs to be analysed when using Bourdieu’s sociological concept of the field in which the fundamental base “lies in research, in the practical problems and puzzles encountered and generated in the effort to construct a phenomenally diverse set of

objects in such a way that they can be treated, thought of, comparatively” (Wacquant 50).

III

Using Bourdieu’s concepts as a useful frame of reference this thesis is concerned with explicating what Brian Kiernan calls the elusive “pattern of links connecting literature and society” (“Literature”17). In doing so, however, there is the real possibility that such an analysis could reduce literature to social commentary. As Turner and Bird argue:

The use of sociology in the sociology of literature, and of history in reading literature for its social content are familiar methods. But they do fall into the difficult text-context area, and they can be seen as methods which threaten the notion that the literary utterance is unique or reduce literature to social documentation. (145)

In applying the concept of field to an Australian literary field of the 1890s, this thesis argues that writers occupy a specific space – a field of forces in which they are held in suspension, but also a field of struggles between dominant and dominated to preserve or transform the field of forces. Writers therefore exist under the structured constraints of the field. The writer’s point of view is the perspective from a given point in the field. This then allows authors to distinguish themselves within the field, and continue to be distinguished from others. In deciding to enter the field and ‘play the game’ of literary producer, writers accept both the constraints and possibilities within the field. Success or failure is then determined by the distribution of specific symbolic capital with the field.

An essential aim of this thesis is to define an appropriate literary field within a Bourdieuan framework, but using ‘literary’ here to include all those cultural relations that impinge upon the literary work during the period known as the 1890s. In this Ken Stewart’s idea is relevant:

the 1890s means, according to context, either the specific decade, or the “movement” or complex of strands which was discernible in that decade and can be contained very approximately by the years 1885 to 1905. (1890s 25)

This is particularly useful because the literary field must contain within it an answer to the question of why Joseph Furphy (associated as he is with the Australian literary canon of the 1890s) did not have his literary output published until the early years of the twentieth century. Such is Life was first published in 1903, Rigby’s Romance was first published in serial form in 1905-6, and The Buln-Buln and the Brolga was not published until 1948. Just why this was so evolved from the complex of relational dynamics within the literary field at this time, not least from what Bourdieu (in his conversation with Wacquant) says of writers as a “dominated fraction of the dominant class” (Wacquant 40).

The study of Joseph Furphy in this thesis considers his limited published output during his writing life and analyses earlier approaches to this ‘commercial failure’ by later critics and historians. Of crucial value in evaluating Furphy’s writing are the remarks he made in letters to Cecil Winter just after Such is Life was published in 1903. Furphy sees the “Out-back man” as the real Australian whose pessimism merely reflects his error in interpreting Nature. Furthermore, Furphy claims: “I write only what I know. You wouldn’t catch me laying a scene in Russia or Brazil, nor undertaking a society story” (Letters 124). Added to this is Furphy’s belief that

The poet’s eye must see everything that is to be seen; his ear must hear everything that is to be heard; and finally his pen must give to these things a local habitation and a name. (Letters 137)

At first reading he appears to be arguing for an emphasis on realistic depictions of life. However, any perceived realism must be seen from his perspective in attempting to distinguish himself from other writers.

For Russel Ward and Vance Palmer, Furphy's writing has particular value for his perceived realistic portrayals of the life of his time. Ward, who can be said to belong to the democratic nationalist and socialist school of historians, sees an essential truth in the fiction of the writers of the 1890s. He argues that:

It is not necessary to construct from documents a detailed picture of the bushman of the last decades of the nineteenth century for comparison with that of his prototype. The work has been done from the life, and for all time, by Furphy, Lawson and Paterson. (Australian 180)

His aim (in the chapter entitled "the bushman comes of age") is to "underline the accuracy" of the fictional characters (Australian 180). He also privileges these three authors as somehow pre-eminent in the literary field.

Vance Palmer, however, another democratic nationalist writer, argues that Joseph Furphy constructs, through his narrator Tom Collins, "a method that is the reverse of the realistic" (Legend 124). This allowed Furphy, Palmer argues, the freedom to "comment on the social structure, particularly the pastoral structure" (Legend 124). Despite this perceived anti-realism Palmer, like Ward, describes what he sees as an essential truth or realism in Furphy's writing.

In Such is Life there is no temperamental revulsion from a drought-stricken landscape, as in Lawson, and no sentimental picturing of grassy paddocks and cool river-stretches, as in Paterson. Furphy takes the level, black-soil plains of the Riverina for granted, their monotony, their occasional hints of beauty. (Legend 125)

Furphy's world is one that is alive with the detail that only an observant bushman could understand and describe. "Furphy's background is as much a part of him as his style" (Legend 126).

A Bourdieuan analysis in this instance allows one to acknowledge that both Ward and Palmer provide aspects of Furphy's habitus, but they also provide a point of departure in an analysis of his writing. His position in the field and any perceived realism in his writing require further analysis so as to uncover the strategies he used

within the structured constraints of the field as he attempted to get his writing published for later generations like Ward's to privilege his writing.

The complexity surrounding an author's position within the field can be gauged when one considers Christopher Lee's argument regarding Henry Lawson's attitude in his writing on Aboriginal Australians. Focussing on only one aspect of a writer's engagement with race in their writing ignores the complexity surrounding their position within the literary field. As Lee argues:

Lawson's treatment of the indigene is generally considered as scant and for the most part it is consistent with the conventions of his time. Certainly, as a writer whose living depended upon his relationships with the editors of a variety of newspapers and magazines, as well as a dispersed national audience, he had to show some respect for the ideas which were current. ("Status" 75)

To express this in Bourdieuan terms, Lawson exists under the structured constraints of the field exemplified by his various editors, differing publications and diverse audience. To continue to earn his living as a writer he accepts these constraints but nevertheless his point of view from a given position in the field allows him to distinguish himself, and to continue to be distinguished from other writers. Therefore, as Lee argues, Lawson's representation of the Aborigines is at best ambivalent. More importantly, "Lawson's reactionary temperament, his class position and its tortured relation to the cultural industries of his time, as well as his literary technique, however, make him an unsatisfactory candidate for cleanly-cut categories" ("Status" 76). This is also a valuable starting point for a Bourdieuan analysis of Furphy's engagement with the Aborigine in his writing, where the structured constraints of the field, his own class position and relationship with editors meant his point of view is different from that of Lawson, and his writing on Aborigines can be seen as just as ambivalent.

John Barnes has asserted that Furphy's "claim to be recognised as a major Australian writer rests wholly upon Such is Life" (Joseph Furphy xi). And therefore, his

other writings are only of interest “precisely because they are by the author of Such is Life” (xi). However, a Bourdieuan analysis would need to consider all Furphy’s available writing both published and unpublished because this helps define the literary field and the constraints under which he was positioned in the field. Therefore, Barnes’ 1995 publication of a collection of Furphy’s letters conveys a greater understanding of Furphy’s desire to be recognised as a writer: “Letters were for Furphy a form of literary composition, not merely a method of communication” (Letters xvi). The form of writing undertaken by Furphy in Such is Life is revealed in some part by evaluating his “literary” correspondence. Furthermore, consideration of his other writings is required mainly because the original (or Furphy’s preferred) version of his novel is markedly different from the published version of 1903. Also Furphy’s other so-called minor or lesser writings, short stories, essays, letters, verse, and his two shorter novels Rigby’s Romance, and The Buln-Buln and the Brolga, reveal Furphy’s interaction with Australian society from his perspective within the field.

To understand Joseph Furphy’s writing in the context of the literary field of the 1890s one needs an approach that uncovers the circumstances surrounding his text’s initial production and publication or lack thereof. As Barnes maintains, Such is Life is a “cultural creation” whose “form and substance” is indicative of Furphy’s life as a well-read working-class mechanic living in a small rural community attempting to become a novelist (“On Reading” 46). That is, “an understanding of Such is Life depends upon an understanding of Furphy’s relationship to the colonial culture of the time” (“Life and Opinions” 103). Vance Palmer, in his 1954 book on the 1890s, offers a number of starting points in his assessment of the novel.

If Such is Life had been published when it was written, it might have had more immediate effect. It was finished early in 1896 ... but it took Furphy over a year to write out his first copy. Afterwards there were innumerable difficulties about its publication and it did not see the light of day until August, 1903. By then a

distinct change had come over the national scheme. The Boer War had been fought, federation was accomplished, the sense of morning freshness had passed from the literary air, and Furphy had the air of a belated traveller, stumbling along with his long, discursive story into a party where the fire is out and most of the guests gone. (Legend 126)

Furthermore, Palmer maintains that it was only a future “generation” that was able to see the originality in Such is Life (Legend 126). And also, he contends, it was A.G. Stephens of the Bulletin magazine who persevered against “all difficulties” and arranged its publication (Legend 127).

The issues identified by Palmer are central to a Bourdieuan reassessment of Such is Life as a “cultural creation” of the 1890s. Just why did it take six years to get published? What were the innumerable difficulties? Vance Palmer’s conclusions warrant further investigation. Palmer seems to imply that the greater political, economic and social issues had so changed Australian life and hence the literary field that publishers and readers would not be interested in a seemingly original work by an unknown author. Palmer’s comments, in the first instance, must be seen as the wisdom of hindsight. Although Such is Life did receive many favourable reviews when it was first published it did not attract large sales. Furthermore, Palmer was roundly condemned by Miles Franklin, Frank Clune and Kate Baker for his involvement in trying to make more accessible to an English public the Jonathan Cape abridged edition of 1937. This would mean that Palmer himself denied the originality of Such is Life to later generations of readers. This is even more surprising when considering that twenty years earlier in 1917 Palmer considered “sacrilege” a Bulletin reviewer’s comments that “a concentrated extract of Tom Collins of the essence of Australianism in literary tabloid form... [would be a] boon to the tired Australian” (FitzHenry, 30). This exchange between the reviewer and Palmer would no doubt have amused Furphy whose yarns, when he initially tried to get them published, were rejected by J. F. Archibald of

the Bulletin. As Furphy later explained, some of these yarns formed the basis of his novel.

A second point to consider in relation to Palmer's comment on Such is Life is that the manuscript of 1897 is not the novel that was eventually published in 1903. This calls into question his conclusion that the novel's themes were out of date before the novel was published. However, the much shorter final novel has new chapters (two and five) that engage with Australian culture at the time they were written. The narrative surrounding the death of the child Mary O'Halloran can be said to continue the nineteenth-century anxiety about the future of the Australian nation.³ Inherent within this narrative also is the seemingly never-ending concern over Protestant and Catholic sectarianism as fundamental to understanding Australian society. Neither Federation nor the start of a new century would diminish uncertainty over Australia's future and its place in the world.

Added to this is the issue surrounding Furphy's alteration of the original manuscript. Of particular interest here is the argument of Julian Croft, in his 1991 book on the works of Joseph Furphy, which maintains that Furphy altered his manuscript to please 'the boys' at the Bulletin. That is, Croft seeks an answer to why Furphy altered his manuscript "so that the political work dominated" the narrative (Life 62). Croft's evidence is not overly compelling, mainly because he is mounting a case that sees the published novel as better than the original 1897 typescript version. However, his account of Furphy's visit to Sydney has merits in determining the literary development of Furphy. The significance of Furphy's only visit to Sydney in 1901 (four years after he completed his manuscript) lies in the fact that it was the only time he can be said to have personally participated directly in the working of a literary circle. And here the

³ In particular see Peter Pierce's analysis in his The Country of Lost Children (86-92).

role of the Bulletin's editor and book publisher A.G. Stephens' gathering or symposium was influential in shaping the voice of the magazine within the Australian literary field. Furphy for the first time was able to put faces to the names of the writers at the Bulletin he so admired. And therefore he can be said to have seen himself for the first time in his life as part of the game with which he could feel a natural affinity. It can be concluded that the renewed interest and enthusiasm Furphy gained from his visit to Sydney allowed him to shorten his novel while keeping the original form and structure. However, his novel could now be said to refract turn of the century Australia as he witnessed it being espoused by the writers and editors of the Bulletin. This does not mean the Bulletin was pre-eminent in the Australian literary field, especially so when their somewhat limited book publishing venture. A literary field is the space of a dynamic struggle between agents and institutions for dominance in the field. A point to consider here in analysing the constraints affecting Furphy is that of censorship – a term which has particular meaning for Bourdieu.

Mechanisms of censorship operate not only in the production of everyday oral discourse, but also in the production of the scholarly discourses found in written texts. [W]hen Bourdieu speaks of 'censorship' he is not referring to the explicit activity political or religious organizations seeking to suppress or restrict the diffusion of symbolic forms. Rather, he is referring to a general field of markets or fields which requires that, if one wishes to produce discourse successfully within a particular field, one must observe the forms and formalities of that field. (Thompson 20)⁴

From this one idea of censorship is able to reassess Furphy's writing but also to reconsider previous critical accounts of his writing relating to the language, form and structure of Such is Life.

⁴ The example used by Bourdieu is that of the philosopher Heidegger, where Bourdieu emphasises how for him the "language is so arcane, so preoccupied with distinctions, allusions and rhetorical effects" which is a product of "the mechanisms of censorship and strategies of euphemization associated with his position in a specific philosophical field, itself related in determinate ways to the literary, political and broader social fields of Weimar Germany" (Thompson 20; Bourdieu Language 152-8).

IV

By using Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital and field as a useful frame of reference for the production and interpretation of literary works, this thesis positions itself as an alternative analysis to that offered by other critical methods such as New Historicism, Cultural Materialism and Marxism. As Johnson outlines, Bourdieu's sociology is similar in many respects to the New Historicism which emerged during the 1980s. Both methods are concerned with explicating a methodology so as to avoid reductionist accounts inherent in internal formalist approaches and the externalist approaches inherent in Marxist criticism (19).⁵ As Louis Montrose explains, the aim of New Historicism has been

upon a refiguring of the socio-cultural field within which ... dramatic works were originally produced; upon resituating them not only in relationship to other genres and modes of discourse but also in relationship to contemporaneous social institutions and non-discursive practices. (17)

Moreover, it is possible to see in Stephen Greenblatt's account of New Historicism similarities with Bourdieu, in particular the emphasis on currency and practices.

The work of art is the product of a negotiation between a creator or class of creators, equipped with a complex, communally shared repertoire of conventions, and the institutions and practices of society. In order to achieve the negotiation, artists need to create a currency that is valid for a meaningful, mutually profitable exchange.... I should add that the society's dominant currencies, money and prestige, are invariably involved, but I am using the term "currency" metaphorically to designate the systematic adjustments, symbolizations and lines of credit necessary to enable an exchange to take place. (12)

Thus it is possible to see how both Bourdieu and New Historicism emphasise that "formal and historical concerns are inseparable ... and that possibilities of action are

⁵ Vincent Pecora begins his criticism of New Historicism by stating that it

is an attempt to find a methodology that could avoid the reductiveness both of formalist (or more traditional literary historical) hypostatizations of the aesthetic object as a mirror or expression of a timeless human nature, and of the Marxian treatment of the aesthetic object as primarily an ideological mediation of changing, but historically determined, social conflicts. (243)

socially situated and defined” (Johnson 19). However, the difference between Bourdieu and New Historicism can be said to be that New Historicism “downplays the importance of an extra-textual social and historical ground and the mediating role of the field of cultural production” (Johnson 19).

Cultural Materialism, along with New Historicism, is another of the post-structuralist approaches that became influential in literary criticism during the 1980s. What both these schools of criticism have in common, as Howard Felperin has stated, is their “post-structuralist understanding of literature and history as “constructed textuality” (144). However, again according to Felperin, the differences come down to the emphasis on how Marxism underpins their “theoretical alignments and ideological allegiances” (157). New Historicism inhabits a “discursive field” where Marx is not really present as against Cultural Materialism where Marx is ever present (157). Therefore, Felperin argues, Cultural Materialism, compared to New Historicism, can be seen as more appropriately informing a practice of “genuine historical and political criticism” (157). As John Brannigan explains:

The crucial difference between cultural materialism and new historicism is how each approaches the issue of subversion; the latter believes that subversion is always produced to be contained within the text, whereas cultural materialists work from the more positive belief that even where subversion is contained, traces of it remain which enable the dissident critic to articulate this subversion and thereby contest the meaning attributed to it by the dominant culture. (113-114)

Nevertheless, Brannigan does highlight some of the problems in using a cultural materialist approach, specifically the way in which the past is interpreted from the “perspective of the present” leading to partial and exploitive critiques. More seriously, the politicising objective of the cultural materialist approach ignores an engagement with the text as complex linguistic forms (114). Moreover, the cultural materialist approach reveals a position to

make many texts tell the same story about the fate of marginal and oppressed groups. It may be that oppression and marginality are so prevalent that every text will add to the story, but the relentless attempt to make the texts from the Renaissance through to the contemporary express the same dissident or reactionary perspectives often has the effect of closing rather than opening avenues of meaning.(115)

Other avenues of meaning from a closer reading of the text is the approach adopted in this thesis in applying a Bourdieuan frame of reference and his concepts of capital, habitus and field as well as that of class.

The treatment of class is a useful marker distinguishing a Bourdieuan analysis from other historical poststructuralist approaches. His particular use of the term ‘class’ is another of his important concepts, like habitus, capital and field, in which he engages with social practices. In this he is positioning himself against Marxist traditions of criticism and explication. This is not to say that Bourdieu is not indebted to Marxist ideas. Bourdieu accepts from historical materialism the importance of class conflict, however, he does not define classes as related to the ownership or not of the means of production. As Swartz states, Bourdieu “thinks of class in more general terms of conditions of existence that can include education, gender, age, and status as well as property” (39). Bourdieu’s position is one that insists on making a clear distinction between classes as “scientific constructs” and classes as “real mobilized social groups” so that “constructing a model of the social-class structure yields a theoretical representation of probable classes rather than real social groups” (Swartz, 148). That is, “theoretical classes are not identical with real social groups, though they may help to explain why, in certain circumstances, set of agents constitutes itself into a group” (Thompson 30). As Bourdieu explains:

one can carve out classes in the logical sense of the word, i.e. sets of agents occupy similar positions and who being placed in similar conditions and submitted to similar types of conditioning, have every chance of having similar

dispositions and interests, and thus of producing similar practices and adopting similar stances. (Language, 231)

This concept of class provides a useful addition to the framework for analysing Furphy and his life as a struggling author. It allows one to call into question what is meant, for example, when he is referred to as a working-class mechanic, working-class intellectual, Christian Socialist or autodidact. And more interestingly, what can it mean when Furphy is recognised by his fellow workers as “of us, but not one of us” (Letters 8).

One can use this concept of class to understand Furphy’s position within the literary field and his desire to be seen as author of an Australian literature and intellectual with dispositions and interests that align him other authors and associates. It is also possible to construct a class out of Furphy’s desire to form a literary group of Australian authors. Furthermore, the concept of class, linked as it is to habitus, allows an extension of the framework to investigate his position in the literary field through the interrelated themes of education, religion, language, identity and power. And just how these themes are explicated so that one can go beyond simply seeing characters stereotypically English or Aboriginal. For example, the Englishman Willoughby can be seen as a typically English gentleman whom Tom Collins delights in portraying as ineffectual and unsuited to Australian life in the Bush. However, by using Bourdieu’s concepts one can position an argument which posits Willoughby as a logical member of a constructed class of people with similar dispositions whose education makes them unsuitable for life in the bush. Education, therefore, is an important theme that emerges throughout Furphy’s writing that emanates from his own habitus as he struggles to be an author. A similar line of analysis using class can position the treatment of indigeneity. While the theme of Aboriginality is present in Furphy’s writing the perspective offered in this thesis sees class as a marker of identity and a sight of resistance underpinned by linguistic capital. For the half-caste rouseabout Toby his linguistic capital shows him to

be an articulate individual capable of resisting, through his command of language, attempts to simply assign him as Aboriginal. While the colour of his skin is an ever present reminder of his heritage, using the concept of class in this instance allows one to construct a logical class to position other Aboriginals with similar dispositions and language skills that allows them to adopt similar stances and reactions to being assigned a lowly position in society.

V

In using Bourdieu's concept of field as a useful frame of reference this thesis attempts to read across formal and contextual categories, establishing homologies between language and narrative structure, literary culture, and broader social and cultural power relations. In the endeavour to explicate the value of Bourdieu to literary texts this thesis is structured as follows. In chapter one Bourdieu's concept of a literary field provides a framework to construct the social universe in which the struggle for domination of the field was fought out between publishers and writers. As a Bourdieuan approach offers no ready-made template for constructing a literary field, being as it is a temporary construct to enable interpretation of literary texts, the first step defines the temporal limits so as to confine the boundaries of the field under analysis. In this thesis the relevant Australian literary field covers the period from 1889, the year Joseph Furphy's first contribution was published in the Bulletin magazine, to 1912, the year of his death. Having set the temporal limits, the next step analyses the structural dynamics to reveal the extent to which the Australian literary field of the 1890s, as part of a wider transnational field, was dominated by British institutions. Within the Australian literary field of the 1890s A. G. Stephens exerted a great influence, as the Bulletin's Red Page literary editor (1894 to 1906) and also as editor of Bulletin books from 1897. Given his

influence during this time and his eventual publication of Such is Life, the next section analyses his position within the literary field and his strategies to produce what he considered to be authentic Australian literature. The rest of the chapter then moves to Joseph Furphy as he enters and plays the part of literary producer. As the analysis shows, the protracted time it took Such is Life to be published reveals the dynamics of the Australian literary field, accounting for his subsequent failure to have his other novels published during his lifetime.

In chapter two the theme of education within the literary field and in the life of Joseph Furphy and its influence in his writing is analysed. This chapter argues that by considering Furphy's education in all its forms one can come to understand his writing. These forms of education gained from family, institution and diffuse learning stem from Bourdieu's concept that cultural capital, as a kind of knowledge, is acquired and inculcated early and continues throughout one's life. It is this cultural capital that Furphy as an autodidact brings with him as he enters the literary field and begins his time as a writer. Furthermore, as an autodidact Furphy's love of learning continued to the end of his life often to the exclusion of his writing. In Such is Life Furphy's wide-ranging knowledge, manifesting itself through his narrator Tom Collins, can be seen as Furphy's desire to be accepted as cultured. Therefore, in Such is Life one can read an anxiety over the proper place and use of education for Australians, especially Australians who live and work in the bush. The novel itself can be seen as Furphy's solution to the dilemma of how best to apply his extensive knowledge.

In chapter three political ideologies competing for the hearts and minds of Australians are influences within the literary world and Furphy's writing that emanated from his education and intellectual development in the 1890s. For Furphy the 1890s was a time when materialism and individualism were corrupting Australian society.

Furphy's belief in the evils of modern Christianity condoning the individualism and materialism in society is the basis of his and other writers' anti-clerical literature. Only when society has been re-educated, Furphy suggests, with the moral virtues inherent in the Stoicism of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius and in the socialist message of the Bible will Australia be a fairer and just society. Fundamental to this vision is Furphy's exposition of the proper relationships that should exist between individuals and between the government and its people. Drawing inspiration from pragmatic utopians like William Lane and Dr Charles Strong, Furphy therefore tried to secure publication of his second novel Rigby's Romance, in which its main protagonist Jefferson Rigby delivered Furphy's message on the ethics of State Socialism. The commercial failure of Such is Life along with the Bulletin's or any other publisher's reluctance to produce his new novel meant Furphy was hindered in promoting his socialist message for Australia and its future.

Chapter four focuses on discourses involving power and confrontation by analysing the social commentary in the novel, in its historical context, by examining characters' dialogue as they confront and communicate with each other. To this end concepts derived from Bourdieu – cultural literacy and linguistic capital – provide a useful frame of reference to analyse confrontations between characters to reveal the inter-related discourses of power, identity, and indigeneity. Language is part of a person's cultural capital – more specifically what Bourdieu designates linguistic capital, which can be best understood as a sub-set of cultural capital. It is from this concept of cultural capital that the basis of cultural literacy developed – a concept which integrates Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field and cultural capital. Cultural literacy, therefore, is a way of understanding what happens when characters communicate with each other. Each situation is different. How these characters respond depends on the particular

geographic or historical location and social situation in which they endeavour to communicate with, or dominate, each other. In each social situation the greater a person's cultural literacy the more able he or she may be to exercise power in interactions with others. Power struggles involving language and identity revealed at the time of the publication and reception of Such is Life also inform important discourses within the novel. The first part of chapter four analyses themes of language and identity in order to reveal the competing influences that intersect to show the battle for cultural authority within the literary field at the time of the publication of Such is Life in 1903. Following this section an analysis using the concept of cultural literacy to reveal how in the power struggles between characters Furphy engages with discourses of morality and individualism. In the final part of this chapter cultural literacy also provides a valuable framework to reveal discourses of race and identity concerning the place of Aboriginal Australians in white Australian culture in Furphy's writing.