

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

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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 manager 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 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 be 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.

Chapter 1: A Literary Field and the Dynamics of Authorship

In a letter to Cecil Winter in 1903, Joseph Furphy projected the confidence and dedication that went a long way in enabling him to become a published author:

A few years ago, finding myself, for the first time in my life, with 16 hours “off” out of the 24, and being constitutionally indifferent to what is called amusement, I bethought me of writing a yarn. Before this was finished, another motif had suggested itself—then another—and another. And I made a point of loosely federating these yarns ... till by and by the scheme of “S’Life” [Such is Life] suggested itself. (Letters 124-25)

Furphy’s relaxed manner, however, was not in evidence a few years earlier, in 1900, when he appeared to be almost pleading with A. G. Stephens, the Bulletin’s book publishing manager:

Having some idea of your perennial pressure of business, I have been reluctant to intrude any inquiries respecting the publication of SUCH IS LIFE. I am, of course, aware of obstacles in the way—first, the unfortunate and incurable acreage of the work itself, and next, the present, or late, depression of the literary market; though, by every law of periodicity, the era of short stories and the commercial slackness should be completing their cycle by this time.

(NLA MS2022/5)

These two letters emphasise Joseph Furphy’s dilemma in seeking to occupy the position of a published author. That is, Furphy had to engage with the dynamics of authorship and publishing. As a producer of a literary work, he was dominated by a market dynamic, the “perennial pressure of business”. Moreover, his reference to the “era of short stories” effectively highlights how the literary field is a contested arena: selecting the right publisher and the right genre, at a particular place and time, influences an author’s success.

To analyse the dynamics surrounding the authorship and publication of the works of Joseph Furphy this thesis uses Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of a literary field as a useful frame of reference. Furphy’s struggle to secure publication is indicative of how

this field situated within a field of power that determines not only who is recognised as a writer but also what genres constitute literary capital. Analysing these power relations reveals the interrelated structure of the Australian literary field of the 1890s. Therefore, this chapter begins not with the author himself but the social space in which Furphy was inserted. This starting point, outlined by Bourdieu in his study of Flaubert, does not follow what he sees as the “most common approach” but instead proceeds from the “space” in which the author “is inserted in order to discover what the writer was about, what Flaubert was as a writer defined by a predetermined position in this space” (Field 172). In applying this to Furphy this chapter argues that he occupies a position in a specific space – a field of forces in which he is held in suspension, but also a field of struggles between dominant and dominated to preserve or transform that field of forces. He, therefore, exists under the structured constraints of the field. His point of view is the perspective from a given point in the field. It is this situation which allows him to distinguish himself, and to continue to be distinguished from others. In embarking on a literary career Furphy accepts the constraints and possibilities in the field; and his success and failure is determined by the distribution of specific symbolic capital in the field.

Because a literary field does not have predefined limits the initial step is to set boundaries by defining temporal limits before moving on to discuss the structural dynamics shaping the field. In using this defined concept one can then analyse Furphy’s position within the field. Furthermore, because he admired and was influenced by the Bulletin, his relationship with A. G. Stephens is analysed. This reveals Stephens’ position that encompassed his roles as ‘gatekeeper’ and ‘symbolic banker’ and exemplifies the relational dynamics within the literary field that dominated writers like Furphy in their efforts to be published. From this the dynamics of authorship are

analysed to help define Joseph Furphy's position in relation to others within the field and also to suggest why he came to be identified as one of the Bulletin school of writers of the 1890s.

Defining an Australian Literary Field

The starting point for analysing the predicament surrounding the publication and authorship of the works of Joseph Furphy is to specify the temporal limits of the literary field. While time limits are essentially arbitrary they are important in limiting the scope of the study undertaken here, encompassing the period from the late 1880s to 1912. In essence this period covers the writing career of Joseph Furphy, which begins with the publication of his first article for the Bulletin in 1889 and ends with his death in September 1912 and the subsequent publication of his last verse in the Bulletin in December of 1912. Given the Bulletin's pre-eminent role in shaping Furphy's writing career (limited as it was) it was perhaps fitting that it should have published his first and last contributions.

However, the year 1912 can be seen as relevant for another reason. In that year Bernard O'Dowd, another bush-born-and-bred Irish-Australian like Furphy, published his long poem entitled The Bush. Speaking of Australia and its future O'Dowd wrote:

She is a temple that we are to build;
For her the ages have been long preparing;
She is a prophecy to be fulfilled!

...

She is the scroll on which we are to write
Mythologies our own and epics new

In this poem's utopian theme one can read a sense of closure to the period that emphasised the influence of the Bush ethos in the literary life of the new Australian nation. From this time onward, especially after the First World War, the Bush legend

that was to become the legend of the nineties began to be interpreted, and reinterpreted, by writers such as Vance Palmer, Miles Franklin, C. E. W. Bean, and Russel Ward (among others). They gave prominence to, as well as preserved, their ideas of a distinctive Australian character. That is, Lawson, Paterson, and Furphy, according to Cantrell, became enshrined as writers who established an Australian way of looking at the world that was not seriously challenged until the 1950s (1890s xvi).

To speak of the 1890s Australian literary field encompassing more than just the decade may at first appear to be going beyond the bounds of accurately representing the period. Moreover, attempts to give specificity to the term 1890s reveal contradictions. For example, in his introduction to his anthology of 1890s literature, Cantrell asks his readers to ponder why the decade of the 1890s was different from the 1880s or the first decade of the twentieth century. However, by including a section from Furphy's Such is Life, which the reading public could not have read until 1903, Cantrell himself shifted the boundaries beyond the decade to include representative 1890s literature. This point is not made here to challenge Cantrell's selection for his anthology. An anthology, through its inclusion or exclusion of authors' texts, can be unrepresentative of a period; anthologies after all invariably depend on the more or less subjective decisions of editors. For example, only five of the eighty-nine selections in Cantrell's anthology of the 1890s are by female writers. While Cantrell's anthology includes ten of Christopher Brennan's lyrical poems, it includes only two by Mary Gilmore and one each by Barbara Baynton, Louisa Lawson and Miles Franklin. None of these works by women writers appear in the section under the heading of "Nationalism, Politics and Society". In an article entitled "Romance Fiction of the 1890s", Peter Pierce takes Cantrell to task for his "tendentious interpretation of the decade" and cites as evidence the omission of Rolf Boldrewood, who was a successful published author in the 1890s (157).

Anthologies, therefore, can help to promote what is authentic cultural capital and also who is considered to be an acceptable author. This point is made to emphasise that if Furphy is seen as a representative author of the 1890s then this positions him more correctly within the first decade of the twentieth century. This can readily be proved if one considers that within Furphy's life time all his published prose fiction (some fifteen short stories, one novel and one serialised novel) appeared between the years 1900 and 1908.

Therefore defining an 1890s literary field beyond the temporal duration of the decade itself is relevant when discussing Furphy. In addition, defining a temporal duration beyond the decade has the advantage of precedents set by several Australian literary critics and editors. John Docker, in his 1991 book The Nervous Nineties, referred to the nineties as the "final two decades of the nineteenth century and the first few years of the twentieth" (xv). Subsequently in 1996, Ken Stewart advised readers that his anthology of literary criticism on the 1890s involves the "complex of strands" evident between the years 1885 and 1905 (1890s 25). More recently in 1999, Christopher Lee selected those texts of 1890s Australia for his anthology that were "composed and published between 1885 and 1905" (Turning the Century ix, xi).

Just why these three literary commentators reveal a consensus on this time frame is not entirely clear. But it is possible to speculate about their reasoning by observing that this was the time when the Bulletin had its greatest influence. By 1906 Archibald was no longer in control of the magazine. And just as significantly, Stephens had resigned from his influential editorial position at the Bulletin. Therefore, the year 1906 seems to mark the end of a significant period in Australian literary history during which Archibald and Stephens had promoted their ideas of a distinctive Australian literature. According to Leon Cantrell, by 1906 Stephens began focussing on "non-literary" topics

to keep the Red Page “alive”. New literature was not as prevalent as before due to changes in the “literary scene”. These changes included the recent death of authors Brunton Stephens, John Farrell and Victor Daley. Also, the best new work from Australian writers like Franklin and Richardson was being produced overseas. Compounding the problem was the fact that authors such as Paterson, Baynton, Rudd, and Furphy “had moved away from the Bulletin group of writers” (Cantrell 1890s 21-2). Cantrell, therefore, reveals the relationship between one institution and its associated authors. However, these writers did not simply move away from the Bulletin. Although Furphy never gave up his desire to be published by the Bulletin, he was forced to do so when it finally became clear to him that the Bulletin, with its “perennial pressure of business”, would not publish his new novels Rigby’s Romance and The Buln-buln and the Brolga. Furphy therefore looked beyond the Bulletin to further his literary aspirations. The next step in reconstructing the predicament surrounding the publication of the works of Joseph Furphy focuses on the structural dynamics of the Australian literary field during the 1890s.

Structural Dynamics

‘Structural dynamics’ in this study are those influences in the Australian literary field, within the wider context of Australian culture, which reveal the conflicts within and among institutions over the production of literary commodities. In Furphy’s letter to Stephens, quoted in the introduction to this chapter, Furphy himself quite astutely reveals his understanding of these influences. His concern over the depression of the literary market and its attendant commercial slackness reveals how the periodicity of economic cycles of the literary market is related to the economic cycles of the nation.

According to Elizabeth Morrison, the economic depression of the 1890s contributed to the eventual demise of serialised fiction in Australian newspapers from

the boom years in the 1880s. The “shrinkage” in the size of newspapers meant proprietors could no longer provide the space for this fiction (Morrison “Serial Fiction” 319). Before this ‘bust’, the importance of this outlet for proprietors (and therefore their readers) in the Australian literary field can be ascertained from some “crudely” determined numbers provided by Morrison. In 1891 about one third of a total of 605 newspapers provided weekly serialised fiction for around three-million readers. These estimated circulation figures amounted to a “combined weekly issue of about 500,000 copies of newspapers publishing parts of novels” (Morrison “Serial Fiction” 308). However, by 1895 all this had changed. And just as nature abhors a vacuum, this void, created by the depression and the subsequent demise of serialised fiction in newspapers, provided opportunities that were filled mainly by British book publishers and also to a lesser extent by Australian book publishers.

Within the Australian literary field of the 1890s, the conflicts surrounding book publishing institutions reveal the primary impact of British publishing institutions. According to Richard Nile and David Walker, London was the market hub of the literary world. British book publishers relied on the Australian market to secure their profit margins. To achieve these profits British publishers “colluded” with Australian sellers “to maintain their market dominance of the Australian book trade” (7). That is, prices were regulated and margins fixed by the “alliance” known as the Publishers Association of Great Britain. The effect of these regulations on the book trade in Australia meant local publishers were reduced to being importers and retailers rather than publishers. Australian publishers were better advised to act as talent scouts to identify new literary forms to be added to a British publisher’s list (Nile and Walker 8). And quite surprisingly, according to Nile and Walker, Australia’s largest publisher, Angus and Robertson, “consistently” put selling before publishing. The effect of this

market dominance by British publishers meant the Australian novel was hamstrung in having to address itself “primarily” to an overseas public (8).

The 1890s also witnessed the demise of the three-decker novel. According to Martyn Lyons, traditionally this three-volume structure had allowed the circulating libraries to “hire” out each section of the book separately. The high cost in producing these novels eventually resulted in the publishers themselves undermining this market for high-priced books (at 31/6) by producing low cost single volume editions. By 1894 the main circulating library, Mudies, instituted a call for six-shilling single volume editions. The result of these changes saw the beginning of the process towards, and eventual domination by, “cheap, mass produced fiction” in the market place (“Britain’s Largest” 21). As Nile reports, this was translated “into the farthest reaches of the empire” (85). Moreover, “the single volume novel took an immediate hold in Australia as reading publics adjusted away from the larger triple-decker nineteenth-century fictions towards the shorter book” (85-6).

From data tabulated by Ken Stewart for the period 1890 to 1909 (1890s 27-31), it is possible to ascertain the most popular genres and also, more importantly, the extent to which books were published overseas for sale in both the British and Australian markets. In this period, genres of fiction were most frequently published. Of the 778 titles published between 1890 and 1899, 539 were fiction followed by poetry with 227 and only 12 titles of mixed fiction and poetry. Similarly, between 1900 and 1909, out of a total of 948 books published, fiction comprised 611 titles, followed again by poetry with 314, and mixed fiction and poetry accounting for 23 titles. Turning to the place of publication, overwhelmingly most fiction titles were published overseas. Of the 539 fiction titles published between 1890 and 1891, 378 (approximately 70 per cent) were published overseas. The percentage is the same for the period 1900 to 1909. The news is

better for Australian-based publishers when considering poetry titles. Only around 15 per cent of poetry titles for both decades were published overseas. One point to keep in mind when analysing this data is that it only conveys the number and place of publication. The data does not, as Stewart quite rightly points out, “indicate the sales and popularity of particular titles” (1890s 31). Nevertheless, the numbers do reinforce the argument that the Australian literary field during the 1890s was a contested arena in which Australian publishers were dominated by British publishers.

The production of cheap single-volume colonial editions by British publishers had an impact on Australia. As Lyons suggests, British publishers, like Macmillan, knew producing these cheap colonial editions reinforced their dominance over Australian publishers. Contributing to this dominance were Australian booksellers who achieved profitable returns by manipulating British publishers. For example, Rolf Boldrewood had eighteen of his novels published in colonial editions by Macmillan. This gave him an audience in the English speaking world (Lyons, “Britain’s Largest” 24). His prestige therefore was enhanced within the Australian literary field and beyond. Moreover, the successive publication of Boldrewood’s Robbery Under Arms is a prime example of the changing dynamics within the Australian literary field. First serialised in 1882-83, Robbery Under Arms was published as a three-decker in 1888 after being shortened by 2500 words. The following year, 1889, it was published as a one-volume edition after again being shortened from 269,750 to 231,000 words: 413 pages (Brissenden xiv). Furthermore, Boldrewood’s success with Robbery Under Arms impacted on Furphy as is revealed in his letter to George Nugent (April 1896). Furphy expresses an awareness of the changing dynamics of the literary field, which surrounded his attempts to be a published author, when he agonises over the length of the

manuscript of Such is Life, and mentions trying to fit it to the “length of Robbery Under Arms” (Letters 25).

The Bulletin was one Australian institution which attempted to compete against the dominance of British publishing houses. This fight centred on the particular ideas and marketing strategy of J. F. Archibald, which Cantrell described as Archibald’s “famous literary principles”.

Short stories, or ballads, especially on bush, mining, sporting, social, or dramatic themes, are preferred by the Bulletin; 1360 words go to a column. If you can possibly keep your story within a column all the better. Don’t write a column on any subject if a half-column will do; don’t write half-a-column where a mere paragraph is enough. “Boil it down”.

(Cantrell "A.G. Stephens, the Bulletin and the 1890s" 107-8)

One can argue that these same principles, although meant for the Bulletin newspaper, can be said to have influenced Archibald’s book publishing venture. A brief survey analysing the Bulletin’s book publishing venture between 1888 and 1908 confirms this assertion; it reveals the extent to which the approximately two dozen books published were based on material that had previously been published in the pages of the Bulletin. The two decades considered here have not been arbitrarily chosen for they correspond to the first period of the magazine’s book publishing venture. After 1908, with Stephens gone and Archibald no longer at the helm, book publishing ceased until the early 1920s.

The success of reprinting articles, stories and verse in book form was established from the very beginning with the release in 1888 of The History of Botany Bay. As Mackaness and Stone record, Archibald had decided to reprint the articles as a collection in opposition to the “smugness of a number of official and semi-official histories published to commercialise the Centenary of the Colony in 1888” (47). The commercial success of the volume saw a second edition in 1891. More success for Archibald soon followed. In 1890 the Bulletin’s first collection of short story fiction and verse, A Golden Shanty, witnessed the sale of some 15,000 copies during the following

decade (Mackanness and Stone 48). Also proving a success in 1892 was the publication of a collection of 11 short stories from the magazine's pages of Price Warung's convict tales. In 1898, the year Furphy was attempting to persuade the Bulletin to publish Such is Life, Will Ogilvie based his collection of verse around 52 of his poems that had previously been published in the magazine (Mackanness and Stone 55). The magazine's greatest book publishing success was undoubtedly the short stories previously printed in the Bulletin that were "packaged" by Archibald and Stephens to give the reading public Steele Rudd's somewhat plotless but nevertheless character rich novel On Our Selection (1899) about life in the Australian Bush. After the initial print run of 3,000 copies, a further 17,000 copies were printed between 1901 and 1903 (Mackanness and Stone 58). In addition to the reprinting of stories and verse from the pages of the Bulletin, two collections of drawings by Phil May and one collection by Livingston ("Hop") Hopkins were reprinted in 1903 and 1904. The year 1904, however, seems to mark the beginning of the end for the first period of the Bulletin's book publishing venture. The year before, Furphy's Such is Life had been published but a year later it was proving a commercial failure, despite critical acclaim from a number of reviewers and critics. In 1904 Stephens in an attempt to broaden his international appeal reprinted a collection of his red page literary criticism in the Red Pagan, but this too was not a commercial success. It appears likely that the commercial failure of Such is Life and the Red Pagan was sufficient evidence for the new editor in charge, James Edmonds, to discontinue book publishing at the Bulletin.

Archibald's principle of preferring short stories is arguably what Furphy alluded to when he wrote of the "era of short stories" impacting on his attempts to secure publication of Such is Life by the Bulletin. The difficulty for Archibald centres on his ideals to promote a genre of bush realism in Bulletin literature. This was no easy matter

given that romance fiction was the predominant fiction genre (Stewart, 1890s 7). What this means is that throughout the 1890s Archibald, before committing himself and the Bulletin to an extensive book publishing venture, would have to satisfy his literary principles but would also need to be a commercial success. The Bulletin therefore throughout the 1890s can be best understood as providing an alternative to the success of the romance fiction genre in Australia. Moreover, the Bulletin newspaper was always the centre of Archibald's attempts to promote his short story bush-realism genre.

Just how the short story genre came to be the ideal for Archibald and the Bulletin has been examined by Doug Jarvis. According to Jarvis the move to the short story genre can be traced to the return of Archibald to the Bulletin in 1888. From this time on, advice was meted out to readers through its columns and by introducing translations of French short story writers (like Guy Maupassant) in which a particular translated story would be promoted as a "model" to follow (Jarvis 59, 62). Jarvis' article goes into some depth to argue how the Bulletin model in many respects hampered the early writing style of Henry Lawson. Only after he moved away from the Bulletin did he expand his literary talent. Throughout the 1890s Furphy did try to have the Bulletin publish his short stories, however, it appears he did not appreciate the model being proposed. A letter from the magazine's editor in December 1899 just after he had his first article accepted shows that he was not conforming. As Archibald stated:

The best thing you have yet sent us was the first, which had an unpremeditated and photographic air about it. Can't you send us some short, sharp paragraphs about people who are or ought to be celebrated, or some interesting bush reminiscences or short stories? ... a single simple episode treated at no greater length than a column. (NLA MS2022/4)

Furphy did not give sending his articles and short stories to the magazine and in 1895 Archibald again wrote to Furphy to compliment him on his writing: "We all like your writing and think your" Voice from the Bush" which will duly appear, a most

interesting article". Archibald then goes on to ask if Furphy could provide a short story in time for the Christmas edition, but qualifies his remarks by adding that by a story he did not "necessarily mean anything with a detailed plot – any neat little episode so long as it is original and looks original" (NLA MS2022/5). Although by 1895 Furphy still did have a short story published in the magazine he seemed unwilling to conform to satisfy Bulletin ideals when it came to providing the required short story format and style. Although it is not possible to determine just when he started to write his novel it is likely by this time that he had decided to go his own way to write his novel about the people he thought ought to be celebrated via his own original fictional technique with its complex and detailed plot line.

That the short story formed the basis of the Bulletin's literary ideals is revealed in a Bulletin article (21 March 1896). In the article Stephens responds to another that criticised the short story, "especially the Bulletin short story", as a worthy literary form. His critical defence attacked the "good old solid type of novel in three volumes [that left]... nothing to the imagination". Furthermore, he continued, British readers have no imagination and therefore demand a story where "every couple shall be married, every character accounted for, every thread unravelled to the bitter end" ("Short Story" 103). It is somewhat ironic that within a few months of writing this article Stephens received the "incurable acreage" of the manuscript of Such is Life. He initially wanted to publish it in separate parts, which seemingly contradicts his stance against the three-decker novel. Despite this contradiction, readers who have taken the time to read Such is Life for themselves, even though it was released in a much shorter version than originally intended, will find that an active imagination will not reveal at a single reading (if it ever does) a narrative where every thread is unravelled. One can speculate that the original disappointment among readers and critics of Such is Life may be attributed to a

public more attuned to the fictional world of Geoffrey Hamlyn or Robbery Under Arms. It is against novels such as these that Stephens and Furphy projected their own ideas on Australian literature. Therefore, the next step in analysing the publication of the works of Joseph Furphy focuses on Stephens' ideas and the positions he occupied within the literary field.

A. G. Stephens and Australian Literature

In light of his publication of Furphy's Such is Life, Stephens' ideas concerning Australian literature warrant analysis with regard to the Australian literary field of the 1890s. According to Cantrell, "every Australian author of importance" during this period appeared in one or other of Stephens' books. During this time Stephens published and edited some twenty-five volumes (1890s 20). While this was an impressive achievement on Stephens' part, Cantrell's statement about "every Australian author of importance" needs qualifying. That is, the important authors were those who fitted into Stephens', the Bulletin's, and Cantrell's ideas of what constituted Australian literature. This reveals a problem confronting female authors of the period, such as Ada Cambridge, Barbara Baynton, and Miles Franklin.

Stephens' literary criticism when applied to female authors of the period reveals his idea about what constituted, and should constitute, Australian literature. Stephens, in an article written in 1901, in declaring Australian literature to be "what he likes", was particularly critical of female authors. Although Ada Cambridge had a long and successful literary career in Australia, she was described by Stephens as not "claiming recognition as an Australian writer: her men and women might be staged anywhere; that they were staged in this country is an accident. As an English writer she is scarcely distinguished" ("Aust. Lit. I" 84). Ada Cambridge fitted the model of what Stephens called the "literary inferiority of the female sex" ("Aust. Lit. I" 87).

Stephens' criticism of female authors, as supposedly inferior, first surfaces in his writing just after he joined the Bulletin in 1894. One writer in particular who attracted his criticism was Marie Corelli. Stephens' criticism of her emphasises the power plays that exist between critics and authors within the literary field. In an article entitled the "Angry Woman" in the Bulletin (28 December 1895) Stephens is critical of her novels particularly her latest, The Sorrows of Satan (1895).

'Marie Corelli' saucers platitude with rhetoric, and finds that the middle-class mind approves the mixture. She trades on the Great Secret which successful authors early discover—that there is nothing the mass of readers hate and distrust more than originality. (cited from Cantrell The 1890s 313-14).

Despite his criticism of the novel's literary worth, Stephens nevertheless alludes to the fact that the "mass of readers" has made Corelli a wealthy, successful and widely read author. Furthermore, as Robyn Hallim records, The Sorrows of Satan was spectacularly successful; indeed, its initial sales outshone all previous English language novels "making it the first best-seller in English history" (8-9). The success of Sorrows can also be seen as a force in the changing dynamics of the English literary field in the 1890s. As Hallim argues,

The Sorrows of Satan is also significant because it was the first of Corelli's novels to be published as a six-shilling, single volume and its popularity contributed to the success of the cheaper publishing format and the demise of the circulating libraries. (9)

In Stephens' 1903 review of Bush Studies he qualified his enthusiasm for Baynton's "masterpiece of literary realism" by declaring her limited artistic appeal to a wider international audience. Bush Studies, he maintained, remained locked into detailed description but failed as realistic art, which he described as a "key to unlock every uncomprehending mind". Bush Studies, therefore, remained valuable only to a "knowledgeable" Australian audience ("One Realist" 198). In another article written a fortnight later, Stephens' literary criticism of Baynton reinforced his idea that Australian

literature needed to be written to appeal to a wider international audience – in order to be true world literature.

Bush Studies represents one phase of Australian life, in one place, at one time; and it would have been well if the author had said this in the preface, for foreign readers are sure to refer the descriptions to Australia generally. ("Bush" 201)

Baynton's view, argued Stephens, was a "jaundiced" view where the "horror and disgust" of her bush "epithets" are natural but these sketches could not have been published in Australia. Australian publishers were too parochial to publish "predominantly [the] obstetric quality of Bush life" ("Bush" 202). For Stephens this reinforced his ideas about female authors writing about what is natural but not always pleasant ("Aust. Lit. I" 87).

Furthermore, in an article written in September 1901 on Miles Franklin's recently published My Brilliant Career, Stephens exhibits a contradictory stance or blindness. And what Stephens wrote emphasises the conflicts between institutions and authors underpinning the structural dynamics of the Australian literary field of the 1890s. Stephens declared that My Brilliant Career, as the first "Australian novel" to be published, could not have been published in Australia because of little chance of financial return, and also because "the local audience whom it will interest is still too scanty" ("Bookful" 213). But his emphasis on financial returns and small audience is questionable if one considers his initial enthusiasm for Furphy's Such is Life. In a letter to Furphy (22 May 1897) Stephens declared that Such is Life should be published despite the possibility of attracting only a small readership of men aged over forty with the attendant prospect of low financial returns for prospective publishers. Nevertheless, Such is Life had a greater value because it had the possibility to become an invaluable work of Australian reminiscences (Furphy and Stephens 119). In addition, one should consider Stephens' clinching argument to Archibald that emphasised how "other books

than Such is Life were selling well; and the roundabouts would make up for the swings” (“Preface” ix). Miles Franklin, however, was unable to attract the same enthusiasm as Stephens afforded Furphy. And therefore Stephens’ contradictory stance meant he missed the opportunity to publish and therefore legitimise what he later acknowledged was for him an example of authentic Australian literature. While Stephens provided Franklin with the recognition vital to a struggling author, more practical support, in the form of publishing contracts, was not forthcoming from the Bulletin (or any other Australian publisher for that matter). Franklin ultimately decided (or, perhaps, was forced) to leave Australia.

Furphy was arguably more astute than Stephens; Furphy declared in a letter to Franklin, who was by then living in America, that Australia could not spare her: “We want to make our land a classic land ... And of all Australian women we can least spare Miles. There is a false note in Australian literature, a note which your own mental temperament, without any forcing, may largely correct” (Letters 227-28). Furphy, however, could do little beyond providing moral support. Moreover, one is left to speculate whether Franklin’s inability to find an Australian publisher had less to do with market dynamics and more to do with her being identified as a female author; her writing, however much it was praised by Stephens as authentically Australian, because she was a woman did not warrant being published by the Bulletin.

Stephens’ criticisms were not limited to female authors. His assessment of the original 1897 manuscript of Such is Life as meriting classic status, for example, indicates his ideas about a distinctive Australian literature that would merit a place among world literature. Stephens, therefore, was particularly critical of literature that did not conform to his ideas. In an 1895 Bulletin article, Stephens was dismissive of Marcus Clarke’s claim for Henry Kingsley’s 1859 novel Geoffrey Hamlyn as the “best

Australian novel”. Geoffrey Hamlyn, argued Stephens, was a novel about Australia but not an Australian novel. The novel’s English point of view flattered English sensibilities and exhibited prejudices against “independent Australians”. The novel’s merit, continued Stephens, was in representing a bygone era which no longer represented Australian culture in the 1890s. Nevertheless, Stephens did concede that the novel’s greatest achievement was in its descriptions of the “lovingly and well described” scenery (“Geoffrey Hamlyn” 170-71). For many modern readers Hamlyn’s botanical descriptions categorising Australian scenery may appear at times to be the writing of an emotionally detached visitor marvelling at the wonders of a new land. However, for Stephens this emphasis on the bush lies at the heart of what he believed was truly Australian. Writing on Australian literature in 1901, Stephens again made reference to Kingsley’s novel with its “birds singing and the flowers blooming” being “true and tonic” (“Aust. Lit. I” 84). And it was this ‘Bush realism’ when written from an Australian point of view with its Australian sensibilities that underlined his argument when he took credit for eventually persuading the Bulletin to publish Furphy’s Such is Life in 1903. Stephens overpowered Archibald when he asserted that

the Bulletin called itself the “national Australian newspaper”; that here was a national Australian book, a Bush book, that would be relished 100 years hence-- that would be relished and enjoyed now in the Bush its home, where people had lots of time for reading and reflection. (“Preface” ix)

Stephens’ assessment of his own ability to persuade Archibald is a direct consequence of the power he was able to exert within the literary field. Consequently, the next section analyses just what positions allowed Stephens to command such power.

A.G.S. – “the three-initialled terror”

Stephens’ influence (or power) over authors was a function of the position that he occupied within the literary field. As Jen Webb *et. al.* state, the “amount of power a

person has within a field depends on that person's position within the field, and the amount of capital he or she possesses". The result was that those with a "position of power ... designate what is 'authentic capital'" (Understanding 23). Consequently, Stephens' beliefs went hand in hand with his power to designate what he believed was authentic Australian literature. This, however, needs to be qualified slightly. At no time can Stephens be said to have occupied one definitive position. Although he joined the Bulletin as a junior sub-editor, he quickly became the editor of the literary Red Page (1894-1906), and then editor of the Bulletin's book publishing venture (1897-1906). Moreover, he was a literary agent from 1897. In addition, Stephens was also a somewhat unsuccessful poet and the publisher of his own literary magazine, the Bookfellow, the first five editions of which appeared in 1899. And therefore, to borrow an idea from McDonald, Stephens had a disposition towards a number of positions within the literary field (17).

Just why Stephens was disposed towards these positions is relevant to understanding the conflicts between agents within the literary field. At one level, Stephens acted from self-interest occasioned by financial insecurity. Although he was paid eleven pounds per week (almost four times that of the mechanic Furphy), Stephens bitterly complained in his diary that this was half of what the cartoonist Hopkins was paid. As Cantrell has reported, at no time during Stephens' twelve years with the Bulletin was he offered a contract (or security of tenure). His employment was on a week-to-week basis. His ability to promote the Bulletin as a leader in the Australian literary field was his only guarantee of employment. Therefore, Stephens' status and recognition, that is, his accumulation of symbolic capital, was vital in this respect.

Stephens acted as a literary gatekeeper when he accepted or rejected an author's work based on his ideas of what constituted authentic cultural capital. In doing this

Stephens legitimised authors' works and, therefore, consecrated them so that their prestige (i.e. their symbolic capital) was raised within the hierarchy of literary producers. Furphy highlighted this dominant position over authors when he referred to Stephens (AGS) as the three-initialled terror. This three-initialled terror, therefore, in his position as literary agent, was responsible for initiating the process of legitimising Furphy within the hierarchy of Bulletin writers above that of his previous position as a minor contributor to the pages of the magazine. In a letter to Furphy (22 April 1897) Stephens considered that the manuscript of Such is Life was for him an authentic Australian literary commodity worthy of publication.

I am in the habit of classifying MS. [manuscripts] as 'worthless', 'tolerable', 'fair', 'good', or 'very good'. Such is Life is 'good'. It seems to me fitted to become an Australian classic, or semi-classic, since it embalms accurate representations of our character and customs, life and scenery, which, in such skilled and methodical forms, occur in no other book I know. ... So I think the book ought to be published, and would find a sale. (Furphy and Stephens 119)

Furthermore, Stephens claimed his knowledge of the Australian literary field meant he could promote three Australian publishers that would be appropriate for Such is Life. Stephens, however, was constrained by Furphy's suggestions of prospective publication: Furphy could not help financially and Such is Life had to be published "as a whole" by an Australian publisher. Despite this Stephens still believed that Angus and Robertson would publish Such is Life. In another letter to Furphy, dated 22 May 1897, Stephens claimed that the "ray of hope" for publication depended in this instance on his own assessment of his "little lever", his symbolic capital, to raise the expectations of publication: "If I can conscientiously say to A. & R. that S. is L. is a very exceptional work, I know my opinion will have considerable weight with them" (Furphy and Stephens 122).

Despite Stephens' belief in the strength of his opinion, one needs to ask the question why he did not initially take on the task of publishing Such is Life himself.

Two possible answers are worth considering given that Stephens eventually published the novel. The first answer relates to the market dynamic of the literary field with its “perennial pressure of business” involving literature as a commodity. Although by 1897 Stephens was the new editor of Bulletin books, his first book manuscript was likely to have been Furphy’s novel. Therefore, Stephens’ own assessment of the manuscript as a likely financial failure meant he would not want to jeopardise his new position of editor by publishing the manuscript in 1897. Doing so at this time would have impacted unfavourably on his own prestige. Although Stephens’ initial assessment of the financial failure of the novel proved prophetic it was not as poorly received by the public as he claimed in his preface to the DeGaris edition of Rigby’s Romance in 1921. That Such is Life was eventually published by the Bulletin under Stephens’ editorship in 1903 can be attributed to Stephens’ influence being at its greatest later, not only within the magazine and also within the Australian literary field.

A second answer concerns the text of the manuscript that Furphy described as the “unfortunate and incurable acreage of the work” (NLA MS2022/5). Despite the unique Australianness of Such is Life, identified by Stephens, the acreage of the manuscript did not appeal to the Bulletin proprietors, Archibald and McLeod. These proprietors would no doubt concur with Stephens who claimed, quite remarkably given his enthusiasm for the novel, that only the typesetters would read the manuscript right through. What this serves to demonstrate is that the conflicts over what constitutes cultural capital within the Australian literary field occur not only between institutions but also within institutions. In 1897, therefore, Stephens would not jeopardise his new position as book publishing editor because he was not securely entrenched within the Bulletin hierarchy. To do so Stephens’ successes had to outweigh any sense of failure

on his part. And although Stephens was criticised during his time as editor of Bulletin books, his position as editor was more influential than that of literary agent.

Stephens' position as the Bulletin's book publishing manager was criticised by Norman Lindsay. Lindsay, a contemporary of Stephens on the staff of the Bulletin, recollected in 1956 that Stephens' "unbusinesslike" approach contributed to the decline of the magazine's book publishing venture. For Lindsay, Stephens' business method was too fastidious. His selection of format, typescript, and cover for a book only served to increase costs of publication. As well, Lindsay recalled how McLeod was critical of Stephens' last minute corrections that contributed to delays in printing (39). How much weight one should give to these criticisms is problematic given the acrimonious relationship between Stephens and Lindsay. According to Cantrell, Stephens, as art critic, was the "first writer to draw attention to the limitations of Norman Lindsay's work, something for which Lindsay never forgave him" (A. G. Stephens 345). Furthermore, as Cantrell has argued, the evidence from Stephens' diary reveals his hatred of McLeod ("AGS Bulletin Diary" 36). Similarly, Lindsay related how Dorrington (one of the Bulletin school of writers) considered Stephens a user of other people's ideas (Cantrell "AGS Bulletin Diary" 40).

Despite these criticisms of Stephens, Lindsay's remarks surrounding the physical aesthetics of book publishing fail to appreciate that a book is more than just words on a page. An example taken from the Book Exchange section on the Bulletin's Red Page (16 March 1895) in which production values are emphasised serves as a good example. "The new edition of [Thomas] Carlyle's works can be strongly recommended...The books are splendid value, being well bound, clearly printed, and fit to stand in any library". As Cantrell has suggested, Stephens was "obsessed with the idea of literature as a commodity" ("AGS Bulletin Diary" 37). Stephens' love of books

as a commodity may perhaps be traced to his earlier career in the printing industry. As Cantrell argues:

These early years in the printing trade gave A. G. Stephens that practical knowledge of printing techniques which was to help shape his career as author and publisher. No one loved a well-produced book more than A.G.S and some of the finest works of Australian literature, published under his editorial care, are also some of the finest examples of book production this country has seen.
(A. G. Stephens 4)

Unfortunately Cantrell does not say just what books were particularly worthy of this high praise. Moreover, one should also consider Stephens' other strategy in book publishing. According to Mackaness and Stone, E. J. Brady's book of poems "was the first book published for the year [1899] by THE BULLETIN, the format and general appearance bearing a remarkable resemblance to the books being produced at this time by John Lane in England" (56). Nevertheless, Cantrell's use of the phrase "practical knowledge" is a good example of Stephens' acquisition of cultural capital as a form of knowledge inculcated from an earlier time that he brings with him as he enters the literary field of the 1890s and seeks to position himself as editor and publisher.

Books as commodities, therefore, could be bought or rejected on the basis of their aesthetic appeal. The importance of this has been discussed by Colin Roderick when he reported Stephens' adverse reactions to Henry Lawson's first work, Short Stories in Prose and Verse, published by his mother Louisa Lawson in 1894. Stephens was "repelled" by the "paper cover", "bad printing", and "second-hand advertisements" (Henry Lawson: A Life 123). Moreover, Stephens was not the only reviewer to emphasise the poor quality of Lawson's first collection. In a review for the Brisbane Worker (26 January 1895), Prometheus described the bad printing and poor quality illustrations. He continued by stating that only when Australian publishers "produce something superior" to Lawson's pamphlet would Australian books be appreciated by Australian readers (7). This lack of aesthetic appeal, according to Roderick, contributed

to the book's failure. But arguably more contentious is the assertion: "had the book been printed, bound, and published as the contents merited, Lawson would have made an impact on the Australian public earlier than Paterson" (Henry Lawson: A Life 123).

However, what this also effectively highlights is the difficulty for Australian publishers, like Louisa Lawson, in establishing and then competing with British institutions who could publish and transport books to Australia more cheaply than local institutions. As Richard Nile argues, "Australian publishers could not compete against the systematic practice of dumping cheap books onto the Australian market" (Making 37). Moreover, one needs to consider why Henry Lawson wanted to publish his pamphlet at this time. Although in his preface to the collection he recognises it could have benefitted from professional editing, he was just as anxious to publish in time for Christmas 1894 (109). His strategy was a compromise between producing an aesthetically pleasing commodity, which would have mollified his critics, against publishing to take a perceived advantage of a Christmas buying public. With appropriate sales he could enhance his living and reputation as a professional writer.

The explanation for Lawson's initial failure does have merit given the success of Angus and Robertson's publication of Paterson's first book, The Man from Snowy River, in 1895. As John Farrell commented in Sydney's Daily Telegraph (15 February 1896), within the first few months of being published, an almost ceaseless "appetite of readers" consumed Paterson's first collection (9). Attesting to this appetite is the evidence provided by Cantrell who reports that The Man from Snowy River was reprinted "twelve times in Australia and twice in England" by 1900 and achieved sales of "35,000 copies by 1906" (1890s xiii). Stephens' insights, therefore, about what constituted an aesthetically appealing literary commodity should be considered in light of Lawson's initial failure and Paterson's success. Moreover, criticisms of Stephens'

personality overlook the success his fastidiousness achieved while he was editor of Bulletin books.

Even after Stephens left the Bulletin in 1906 his disposition to occupy gatekeeper positions of power, as publisher and agent, within the Australian literary field did not diminish, as is revealed in his relationship with the poet Shaw Neilson. In a letter to Neilson in December 1907, Stephens commented that he (i.e. Stephens) would be “required to spend considerable time in revision” on the imperfect poetry. Stephens also appraised these pieces at twelve and sixpence. However, he would do much better with eventual publication. Furthermore, Stephens adopted the lever and weight metaphor he had used when writing to Furphy ten years earlier to enhance his prospects with Neilson: “with my [i.e. Stephens’] back lifting under you I hope you will presently get the credit to which you are entitled”. Stephens, as publisher of his resurrected Bookfellow journal, would publish, review, and praise (if merited) Neilson’s verse (Hewson 50). And indeed, Neilson did receive high praise from Stephens. His article on Neilson in the Bookfellow of October 1912 declared that: “we see no other poet now writing who approaches so nearly as Neilson to the quality of Blake. Neilson reminds us of Blake’s vision; he reminds us of Blake’s spontaneous expression” (“John Shaw Neilson” 165). One can only wonder if Stephens was also praising himself as editor of Neilson’s imperfect pieces that he (i.e. Stephens) had spent “considerable time” revising. Nevertheless, Stephens wanted to be publisher and agent for all of Neilson’s work. Stephens projected his worth when he referred to his prior success with Will Ogilvie among others over which he (i.e. Stephens) held “power of attorney” (Hewson 51). And therefore, the dominating gatekeeper positions of editor and agent that Stephens so effectively performed at the Bulletin continued, with the further result that

acting upon his belief of what constituted authentic Australian literature he succeeded in publishing four volumes of Neilson's verse.

So far the effort to recreate the circumstances surrounding the authorship and publication of the works of Joseph Furphy has contributed to the definition of the literary field, constructed from Furphy's particular position within this field. Stephens' relationship with Furphy, and Stephens' influence in promoting his own and the Bulletin's ideas through his gatekeeper positions of literary editor and agent constituted attempts to legitimise an authentic Australian literature. The next step in this analysis is from Furphy's point of view and his relationship to others as he enters and attempts to 'play the game' – to distinguish himself within the field – as an author determined to promote Such is Life as his distinctive literary endeavour.

The Dynamics of Authorship

In line with the Bourdieuan framework followed in this thesis, reconstructing the circumstances affecting the authorship and publication of the works of Joseph Furphy focuses on the life of the author himself. Here John Barnes' argument is relevant when he declares that Such is Life is a "cultural creation", which in its "form and substance" is indicative of Furphy's life ("On Reading" 46). Furthermore, "an understanding of Such is Life depends upon an understanding of Furphy's relationship to the colonial culture of the time" (Barnes "Life" 103). While essentially agreeing with Barnes here, one needs, however, to add that not just Such is Life but the entire range of Furphy's literary and non-literary writing is indicative of his relationship to Australian culture of the 1890s. One of Bourdieu's main tenets is to assert that authors' biographies are relevant in assessing their positions within the literary field. This brings into play Furphy's habitus, which (to adapt Webb *et. al.* Understanding) are those values and dispositions gained from his own cultural history that determined his responses to the

cultural rules and contexts within the Australian literary field of the 1890s (36-37).

However, Brian Kiernan warns against a determinism in which the particular “age”, through social, economic and market conditions, produces the literature of the time. He also warns against the other extreme of seeing imaginative literature as autonomous, and ignoring the involvement of writers with their society (“Literature” 17-18).

Although Kiernan, writing in 1976, did not mention Bourdieu, his argument neatly encapsulates one of the main tenets in Bourdieu’s theory of literary fields. That is, 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. (Johnson 9)

Therefore, in the remainder of this chapter, Furphy’s ‘biography’, with all its predicaments, is analysed to show how he responds when “for the first time” in his life he pursued a literary career in the “16 hours ‘off’ out of the 24” by writing not only Such is Life but also his other literary prose, verse, and non-fiction texts.

“my normal condition is stone broke”

In his pursuit of a literary life Furphy was constrained by his lack of material wealth. When in 1883 Furphy, at age forty, accepted the job of mechanic in his brother’s foundry at Shepparton, he did so to procure a regular weekly wage and thereby maintain financial security for his wife and children. Prior to his move to Shepparton Furphy had lived a precarious existence trying a number of occupations, at which he essentially failed, to procure lasting material wealth. During the previous twenty years he had tried his hand at farm-labourer, mechanic, gold-fields prospector, farmer, and land selector. He also obtained work as a local carrier and road-roller. From 1880 to 1883 Furphy and his family moved to Hay in the Riverina district from where he

worked as the owner-operator of a long-haul carrier business. And for a time it appeared as though he had at last found his true vocation. As he reported to his father (13 Feb 1882),

I can and do make money in a way which in Victoria would have horrified me, as suggestive of a compact with the Evil one but the expenses are such as would have swallowed my Victorian income and called for more—wages, repairs, materials, such as ropes, chains, canvas ... rent, horse feed and travelling expenses such as water and bridge tolls—Altogether, ... I can, as yet, do very little beyond keeping a few pounds—say, from £10 to £20 in hand. But withal, I find myself better off in property and prospects now than at any time since I took to the road. (NLA MS2022/5)

However, this seeming “compact with the Evil one” had a sting in its tail. In a letter to his father eighteen months later Furphy reported on the circumstances impacting on his continued existence as a long-haul carrier.

For this terrible year, which has ruined half the carriers on the Murrumbidgee, may repeat itself at any time and I will be safer in a less fertile but more certain part of the country. The country itself is good for a great deal more than a living, in spite of all the losses I have had. (NLA MS2022/5)

As many other Australians have found, however, there is nothing “certain” about living and working in the Bush. Not long after writing this letter Furphy was ruined by the drought and the loss of his bullocks through pleuro-pneumonia. Such was Furphy’s life before he moved to Shepparton. And it was from Shepparton that he created the authorial persona of Tom Collins.

In developing this literary persona Furphy was further constrained by his relative isolation, both personal and geographical. Living in the small rural community of Shepparton, he worked as a mechanic for six days a week at his brother John’s foundry. According to Barnes, Joseph Furphy endured a relative self-imposed isolation in the refuge he built in his backyard where he could live his own life. Furthermore, this sense of isolation was reinforced when one considers his “sanctum” that with its table, bookcase, and stretcher bed “was almost crowded with only one visitor” (Order 143).

Moreover, according to Barnes, Furphy was ostensibly estranged from his wife Leonie who lived as a sort of housekeeper to Furphy and the children and received her husband's weekly wage of sixty shillings out of which she gave him an allowance of one shilling (Order 143-4). Although Furphy was able at last to provide for his family he was never at any time in his life a wealthy man.

The impact of this relative poverty can be gauged when one considers how Furphy needed to be persuaded by his friend Jim Gourlay that a trip to Melbourne was financially viable. In a letter to his friend William Cathels, Furphy itemised the projected cost involved to attend the Melbourne Agricultural Show in August 1894. From a budget of one pound the greatest expense was the train fare of fourteen shillings. Entry into the Show amounted to "half a crown". Of the remaining "three-and sixpence", one shilling would be needed for three or four "penny" meals. The remainder, amounting to "half-a-crown", could be spent at Coles Book Arcade. As to accommodation while in Melbourne, Furphy and his friend Jim Gourlay would "make Cathels shout a bed" (Letters 21). One is left to ponder the inordinate amount of time it would have taken Furphy to raise one pound from his weekly shilling-allowance. And although it is unlikely that Furphy would have wanted to take his family with him to the Show, given the estranged relationship between him and his wife, his careful account of the most economical way to spend a pound meant taking the family was beyond his limited finances.

Furphy's lack of material wealth, with the ever present need for him carefully to limit expenses, cannot be overstated when one considers his efforts in trying to get his novels published. When he first corresponded with Stephens, in May 1897, Furphy explained that he was not one for pretension or for women; he had never been on the "razzle-dazzle" or been "addicted to Flossie". Despite his frugal way of life, his "normal

condition is stone-broke” (NLA MS2022/5). Therefore, Furphy’s low income meant he was unable to raise the amounts needed to get his manuscript typed and edited by the Bulletin (or any other publisher for that matter). One senses that Furphy could see his chances of getting Such is Life published slipping away from him. In a letter to Stephens (20 June 1897) Furphy rather apologetically wrote: “I find that, when I promised to be ready with the fee for typeing [sic], I overrated my ability; and this I fear disturbs our procedure of prospective publication”. His concern was that the eight pounds was not the final expense and therefore he most “reluctantly” added:

the £8 in the foreground, £8 more in the middle distance, probable additional expense in the further perspective, and a chance of rejection in the background, form a composition too difficult for an artist of my size. (ML MSS4937/2)

Despite Stephens’ enthusiasm in stating that Such is Life should be published, Furphy himself was only too aware that simply paying the costs associated with a publisher’s “perennial pressure of business” did not guarantee eventual publication.

What needs to be considered at this point, however, is why Stephens deemed it necessary for Furphy to help offset the production costs of Such is Life. One could expect that the publisher would pay the costs of publication and recover their expenses from the sales of the novel. However, the originality in form and structure of Such is Life that involved one long lie in seven chapters was, according to Stephens, unlike any other book he had encountered (Furphy and Stephens 119). Stephens, nevertheless, did temper his enthusiasm for the manuscript of Such is Life with his pronouncement:

I do not think it would find a quick sale, or an extensive sale. (The interest, though continuous, is never very vivid; and the modern reader’s palate craves dishes highly spiced.) I should expect for it a slow dropping sale, largely among men over forty—‘old hands’ who could grow young again as they read. By-and-by, I think, it would establish itself as a standard book of Australian reminiscences—but that would take time. The young Australian Gallio would not, I fear, boom it as he booms ‘The Banjo’. (Furphy and Stephens 119)

“Modern readers”, therefore, were not ready for or likely to be interested in an original novel by an unknown writer. The reference to ‘The Banjo’ here is a reminder that by 1897 his recently released (1895) collection, The Man from Snowy River, was proving popular with the Australian reading public. Banjo’s collection and Lawson’s 1896 collection, While the Billy Boils, proved more accessible to the Australian reading public through their verse and short story form so beloved by the Bulletin and its readers. Furphy, therefore, faced the real possibility of being rejected by a prospective publisher and, if he was lucky enough to be published, by the majority of the reading public who were not ready for the long and discursive narrative of Such is Life.

One cannot help being struck by a certain irony here if one considers Lois Hoffmann’s argument concerning Furphy’s initial attempts to be published by the Bulletin. Such is Life may never have been written at all if Archibald had not rejected Furphy’s stories that he submitted to the Bulletin in the early 1890s: the “stories may have been amongst the ‘yarns’ from which the novel grew” (Hoffmann 410). Hoffmann’s speculative assessment has merit given the episodic form of Such is Life and the relative ease with which Furphy was able to replace the two longest chapters from his original typescript with two new and shorter chapters. What one can observe here is Bourdieu’s concept of censorship. On the one hand we have institutional censorship of the publisher more or less demanding that the novel be shortened. On the other hand, however, Furphy’s decision to alter the structure as he did is consistent with the idea of censorship “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). Furphy’s creative imagination is at its best in his analogy for shortening the novel. In a letter to Stephens (24 April 1901) he explained that “contraction proper is impossible; the operation must be performed as if you would cut

an ocean liner in two, then take a portion out of the centre, and deftly stick the ends together, making a tight, seaworthy brig” (Letters 62).

The supreme irony, and possibly Furphy’s and Such is Life’s greatest “goak”, is that with the eventual publication of Such is Life – with its form and structure of “loosely federating yarns”– Furphy cemented his position as an original and creative novelist who came to be representative of, and contributed to the legend surrounding, the Bulletin school of writers of the 1890s.

However, according to Barnes, Stephens showed no “appreciation of the originality [of Such is Life] to which Furphy himself had drawn attention”. Stephens’ attitude, expressed in a letter to Miles Franklin, was that Such is Life was a modern classic:

a book that everyone praises lest he be convicted of ignorance, but which no one ever reads through. No one but the proof readers will ever read Such is Life right through. (Order 255)

This statement by Stephens perhaps indicates that he did indeed recognise that Such is Life was an original literary work but that originality was a difficult commodity to sell to a reading public. The poor sales of the novel would only seem to confirm this to Stephens. By the time Such is Life was published in 1903 Stephens had had his own publishing failure (1899) in attempting to bring his original Bookfellow magazine to an Australian public but this initial venture had ended after only five issues. Trying to get readers interested in new and original texts appears to be one of the ever present dilemmas faced by publishers and editors as much at present as it was for Stephens in his career at the Bulletin. Ivor Indyk, commenting on his own attempts to interest a reading public in his literary journal, once remarked that “originality is not a marketable quality” (personal conversation, 18 September 2002).

Furthermore, argues Barnes, Stephens' letter to Furphy "suggests" this unenthusiastic response to Furphy's writing. Stephens' claim that Such is Life was a "classic or semi-classic" was based on the strength of only one reading. And therefore, he did not really understand the "design and thematic interests of the book". This had led him to over emphasise the "historical value" of Such is Life, that he observed in its "accurate representations" of Australian "character and customs, and life and scenery" (Order 254). But, as previously argued, this emphasis on an Australian Bush realism accorded with Stephens' and the Bulletin's ideas so that Such is Life was seen as representing for him an authentic Australian literature.

Stephens' emphasis on the historical worth of Such is Life, which would become the "standard book of Australian reminiscences", meant, as the prospective literary agent to Furphy, Stephens expounded his knowledge surrounding publishing.

To produce 1000 copies of such a book [as Such is Life], bound modestly in cloth, and secure stereotype plates for further editions; to distribute free copies to the press; to pay for advertising, and allow retailers' and wholesalers' discounts; this would cost about £400—rather over than under, if you are liberal with your paper and ink, and have work done in Australia. (Furphy and Stephens 119)

Stephens continued with a claim that publication "might" be cheaper in England but then the prospect of not being able to correct "proofs" could lead to a mistake ridden production. And here an important lesson for writers about the use of English publishers is seen with the unsatisfactory outcome for Miles Franklin, as a first time novelist, surrounding the publication of her novel My Brilliant Career in 1901. The inability of Franklin to find an Australian publisher meant she eventually had her novel published by Blackwoods in Britain. Despite informing her London agent, Pinker, of her wishes on the proposed alterations to her manuscript, she was ignored. And the final editorial cuts made to her manuscript before being published infuriated Franklin. Moreover,

The sight of her toned down and interrogationless firstborn [novel] did little to mollify Franklin. On 18 September [1901], after receiving her copies, she wrote

Pinker a testy note pointing out that ‘it would have been wise and fair to have allowed me to see the proofs of the story that I could have corrected the many irritating mistakes and substitutions in the matter of slang and idiom’.

(Webby, “Introduction”, My Brilliant Career viii)

Being “wise and fair” it seems is seldom the preoccupation of literary agents once publication rights have been gained. Distance from England was Franklin’s real enemy. Only with the advent of “regular airmail services” between England and Australia, as Webby points out, did it become possible for writers “living in Australia ... to correct the proofs of works published in Britain” (Introd. My Brilliant Career viii). And although Furphy was comparatively isolated in Shepparton, away from the metropolitan centre of the Bulletin’s Sydney office, the mail service did ensure that he did at least receive, and had the opportunity to correct, the proofs of Such is Life.

Barnes does assert that Stephens in 1897 was a beginning literary agent, and with Furphy as “possibly the first... of his ‘clients’”, sounded “more experienced” than was the case concerning the “procedures and economics of publishing” (Order 252). Nevertheless, one can readily understand how Furphy was overpowered by Stephens’ detailed knowledge of the vagaries and necessities involved in book production, which led quite naturally to Barnes asserting that “Stephens was the publishing authority to whom he [*i.e.* Furphy] always deferred” (Order 257). The effect of this dominant position is even more pronounced when one considers that Furphy, with his limited experience in dealing with literary agents and editors, never approached another publisher with his manuscript of Such is Life (Order 255).

Despite Stephens’ assertion that the novel should be published and “would find a sale”, he tried, through his seemingly detailed knowledge of book production, to convince Furphy of the necessity to help offset the costs of production.

For 5s or 6s is about the limit of price if the book is to sell at all—unless you will dun your friends to underwrite the venture with subscriptions, or guarantee advertising and press puffery galore....

And if at 5s, the net return to publishers—deducting discounts and commissions, is from 3s 2d to 3s 3d—rarely more. Say you sell 1000 copies a year—which, in my opinion, without adventitious aids, is a fair estimate—that means 1000 @ 3s = £150. Deduct £400 for ex's [expenses] and debit balance of £250 to author's account. (Furphy and Stephens 120)

Although Furphy was living in relative poverty he had managed, through his steady job at the foundry, to pursue a debt free life. Being in debt to follow his literary life was not an option that he was prepared to consider. And therefore the associated costs of production detailed by Stephens proved prohibitive to Furphy.

To Stephens, Furphy explained that he was “not the sort of person [who] has £400 all at once” (ML MSS4937/2). Given that four hundred pounds approximated his wages for three years, when combined with his reluctance to approach his wealthy brother John for financial assistance, Furphy was again overrating his “ability” to pay the costs associated with publishing Such is Life. One is entitled, therefore, to be sceptical of his claim, made in a letter to his friend William Cathels, that he (i.e. Furphy) was not “prepared to plank down £400” (Letters 37). A more realistic stance was adopted in his letter to Stephens. To Stephens' question whether Furphy was prepared to “take any part of the risk of publication ... either by putting in cash, or by guaranteeing sale of a number of copies” of Such is Life, the answer was a resigned no (Furphy and Stephens 120). Although he realised this would put him at a “grave disadvantage”, he nevertheless reluctantly informed Stephens that “the publishers must of necessity stand the racket, and recoup himself the best way he can” (Letters 30).

Without access to the financial resources to help offset the costs associated with publishing Such is Life, Furphy responded in the only other way that was left open to him. He therefore accepted Stephens' advice to take back the manuscript and produce a type-written copy to make it more appealing to potential publishers. In a letter to Stephens (8 July 1897) Furphy excitedly declared that he had “got a Franklin”

typewriter, which he kept “jigging every evening” (Letters 35). Similarly, in a letter to his friend William Cathels, Furphy was just as excited when he described how his new Franklin (“the pressman’s machine – par excellence”) was kept jigging five evenings a week to produce the typescript (Letters 37). Although Furphy explained that he could have sent the manuscript to Melbourne to be typed by a friend, he “wouldn’t trust any typeist [sic] to transcribe dialect unless he was standing over ... [him] with a stick” (Letters 35). Despite taking eleven months to complete the typescript his comments do highlight his desire to be in complete control of his novel prior to sending to his publisher. What it also allowed him to do was have sections of his novel read by his friends and acquaintances as he prepared and revised the typescript.

The need for high sales to recoup costs was uppermost in the minds of Australian publishers like the Bulletin’s Archibald, and Angus and Robertson’s George Robertson. And therefore, this “pressure of business” was a significant dynamic for publishers, which informed their decisions regardless of a text’s perceived literary worth for a place within Australian culture. Although by 1900 Furphy had signed a contract with the Bulletin to publish Such is Life, he received no replies from either Stephens or McLeod regarding a likely publication date. As Barnes has stated, “Furphy was to discover, as so many writers have, that the signing of a contract is no guarantee of early publication” (Order 278). Furphy, therefore, made his one and only trip to the Bulletin offices in Sydney at Easter 1901 to try and determine the cause of the delay in getting his novel published. As he reported to Kate Baker (29 April 1901),

The Bulletin people tearfully offered to print the book at once, though they shuddered at its size. According to repeated estimates, which they rooted out for my inspection, a two-years’ sale would still leave them from £20 to £50 out of pocket. Still they wouldn’t entertain the thought of excising one precious paragraph. If the book was only a little shorter, it would be perfect

(Letters 63)

Furphy had always known that the size – the “incurable acreage” – of Such is Life was of concern to the Bulletin publishers. And although he does not explicitly say so in this or any other letter, one can confidently assume that after his “three interviews” with Archibald, who expressed enthusiasm for his writing, and his meeting with McLeod, the magazine’s business manager, Furphy was left only one course of action if he wanted to be published: he had to shorten his novel.

During the four years that had elapsed since Furphy first approached the Bulletin in 1897, he had built a good relationship with Stephens, which continued until 1903 when Such is Life was finally published. Furphy had come to believe and expect that Stephens would publish Such is Life in its original form. As Barnes has stated,

In the eyes of local writers, Stephens was ... more influential than ever. He was a power in the land, deciding who should appear under the Bulletin imprint, and himself designing the volumes and supervising all aspects of the publication.
(Order 282)

However, the outcome of Furphy’s meetings with Archibald and McLeod highlight the extent to which Stephens himself was dominated by institutional power within the literary field. Stephens could proudly boast that Archibald only made two editorial cuts to the Bulletin’s Red Page (the “empire within an empire”, as Barnes called it) during Stephens’ twelve years as editor (Order 282). However, according to Barnes, “within the Bulletin office, he [i.e. Stephens] was less powerful than outsiders thought. Archibald and McLeod had the final say” (Order 282). And therefore Furphy responded in the only way he could and altered his novel to accommodate the wishes of the Bulletin power brokers. As Furphy explained to Kate Baker,

Now what would you have said? You would have said, as I did, “I’ll shorten the beggar down to any size you like; and trust me to serve up the scraps in some other form.” So I’m going to start on the task like a giant refreshed with new spuds. (Letters 64)

Despite not securing immediate publication of Such is Life during his visit to Sydney Furphy nevertheless did benefit for it “was the only time in his life that he experienced at first hand being part of a ‘literary circle’”. What one can recognise here is Bourdieu’s concept of class Furphy’s excitement and enthusiasm at this experience is evident from his letter to Kate Baker (29 April 1901).

Also I had tea with Stephens, and a long evening with some boys invited to meet me—Albert Dorrington, Norman Lindsay (artist), Victor J. Daley, and a bright young journalist Clarke. Also I fraternised with Alex. Montgomery; ... and the same may be said of Edmund Fisher and Edward Dyson, both of whom I colloqued with in Melb. [Melbourne], having obtained their addresses from Stephens. (Letters 64)

Furphy had at last met and conversed personally with some of those writers whom he had previously only known through reading the Bulletin. This collection of writers can be seen as logically constructed scientific grouping as an example of Bourdieu’s particular concept of class whose members or agents have similar dispositions and attitudes. While this grouping cannot be considered a real ‘social grouping’, it does help to explore why some writers form associations beyond that of mere literary circle.

On his return to Shepparton Furphy became more and more desirous of contacting and corresponding with the literary folk associated with the Bulletin. He was therefore extremely interested in Stephens’ inspired formation of a society called the Australian Society of Irresponsibles (ASOI). To Kate Baker, Furphy describes this society as “going to be a big thing ... We expect that it will bring into personal touch all the literary and artistic talent of Australasia” (Letters 98). And just as important the emphasis was to be on Australian literature and art as “distinguished from Anglo-Australian” literature. In 1902 Furphy had a “dozen addresses ... and a list of members” (Letters 103).

For Furphy, isolated as he was from the literary centres in the big cities, being able to contact and correspond with like-minded writers provided an opportunity for

him to feel part of a wider community – a particular class of individuals within an Australia literary field. He was therefore anxious when merely twelve months after the formation of the society Stephens decided not to continue with its development. Furphy wrote to Stephens expressing his desire for the society to continue: “No such welcome scheme has been propounded within my knowledge, nor one that would give a dividend of such satisfaction”. The ASOI did briefly resume under the leadership of Arthur Davis however, it eventually ceased to operate. Despite this setback, Arthur Davis proved an invaluable contact for Furphy. In the pages of Davis’s Steele Rudd’s Magazine, begun in 1904, Furphy had a number of his short stories published, as well as his literary criticism of Tennyson’s “In Memoriam”: an article twice rejected by Stephens. Despite the demise of the society after the publication of Such is Life in 1903, Furphy, nevertheless, achieved immense satisfaction from corresponding with two literary figures, Miles Franklin, whom he met only once, and Cecil Winter, a Riverina poet whom he never met, and with whom he communicated his ideas on Australian literature as well as his frustrations in trying to expand his literary life.

While the form and structure of the new version remained substantially the same as the original manuscript, the Bulletin’s “perennial pressure of business” determined the size and arguably influenced the change in thematic content of the revised Such is Life, which was eventually presented to the reading public. Although the market dynamic cannot be ignored, changes to the thematic content of Such is Life are more complex than just the influence of this dynamic. Along with his meetings with the powerbrokers of the Bulletin, he also met and conversed with many of the Bulletin school of writers. And here one may also consider Julian Croft’s argument. Furphy’s revisions to his novel were made to please these writers – the “boys” as Furphy called them.

It was for them that Rigby's romance was cut from the 1898 typescript, and the romance turned over the anvil until the political debate dominated the work; and it was for them that Tom Collins's ideas on the great intellectual issues of the nineteenth century – historical necessity and individual choice – were developed. It was for them also that the urban domestic comedy of the Falkland-Pritchards was replaced by the bush domestic tragedy of the O'Hallorans.

(Life 62)

Nevertheless, the pressure of business proved an immovable barrier for Furphy when the Bulletin consistently rejected all his persistent attempts to have his “scraps” – Rigby's Romance and The Buln-buln and the Brolga – published.

This is readily seen when one considers the evidence surrounding Furphy's frustrated attempts to get his second novel, Rigby's Romance, published. In a letter (November 1903) written to the poet Cecil Winter, Furphy clearly understood that his chances for the future publication of this new novel depended on him satisfying the Bulletin's “business justification” in publishing Such is Life. However, in this same letter, Furphy, calling himself a “philosopher”, decried this “pressure of business” as detrimental to artistic talents.

It is certain that no man can do his best work as author, inventor, artist, or in any creative capacity, if he keeps the dollar in perspective. It is a base and beggarly stimulus—just a little meaner than fame. Looking back along the record of human achievement, we shall find that the best work has been done for mere love of the work itself. (Letters 133-34)

In a letter to Kate Baker (Oct 1904) Furphy again emphasised this point. “Yarn furnished for S.R.'s [Steele Rudd Magazine] Christmas No. is published in Oct. issue. But it is no good—written to order, which is fatal to excellence” (Letters 181). Although Furphy did not specify other names within this “human achievement”, he believed that his labour of love should not end with the publication of Such is Life. He was still arguing this point some twelve months later.

In a letter to Miles Franklin (2 November 1904) Furphy reported how “AGS”, in his position as manager of Bulletin books, had repeated his previous edict that he could

not take on Rigby's Romance. In a letter to Stephens (April 1904) Furphy had asked whether there was any "chance" of the Bulletin "taking-on" Rigby's Romance (NLA MSS 2022/5). However, Stephens had informed Furphy on 26 April 1904 that there was "no chance of the Bulletin publishing Rigby's Romance" (ML MSS 4937/2). Furphy complained, however, that Stephens had rejected Rigby's Romance "irrespective of the merits or demerits of the book (which he has never seen)". Furphy recognised that the "slack" sales of Such is Life, "although now in the second thousand", was the principle reason for the Bulletin rejecting Rigby's Romance. Nevertheless he complained that, although the sales of Such is Life were not what the Bulletin and he would have liked, the publication of Such is Life had meant his literary talents had been recognised or given credence by the Bulletin and he had therefore established himself within the Australian literary field. Or as he stated so eloquently, "the impostor has become a Peri at the Gate. Well the Peri got in at last—though by no means on the nod" (Letters 182). This description of authors passing through the gates and establishing their right to belong encapsulates nicely the idea of a gatekeeper like Stephens in his role of editor consecrating those authors he deemed worthy of admission to the literary field. Although it is not clear where Furphy got the idea for his metaphor of literary field being guarded by a locked gate, A. G. Stephens once described how the "Gates of Fame swung open" for a young writer after his first letter to a newspaper was accepted and subsequently published ("Australian Literature III" 95).

Furphy probably believed he would get a sympathetic hearing from his new literary friends Cecil Winter and Miles Franklin – both of whom were just beginning their literary life. Moreover, by emphasising this creative dilemma to his fellow struggling writers, Furphy was justifying his position as an author within the Australian

literary field of the 1890s. However, passing through the gates to a literary life did not by itself guarantee greater success for Furphy.

The financial failure of Such is Life effectively meant that by the time Furphy wrote to his mother in May 1907 he had resigned himself to never seeing his remaining novels published. In his typical self-deprecating style he attributed his failure to the inevitability that he was not as “good a businessman as ... [he was] a writer”. If he was, he lamented, he would have had a “big reputation, with perhaps a bit of revenue”. His only recourse as he now saw it was to continue writing though it would never see “the dignity of print” (Letters 234). Furphy’s reference to “revenue” here may seem to contradict his previous philosophical stance against the “dollar”. However, with “a bit of revenue” one can believe that he would have been in the happy circumstance of contributing to the costs associated with the publishing of his novels for his “unthinking mates” and “for Australia”. But this is mere speculation. Furphy, for the remaining five years of his life, in his correspondence to his family and friends, vented his frustration and disappointment at Australian publishers for allowing the “pressure of business” to justify overlooking his literary talent. He believed he had earned a second chance. Writing to his mother in September 1911 (12 months to the day before his death) he lamented:

I read everything that comes my way, finding little that is new or interesting. I cannot believe that my own writing—say, in “Rigby’s Romance”—is as undistinguished and prosy as what I am forced to wade through. Yet the publishers pass it by. (Letters 263)

“the cussedness of things”

Furphy was not the only writer in this predicament – in the 1890s Australian writers rarely made a living from the products of their literary talents alone. According to Richard Fotheringham, Steele Rudd stood out as the only author in this period in

Australian history to make “enough money as a freelance writer to support himself and his family in moderate comfort”. He was able to do this in most respects by following “Dr Johnson’s defence — [that] only a blockhead wrote for anything except money” (101). While this may not accord with Furphy’s stance that the pursuit of the “dollar” is detrimental to creative talent, Rudd’s career does highlight that it was possible in Australia to make a living from literary talents.

To make this living as a writer meant gaining institutional support. And his success can be attributed to close collaboration with Stephens as his ‘symbolic banker’. His position as editor of Bulletin books arguably had its greatest success when his purpose paralleled that of Archibald. This was most apparent with the publication of On Our Selection in 1899. By publishing this book Stephens not only enhanced his reputation within the Bulletin hierarchy and the Australian literary field but also raised the literary reputation of the author among the magazine’s school of writers and the reading public. Before 1899 his stories had appeared in the Bulletin and he can be considered to be a lesser literary light below the shining stars of Lawson and Paterson. The overall success of On Our Selection owed much to Stephens’ ability to satisfy Archibald’s business imperative (or market dynamic) as well as to produce his idea of what constituted authentic Australian literature, a literary commodity that accorded with the Bulletin’s ideology.

Stephens revealed his genius in marketing strategy when he made the family name (previously Ross) in On Our Selection the same as the pseudonym of the author Rudd (Arthur Hoey Davis), which had the effect of turning “documentary realism into pseudo-autobiography” (84). And therefore, “Steele Rudd gained a family and a history; Arthur Davis gained a literary reputation” (Fotheringham 84). Stephens was a “brilliant publicist” in creating the legend of On Our Selection that continues to this day and

without Stephens there would have been no “best selling” and “flamboyantly illustrated novel” (Fotheringham 85).

Along with his brilliant marketing strategy, Stephens was also responsible, Fotheringham has argued, for the “structure” of On Our Selection. This required considerable “rewriting” so that the book became more than just a collection of disjointed stories that had originally appeared in the Bulletin. And so, the stories were expanded, rewritten, contracted, or joined to form a cohesive whole (Fotheringham 82). And more importantly, the novel was structured and formatted according to what Stephens thought people wanted (Fotheringham 84).

The extent of Stephens’ role in structuring On Our Selection is revealed in a letter he wrote to Davis in 1899 just before the novel was published. Stephens had outlined the chapter headings and asked Davis to “comment, if necessary, on the proposed arrangement of yarns” (NLA MS2022/5). Davis’ reply, written at the bottom of the aforementioned letter, recommends the order be changed slightly so the final chapter – ‘Bear Industry’ – ends on a positive note with Dad Rudd making a success with his £200 haul. Moreover, Davis continues, by positioning this yarn last it would be a good starting point if a second volume of yarns were to be published. Stephens, however, did not follow Davis’ suggestion and the final published version remains the same as originally outlined.

In creating his idea of an authentic Australian literature, Stephens followed the dictum, according to Fotheringham, that it was the editor’s job to mould a writer’s rough expressions into a language that readers could recognise (Fotheringham 86). This resulted in Stephens’ editing, amounting at times to “co-authorship” (Fotheringham 82). Furthermore, Stephens’ commissioning of the drawings for the first edition of On Our Selection ensured that readers would come to recognise Rudd as a humorous, farcical,

writer and not necessarily a realistic writer (Fotheringham 86-87). The paradox here, however, is that to be a successful writer in Australia one must first be recognised as a successful writer. Nevertheless, Rudd's success with the Australian reading public meant he established his own literary magazine, which fortunately for Furphy provided an outlet for some of his short stories and literary criticism that the Bulletin would not, or had previously refused to, publish. Steele Rudd's career, however, must be considered against the more typical outcome for Australian writers in this period.

Stephens has described the unfortunate fate of some of the Bulletin school of writers who had attempted the literary life. In a Bookfellow article on Louis Becke, written in March 1913, he reported how Becke, William Astley, and Ernest Favenc had died penniless. And although Barcroft Boake had been a promising young poet, he had nevertheless committed suicide "in despair". Moreover, Victor Daley had died "destitute", while Alexander Montgomery despite his "literary labour" had also expired leaving no fortune. Stephens also cited Henry Lawson's advice to young writers in Australia to shoot themselves "carefully with the aid of a looking-glass". The effort required in "literary labour" with its attendant need to earn a living was highlighted by Stephens' assessment that an "evil fortune seems to dog the footsteps of many talented writers 'pursuing literature in Australia'" ("Louis Becke" 61-62).

Although Stephens in this article reported on the fate of Australian writers, one senses that he was also, subconsciously perhaps, including himself in this group by reflecting on his own poverty and despair that had now supplanted the influence and importance he had commanded in his position of editor at the Bulletin. Although he lived another twenty years after he wrote the above mentioned article, during which time he had also edited and published four volumes of Shaw Nielson's verse, Stephens was himself dogged by a seeming "evil fortune". In 1907 after his departure from the

Bulletin he was impoverished trying to provide for himself and his wife and six children. Although evidence extracted from his diary shows that he was bitter about not gaining the financial recompense he felt he was entitled to as an editor with the Bulletin, after he left the Bulletin he no longer had the security of a weekly wage. As Cantrell has described, Stephens was reduced to selling his private book collection, including his own published works, for any price he could obtain at auction. Furthermore, from 1907 to 1933, Stephens was seldom employed full time and lived “mainly on the meagre income of freelance writing”. The depth to which Stephens sank is revealed by his need to sell the books – unread – sent to him for reviewing in his Bookfellow so as to “make ends meet” (Introd. A.G. Stephens 23-24). And according to Vance Palmer, Stephens’ talents in the years after he left the Bulletin were “wasted” because of his need to “devote too large a portion of his time to earning a living” (Fwd A. G. Stephens 30).

Stephens’ career also highlights a fundamental aspect of the Australian literary field. His prestige, that is, his symbolic capital, was derived as it was for most Australian writers as much from being associated and identified with the Bulletin (as a prominent institution within the Australian literary field). In the Bulletin’s terms, it was from his literary talents and editorial position to dominate aspiring authors. Without this institutional support, Stephens, the Bulletin’s despotic “three-initialled terror”, was a terror no longer. And for a time he was again reduced to the level of a new entrant in the literary field. Furphy himself never sank to the depths of impoverishment endured by Stephens or the other Bulletin writers mentioned previously.

However, just as Stephens depended on being associated and identified with the Bulletin so also was Furphy dependent upon being associated and identified with a prominent institution. Without the support of a new ‘symbolic banker’, Furphy’s position as novelist declined. When, after 1903, Stephens and the Bulletin, because of

the poor sales of Such is Life, declined to publish Rigby's Romance, Furphy, without the material wealth to finance his own publishing venture, was essentially left stranded and was forced to seek another publisher for his novels. Some time earlier in 1897, Furphy, in a letter to Stephens, had described the plight of the struggling author – prophetically for himself as it turned out.

[A] man required nothing but a list of publishers' addresses—that he took his MS. [manuscript] to Jacob Tonson No. 1, who rejected it with a promptitude and contumely; ditto. No. 2, and so on for a number of times varying according to the merit of MS.—that owing to the cussedness of things, a work of Boldrewood-merit would pass into print after one rejection, whilst a work of Montgomery-merit would be spurned from eleven offices in succession, to be grudgingly published by the twelfth. (Letters 31-32)

While this indicated his particular dislike of Boldrewood, it also indicated quite clearly Furphy's knowledge of what was required to play the game of literary producer in the Australian literary field of the 1890s. That is, an unknown author had to be patient and persistent until a publisher would accept a manuscript based not only on its perceived literary merit, but just as importantly, on the likely market response to a manuscript: the “cussedness of things”.

In 1897, as a potential first time novelist, Furphy did not have the status, that is, an accumulation of symbolic capital, to convince publishers that the originality in form and structure of Such is Life was worthy of the risk. Furphy, therefore, was dependent on Stephens' advice and support in publishing the novel. As Stephens emphasised in his letter to Furphy: “‘Banjo’ and Lawson were familiar through the Bulletin, and found their audiences waiting. How many people want to buy Tom Collins' book? – unless you make them” (Furphy and Stephens 120). Boldrewood, being an established author with the institutional support of both Angus and Robertson, an Australian publisher, and Macmillan, an English publisher, found his audiences waiting. From 1904, however, Furphy, because of the poor sales of Such is Life, not only lost his institutional support

from the Bulletin but also lost the support of Stephens. He was the one person who had originally recognised the literary merit of Such is Life. He eventually classed it as authentic Australian literature that would find its place as the standard book of Australian reminiscences and would be “relished 100 years hence” (Preface ix). However, with the loss of his institutional support Furphy never again found even a “twelfth” publisher to “grudgingly” publish his other novel manuscripts.

After 1903 Furphy essentially became a ‘literary nomad’ in the sense that he forever searched throughout the literary field for that elusive institution that would publish his novels. In a letter to Miles Franklin (15 June 1904) Furphy wrote what one can readily identify is the struggling writer’s lament.

Isn’t it a weary thing to have your MS. lying on the shelf beside you in your sanctum, waiting on the publisher; while its jokes become flat, and its lofty passages degenerate into hifalutin rot, and its romance becomes mawkish, and you begin to hate the sight of it. (Letters 165)

Vance Palmer, in his Legend of the Nineties, written in 1954, may well have had access to this letter when he made the following assessment of the delays surrounding the original publication of Such is Life.

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 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, in a letter to his friend William Cathels (September 1904) Furphy offered a portrait, in which one can recognise the pathos of his own situation, the image of the writer, with labour of love in hand, ever hopeful of being published. While not physically present at the Bulletin office, he wrote:

I am standing on one foot in front of the “B[ulletin].” Office, clad in indomitable patience and a soojee breech-clout, with one hand proffering “Rigby’s Romance”, and the other raised to heaven in silent appeal.

(Letters 175-76)

While this description of the poor author shows the influence of ideas about the exotic, a more typical Australian description is offered in one of Norman Lindsay's drawings. In a drawing entitled "The Australian Author" a poor down cast Koala is knocking on the publisher's door, hat in hand and sheaf of poems tucked under his arm. One can observe a most fearful and timid look in the koala's eyes. Whether this drawing was meant to indicate the power of Archibald himself it nevertheless is a reminder of the power publishers have in deciding the fate of literary works. (Lindsay's drawing is reprinted in Mackaness and Stone – inside the front cover).

In a letter to Miles Franklin (5 October 1904) Furphy repeated his complaint but prefaced it this time with an exasperated, "I have just written to A.G.S., for the manyth time" (Letters 177). The passage to Miles Franklin is substantially the same as that written to William Cathels: "I am standing on one foot in front of the "B." Office, clad in indomitable patience and a soojee cummerbund, with one hand tendering the type-script of "Rigby's Romance", and the other raised to heaven in silent appeal" (Letters 175). AGS, however, remained "obdurate" to Furphy's pleas. In a later remark to Miles Franklin in February 1905 Furphy again reinforces the plight of the ever-hopeful creative writer: "I have learned that it is a simpler matter to write a book than to get the same into print" (Letters 192). Finding a prospective publisher was not helped by the fact that from 1905 Furphy was more geographically isolated in Western Australia. For the rest of his life he was unable to again pass beyond the "Gate" to a greater and more rewarding literary life.

This chapter has utilised Pierre Bourdieu's concept of a literary field as a useful framework with which to analyse the predicament surrounding the authorship and publication of the works of Joseph Furphy. In setting the temporal limits and social

space, British publishing houses had a dominant role over what was published and marketed in Australia during the 1890s. This is evident from the analysis in the chapter of the power struggles between authors, editors and publishing institutions over literature. Furthermore this chapter has shown how authors who could not afford to publish their own works needed institutional support gained by selecting the right publisher for the genre in which they write. Although the Bulletin's proprietor Archibald claimed that every man can write at least one book, throughout the 1890s the short story formed the basis of the magazine's publishing ideals. That Furphy focussed all his energy into securing publication of his one novel to the exclusion of other genres meant that he was relatively unknown when Such is Life was eventually published in 1903. The poor sales of his novel and the subsequent loss of Stephens – his 'symbolic banker' – and further institutional support for his writing effectively ended his literary career before it had a chance to flourish.

Chapter 2: Education and its influence

It does not take long for readers of Such is Life to become aware that Tom Collins is an erudite narrator who displays the extent of his literary influences and his wide-ranging knowledge at every opportunity. Although character and author cannot be mapped directly onto each other, Joseph Furphy also acquired an extensive knowledge of the world through his voracious reading habits. In the 1921 DeGaris edition of Rigby's Romance, A. G. Stephens remembered Furphy as follows.

Furphy came late and lonely to scholarship. Deliberate study of English classics emphasised rather than extended his individuality; he drew from books affirmation of his knowledge of life. With dictionary and synonyms-book and shelf of 18th-century authors he laboured at language for the dignity of literature producing a ponderous style, heavy with words displayed punctiliously, too many. In the vernacular he shines. Furphy applied to his work, an excogitating, a ratiocinating, not an inspiring intelligence: he is a builder rather than an inventor. (Preface xi)

This sketch of Joseph Furphy is what Miles Franklin claims started the belief that Such is Life was “conceived and brought forth in solitude”. In many respects this claim matches what we know of Furphy’s biography, but Franklin’s argument is determined to emphasise Furphy’s early education when he was a “scholastic and literary prodigy”. Franklin bases her argument on Furphy’s juvenilia: especially the long poem “Childe Booth’s Pilgrimage” composed in 1858 when he was approximately fifteen years of age. For Franklin this poem is evidence of a bush youth who was “familiar with authors, some of whom were known only to specialists”. More importantly, Franklin describes the relevance of this as showing Furphy “in embryo the Furphy who in 1897 was delivered of Such is Life” (Joseph 18, 21).

However, Barnes essentially reinforces Stephens' assessment of Furphy in that, while conceding Franklin's argument that Furphy's early juvenilia reveals his "verbal habits [that] are basic to the Tom Collins style", he places greater emphasis on Furphy's maturity with its directed "discipline" toward greater purposes. Moreover, Barnes concludes:

Perhaps the most significant point to be registered here is how much of this schoolboy taste remained with Furphy. His real intellectual awakening came in his forties when ... for the first time in his adult life he had the regular leisure to indulge his taste for reading—and writing. (Order 62)

Barnes is quite right to emphasise Furphy's "intellectual awakening" as essential to understanding his mature writing. However, when Barnes uses the term "taste" here he is giving rise to what one can readily identify as Furphy's acquisition of cultural capital – as constituent of his habitus, which is fundamental to understanding his literary life from its beginnings as part of his childhood education to his changing habitus when he entered the literary field in the 1890s. That is, Furphy's acquisition of cultural capital

is accumulated through a long process of acquisition or inculcation which includes the pedagogical action of the family or group members (family education), educated members of the social formation (diffuse education) and social institutions (institutionalized education). (Johnson 7)

This chapter, therefore, seeks to reconcile the two positions in Furphy's development as a writer – formed in youth and in maturity – by arguing that only in considering Furphy's education in all its forms throughout his lifetime can one come to understand his intellectual and literary position within the 1890s literary field.

"Too young to understand"

In an episode from the pages of Rigby's Romance an exchange between Dixon and Tom Collins may be relevant to understanding Furphy's own reminiscences of his early education. To Dixon's enquiry, "'Spect you're a bit o' a ringer on Scripture?", Collins

replies, “I only wish I was. Certainly, I had to read a good deal of it when I was too young to understand” (37).

Joseph Furphy (as well as his siblings) received an initial literacy education from both his parents. This initial education cannot be underestimated for it was the solid foundation upon which Joseph built his future literary life. Samuel and Judith Furphy themselves had been educated in Ireland where, according to Miles Franklin, they “respected learning and valued books”. Furthermore, Judith, who had come from a teaching family herself, taught her children to “read as soon as they could speak, and to write as soon as they could hold a pen” (Joseph 38).

This was fortunate for the Furphy children because on Ryrie Station in Yering where they lived there was no school or church, nor was there any nearby settlement where the children could be sent for daily education (Barnes, Order 18). Therefore, Judith Furphy, who was not employed on Ryrie Station, devoted her time to the education of her children using “old fashioned reading cards” (Pescott 3). After the cards came the Bible and the works of Shakespeare. Joseph certainly seemed to have grasped reading early and at age seven he “could recite quite fluently, pages of Shakespeare and chapters of the Bible” (Pescott 3). Thus, continues Pescott, was Joseph’s “literary foundation laid” (3). That is, Joseph’s ability to read at an early age was a constituent of his habitus gained through family education as he entered and positioned himself as a writer within the literary field of the 1890s.

While being taught to read the Bible would be customary in a strict Wesleyan household, the use of Shakespeare is significant for Joseph’s early literary habitus. As Barnes succinctly puts this: “the use of Shakespeare suggests that the respect for literature which was so central to Joseph Furphy’s view of life was inculcated early by his parents” (Order 19). As Miles Franklin, writing in the 1940s, argued, Joseph’s love

of “learning was inculcated in him in infancy by his parents, both soundly educated in days when the majority of people were illiterate” (Joseph 18).

Franklin’s remarks on sound education and illiteracy need to be placed in the context of the times when Samuel and Judith Furphy emigrated to Australia from Ireland in 1841. In that year, according to a study by Eric Richards, some 20,103 people arrived in New South Wales from the British Isles and Ireland (356). Richards’ analysis relates to explaining the connection between the levels of literacy and country of origin of these emigrants. Although employers in Australia were not looking for workers with high levels of literacy (“moral and muscular capacities” were more highly regarded), Richards asserts that the emigrant population in 1841 had significantly higher levels of literacy than the general population of their homeland (346). For Richards this can be accounted for by considering that the immigrants

had a greater inclination to migrate, possessed a greater opportunity to do so, and knew how to take advantage of the opportunity when it was offered by the agents of New South Wales. In short, it was the better educated of the respective cohorts [from the British Isles and Ireland] who decided to emigrate to Australia in 1841. This gives some support to the idea that education was a liberating factor in working class lives; it strengthens the notion that literacy enabled people to gain mobility; in its widest interpretation it suggests that the influences which made for rising literacy – most obviously urbanization and industrialization – also activated a greater than average degree of mobility. (356)

Moreover, among the Irish immigrants, Protestants had higher literacy levels than Catholics (347). Samuel and Judith were among the educated, literate Protestants who took advantage of the opportunity to come to Australia in 1841. And while high literacy does not necessarily make for good educators, Richards’ remark about education being a “liberating factor” may well help to explain Samuel and Judith Furphy’s desires to teach their children to read and write from an early age. Resources were limited, however: the use of Shakespeare is attributed by Barnes to the “scarcity of standard works that could be given to children” (Order 19). The dilemma raised by Barnes’

argument as to resources stresses how Joseph's habitus (and his early acquisition of cultural capital) was a product of the class structure and society he was born into on Ryrie Station. Samuel and Judith Furphy were forced to provide for their family's spiritual, educational and material needs within their limited means when they accepted work on this relatively remote settlement without church and school. In the late 1880s Joseph wrote to his mother after visiting his birthplace, Ryrie Station at Yering, which had grown to be the small village of Yarra Glen. In what one can infer is a tribute for his mother's education, he declared that there was a little State School on the "very spot" where their house once stood (NLA MS2022/5).

"Given a good elementary education"

Furphy's institutional education, his formal school learning, began in 1851 when his family moved from Yering to Kangaroo Ground. John Barnes believes the building of a new school at Kangaroo Ground was perhaps one of the main reasons for the family moving (Order 26). On the first of April 1851 when the new school opened for the first time four of the Furphy children attended class: John, Joseph (aged seven and a half), Isaac and Judith. Samuel and Judith Furphy valued formal schooling for their children, which meant they were willing to pay the school fees of "between five and ten shillings a quarter [year] for each child" (Order 27).

As State-sponsored free education did not become government policy in Victoria for another twenty years, communities who wanted to provide education for their children had to construct their own school institutions. This often meant providing education based on religious or sectarian ideals. And it was just such an undertaking by the predominantly Protestant Scottish-Presbyterian community in Kangaroo Ground that enabled the first schoolhouse to be built. According to Barnes, the sum of fifty pounds needed to build the school was collected in the local district. And although the

Furphys were Wesleyan in religious faith they “apparently had no objection to attending other Protestant services than Wesleyan” (Order 27). The growth of school institutions in the Port Phillip area was testament to the diligence of local communities: of the seventy-four schools built by the end of 1851 eight had been established by Presbyterians: Kangaroo Ground was the twenty-seventh (Order 27).

When Furphy first attended school at Kangaroo Ground he may possibly have been among a fortunate minority of school children in colonial Australia at this time. Evidence reported by Barnes indicates that in Andrew Ross Kangaroo Ground had a “good scholar” who exceeded the abilities of the “ordinary country schoolmaster”. He had been educated in Edinburgh and had previously taught at Scots School in Melbourne (Order 28). And although the new school was not as well equipped as he would possibly have wanted (having to double as a Church as well), the local community had established a school of which they would be justly proud. By the time of the school inspector’s visit in 1862 the school was well established and was distinctive in the colonies in having a district library, which included books on “history, science, travel and religious literature” (Order 25).

It is possible to speculate that the provisioning of this library was in response to school-inspector Childers’ visit in 1851 when he reported that the new school needed books. On his visit at this time he reported that the Bible and spelling books were being used as well as some books on geography, which were often provided by the children themselves. Students on this day numbered twenty and although the inspector’s report does not mention students by name Barnes has speculated that if the Furphy children were present on this day they would have been among the children who “Read (Bible) well” (Order 30). This is not surprising given the importance of the Bible in the Furphy

household and the accompanying instruction by Judith Furphy in particular as a pre-school educator of her children.

Although the Furphy family only remained in Kangaroo Ground until 1852 when they again moved and took up residence in Kyneton, Joseph's initial schooling at Kangaroo Ground is important when considering his later literary life. For here the young Joseph came under the influence of the new Scottish school-master Andrew Ross who, according to Barnes, was instrumental in aiding the young Joseph in developing a more systematic approach to learning (Order 31). One can readily infer how developing this approach was a crucial aspect of his habitus that proved invaluable to him when in later life his "ignorance shifting" underpinned his intellectual development. Furthermore, and despite lacking extant evidence of what Furphy thought of his first schoolmaster, Ross's influence on Furphy may have been greater than he would have realised at the time. Furphy from this time and throughout his life was drawn towards educated Scotsmen with "enthusiasm for learning".

The two other schoolmasters whom Furphy encountered were both Scotsmen, and one of them—John Storie—became his lifelong friend. During the writing of Such is Life his closest literary confidant was William Cathels, a Scottish-born blacksmith with a passion for scholarship equal to Furphy's own.

(Barnes, Order 31)

One can also name other Scots who had a profound impact on Furphy. He greatly admired the poet Robert Burns (whom he defended in the pages of the Bulletin) and the writer Thomas Carlyle. Also during the 1890s Furphy drew inspiration from the life and writing of Dr Charles Strong, the founder of the Australia Church.

Evidence from Furphy's correspondence reflects his attitude toward formal education. He was in a positive frame of mind after the successful publication of Such is Life in 1903. In a letter to Cecil Winter, Furphy commented on the link between education and its influence on literary talent. 'Given a good elementary education ... the

man or woman of literary ability will single himself [sic] out of the ruck and make the pace a cracker” (Letters 127). Furphy here was obviously in a buoyant mood and believed that the publication of his first novel was the stepping stone to greater literary success, attributed here, in part, to formal education.

While Furphy stated that an “elementary education” was adequate to pursue a literary career, Tom Collins digresses at some length on the value of education. Of particular importance is Collins’ portrayal of the Englishman Willoughby in chapter one of Such is Life. Collins comments on the reduced circumstances Willoughby finds himself in as an English gentleman forced to seek employment in the Australian colonies.

Poor shadow of departed exclusiveness!--lying there, with none so poor to do him reverence! He was a type--and, by reason of his happy temperament, an exceedingly favourable type--of the 'gentleman,' shifting for himself under normal conditions of back-country life. Urbane address, faultless syntax, even that good part which shall not be taken away, namely, the calm consciousness of inherent superiority, are of little use here. (SL 32)

Collins’ criticism here is that immigrants to Australia must change their ways and learn to adapt to their new environment. The natural superiority engendered from an institutional education needs to focus on the present if one is to survive and more importantly make a worthwhile contribution for Australia. However, education itself is not the problem – it is only how education is used in one’s life that matters.

As Collins further argues,

Of such reduced 'gentlemen' it is often said that their education becomes their curse. Here is another little subterfuge. This is one of those taking expressions which are repeated from parrot to magpie till they seem to acquire axiomatic force. It is such men's ignorance--their technical ignorance--that is their curse. Education of any kind never was, and never can be, a curse to its possessor; it is a curse only to the person whose interest lies in exploiting its possessor. Erudition, even in the humblest sphere of life, is the sweetest solace, the unfailing refuge, of the restless mind; but if the bearer thereof be not able to do something well enough to make a living by it, his education is simply outclassed, overborne, and crushed by his own superior ignorance. (SL 34)

Here a motivation to become a published author is suggested and the role of education in this process: as a way of making a living as well as benefitting from its intellectual stimulation. There is something poignant about Collins' economic idealism here, especially as Furphy's own history never resulted in such a living being made.

This dilemma over the end product of education is evident in Furphy's attempts to be published. Furphy initially appears at odds with Collins' edict that education should underpin one's livelihood. If one believes his comments to Stephens (20 June 1897), Furphy was more interested in securing the publication of Such is Life over any consideration of monetary rewards. His approach in this instance included his inducement to Stephens to publish a collection of short stories that he, Furphy, had written.

I may add that I wouldn't look for any pecuniary profit from the issue of this little collection,—merely regarding it as a sighting shot.... But as I have no intention of hanging my pen on a willow tree, I should like the publisher to be limited to so many thousand copies, or so many years, in order that all my lies may ultimately go together as a series.... In a word, I would place certain MSS. in your hands; I would disclaim all pecuniary profit, and, subject, to a liberally-limited publication, I would reserve copyright. (Letters 33-34)

Furphy's strategy here is perhaps typical of a first time novelist's attempt to secure publication and with it the literary recognition, the symbolic capital, they desired to pursue further publication and eventual pecuniary rewards. Although Furphy in 1897 was not known beyond a few paragraphs and articles in the pages of the Bulletin, he nevertheless was not going to stop writing (hang up his pen). His astute remarks about copyright indicate his concern over future publishing rights with their attendant economic rewards.

With his inducement to Stephens, Furphy was also astute in suggesting he would provide a collection of short stories. A significant precedent for this lay in the successful publication of Henry Lawson's collection of short stories (While the Billy Boils) in

1896. Furphy was only too aware that the Bulletin favoured short stories and successful publication of his own collection would enhance his literary reputation by introducing him to a wider Australian reading public. From this Furphy could see how this reading public would be primed for the release of his first novel when it was eventually published.

Stephens did not rise to Furphy's bait; Stephens perhaps recognised the ruse for what it was. Nevertheless, it is curious that Stephens did not even send for the short story manuscripts in order to satisfy himself of their prospective literary merit and potential publishing value. The limited cultural capital attributed to Furphy by Archibald, Stephens' senior, contributed to his neglect by the literary establishment. In this one can see how the power relationships within the literary field dominate Stephens and Furphy whereby their habitus, their conscious and at times subconscious action of 'playing the game', is decisive in the production of literary works.

Furphy it seems was prejudged because the language and style of his previous submissions to the Bulletin as well as the manuscript of Such is Life were deemed unacceptable to Archibald despite Stephens' enthusiasm for the novel. It seems likely that Stephens, having just attained the role of book editor, was unwilling to further antagonise Archibald in pushing forward another set of manuscripts from Furphy. Stephens in his role of freelance literary agent could have tried to find a publisher for Furphy. One should keep in mind that neither Lawson nor Paterson had book collections published by the Bulletin, despite both being regular and favoured contributors. And although Furphy continued over the ensuing years from 1897 to have the magazine publish his short-story collection, he was unsuccessful. He seems to have been unwilling to antagonise Stephens by seeking an alternative publisher, especially after his enthusiastic appraisal of, and willingness to publish, the manuscript.

In Collins' digressions on the benefits and pitfalls of education in his assessment of Willoughby, one can read the anxiety that Furphy himself underwent in pursuing a literary life. Furphy did not find the "sweetest solace" in erudition (as his friend and fellow autodidact William Cathels did). And therefore one may conclude here that Furphy in writing Such is Life found an outlet for his extensive self-taught knowledge and "ignorance shifting". And although he never earned the monetary rewards to sustain a literary life he nevertheless gained the literary recognition that meant his education was not "outclassed, overborne, and crushed by his own superior ignorance". His elementary education had provided the basis for him to single himself out as a writer of undoubted literary talent. And the passing of time has only served to underscore and even enhance his contribution to Australian literature that many would appreciate as Stephens had predicted (Pref. ix).

However, Furphy's engagement with education is not limited to his treatment of the influence of formal education. One may analyse his prose for his exposition of what can be considered diffuse education, which is apparent in the particular structure of Furphy's novels when symposia or gatherings of people expound their knowledge. Before expanding on this one needs to look at Furphy's diffuse education after he left school and the period of his literary juvenilia as constituent of his habitus that provided a considerable influence on his later education and writing.

"love of words"

Although Joseph Furphy's institutional (or formal) education ended at age fourteen, this was not the end of his education. From this time onwards his education can be described as diffuse: an education that relied upon his interactions with like-minded individuals within his own social sphere. Initially this relied in part upon interaction with family members, as evidence from his juvenilia indicates. By the time he settled down in

Shepparton in 1883 evidence from his correspondence demonstrates his continuing love of learning inculcated from his early period, as well as his reliance on the support offered by like-minded individuals in his intellectual development that enabled him to write Such is Life.

The impact of Furphy's diffuse education on his habitus and therefore his initial acquisition of cultural capital is most apparent when one considers the ten years between 1857 and 1867, which is often referred to as his juvenilia period. This encompasses the quite remarkable beginnings of Furphy's literary talent – when at age fifteen he composed his substantial poem (“Child Booth's Pilgrimage”) – and ends with Furphy as a young married man at age twenty-four when he was publicly recognised for his poem on Abraham Lincoln.

Evidence of Joseph Furphy's early wide reading and literary talent is apparent when one reads his poem “Childe Booth's Pilgrimage”. As Miles Franklin has stated, the poem “bears traces of easy acquaintance with Scott, Longfellow, Homer, Byron, Burns, Moore and others” (Joseph 20-21). And while one can agree with John Barnes, when he states that Such is Life is not “Child Booth's Pilgrimage” writ large, one can nevertheless identify elements of this poem that stayed with Furphy all his life. As Franklin points out, the poem

shows a love of words and a budding ability for dialogue in the vernacular. A word like “myrmidons” or “oblivion” is found among the colloquialisms of the decade, some of which—“mauleys”, “duneen”, “lumpus”—have since been replaced by others. The eponymous hero does not emerge from his fellows, and in this particular the story foreshadows Such is Life. (Joseph 22)

Moreover, for Franklin this reveals a remarkable talent for a lad of fifteen: “a bush youth familiar with authors, some of whom were known only to specialists or to the widely cultured” (Joseph 18).

Franklin's view is reinforced by the comments in the preface to the poem. In it one can see the formation of Furphy's literary habitus that exhibited his individual ideas on literature along with his comic stance that proved durable when transposed to the literary field some forty years later.

Author positively assures the public on his word of honour as a Bullock Driver that he composed this magnificent epic poem in very little more than four years: he hopes that the character of truthfulness which is diffused through all his writings will render this astonishing and almost incredible assertion more easy of belief. (NLA MS2022/6)

In one of those coincidences that abound in life, the manuscript of Such is Life itself took approximately four years to produce. Moreover, the emphasis on truthfulness of the author is paramount in the narrator Tom Collins in the opening scene of Such is Life.

Whilst a peculiar defect—which I scarcely like to call an oversight in mental construction—shuts me out from the flowery pathway of the romancer, a coordinate requital endows me, I trust, with the more sterling, if less ornamental qualities of the chronicler. This fairly equitable compensation embraces, I have been told, three distinct attributes: an intuition which reads men like sign-boards; a limpid veracity; and a memory which habitually stereotypes all impressions except those relating to personal injuries. (SL 1)

It is from this veracity that Tom as chronicler in Such is Life sets out to paint “a fair picture of Life” (SL 2).

That the form and structure of Such is Life was born from a mind confident in expressing his literary ideas is evident in the preface of “Child Booth's Pilgrimage”.

The Author begs leave also to state that this poem has no faults though it may possess some of the peculiarities which must be attributed to his masterly genius—spurning all control of paltry rules and regulations—soaring unfettered and untrammelled above the common herd.... It is, indeed, a production which poets of future ages may imitate without hoping to equal. (NLA MS2022/6)

An original text unrestricted by literary conventions is perhaps the most apt and succinct description of Such is Life. In Furphy's letter to Stephens he explained that “the plan of the book is not like any other that I know of,—at least I trust not” (Letters 29).

Just who qualified to be “specialist” or “widely cultured” in Australia during the 1840s and 1850s is problematic. According to Russel Ward it was only after the Gold Rushes began in 1851 that literacy began to increase. Moreover, he has claimed that

there can be little doubt that the average standard of educational attainment was much higher among the newcomers than it had been among the pastoral workers prior to the discoveries ... and it was only after the Gold Rush that observers began to remark on the high standard of outback literacy. (Australian 137)

Before the Gold Rush the high rate of illiteracy (36.9 per cent in 1851) among bush workers meant reading for many was not possible. Nevertheless readers were sometimes available to read for these workers.

At a certain outstation one day in the early 'forties [1840s], a man arrived ‘with a joyful countenance’ and a copy of Nicholas Nickleby. In the hut that night another man began reading to a company consisting mainly of old hands who, however, ‘advised that the reading should be stopped, until the men of two or three stations near us, had been invited’ to share in the feast. (Australian103)

This however, was apparently a rare event and one must point out here that Ward’s thesis is biased toward proving a ballad tradition of singing and story-telling among bush workers that compensated for the absence of readers and reading material (Australian 103-4).

Nevertheless, it is interesting to compare Ward’s example with that of the recollections of a contemporary of these bush workers of the 1840s in Victoria (then Port Phillip). Edward Curr was a young squatter in Victoria during the 1840s and 1850s. He gives a very different account from that of Ward of the books and reading habits available to him while he was a young bachelor squatter.

In the matter of books I believe we were better off than most of our neighbours, though those in our possession had been got together in a haphazard sort of way, at various times and without any idea of making a collection for the bush.... These volumes, our great resource for years against ennui, for want of something new, were read, re-read, and discussed, I cannot say how often. In fact, several of them became studies in our small circle. (Recollections 359)

To give an idea of what these bush workers were reading Curr then gives a sample of the great diversity in subject matter of the reading material that belonged to this haphazard collection. Along with several volumes on the history of Napoleon Bonaparte there were

the plays of Racine, Corneille, and Molière; the poetical works of Milton, Shakespeare, Byron, Tommy Moore, Scott, and Burns.... There were also several of the Waverley novels ... Horace's "Odes", Pope's "Iliad", Junius's "Letters" ... Sterne's "Sentimental Journey", "Blackstone's Commentaries", Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations"; two or three elementary works on natural science; ... and a pile of old magazines, chiefly Blackwood's Altogether our collection amounted to about one hundred and fifty volumes, of which those mentioned are fair samples. None of them, perhaps, were left entirely unread; diversity of taste, however, leading to one of us interesting himself in one subject, and another in another. (Recollections 360-361)

One is immediately struck by how much this typifies the idea of diffuse education with its emphasis on one's social formations in acquiring or extending one's education.

Like Furphy, Curr in later life turned to writing. His first major work was entitled Pure Saddle Horses and How to Breed Them, published in 1863. Curr was a recognised equine authority and Tom Collins acknowledges this in Such is Life: "Edward M. Curr knew as much of the Australian horse and his rider as any writer ever did" (SL 279). Curr is perhaps better known today for his two works published in the 1880s just before his death in 1889. Recollections of Squatting in Victoria, then called the Port Phillip District (from 1841 to 1851) published in 1883, and his multivolume work on Aboriginal Australians entitled The Australian race : its origin, languages, customs, place of landing in Australia, and the routes by which it spread itself over that continent, published in 1886 and 1887.

Curr's remarks on his "small circle" in relation to his reading is indicative of the diffuse education that was evident in 1867 when Furphy, as a young married man of twenty-four, won a prize – £3 – for his poem on Abraham Lincoln (Pescott 5). As Barnes has reported, this prize was one among a number awarded annually by the

Kyneton Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association. Formed in 1866 and with membership of 139 the president was the Reverend G. O. Vance and Furphy's old schoolmaster and life-long friend John Storie was secretary. And it was John Storie who read out Furphy's prize winning poem when he was too nervous to appear on stage himself. (Barnes, Order 95). According to Lee Archer, although Joseph was called to the stage to read out his poem he was "suddenly struck dumb" and fled the stage. And this "shrinking from publicity followed him through life" (6). Although Furphy, who was living in nearby Comoora, was not a member of this association his desire to compete for the annual poetry prize meant he used his enthusiasm and his prodigious memory to complete the poem almost overnight:

Anyone who has read this poem will easily recognise what an intellectual feat it was, considering the exactness of data concerning the Battle of Gettysburg, death of Lincoln and Booth, over twenty-two foolscap pages of incidents surrounding these events faithfully recorded (Archer 6).

Gained in part from his diffuse education, this durable and transposable part of Furphy's habitus, his ability to produce an extensive work, when he set his mind to it, stood him in good stead when he set out to write Such is Life.

Although his literary career did not continue at this time, one may also see in this episode Furphy's desire to maintain a distance between himself and his readers. When he began writing for the Bulletin in the 1890s he decided right from the start to use a pseudonym, firstly Warrigal Jack and then shortly after he made the name of Tom Collins his own. When A. G. Stephens suggested Furphy stop using the pen name of Tom Collins, Furphy was particularly concerned that this should not happen. As he explained:

Re dropping of pen-name. As the Royal Sage says, "There is one thing I hate; yea two that I abhor; and these three are celebrity, fame, renown, and reputation; also there are five things that my soul lusteth after; and these be obscurity and privacy." As T. C. [Tom Collins] I can make myself objectionable with a better grace. (ML MSS4937/2)

Stephens ignored this request from Furphy and went ahead and published the short story “O’Flaherty’s Troubles” in the Bulletin in 1902 under the name of Joseph Furphy. Having seemingly resigned himself to having the Bulletin not use his pen name, he again wrote to Stephens and asked that: “If you insist on signing my name to contributions, wouldn’t it be expedient to make it Joe? The full name is sickeningly reminiscent of lilies, haloes, and women scorned” (Letters 93). In previous letters to Stephens, Furphy had signed himself under his full name. However, in trying to make his point, letters to Stephens after this one were simply signed “Joe Furphy”. Henceforth, ‘Joe’, in divesting himself of middle-class values associated with his name, plays the game of literary producer by repositioning himself to trade on values of working-class cultural capital. Joe had his victory when Stephens and the Bulletin relented and “O’Flaherty’s Troubles” remains the only work published in Furphy’s lifetime under his own name.

While the example cited from Curr above is not meant totally to reject Ward’s thesis (illiteracy remained high until after the advent of free education later in the century), Curr’s recollection does highlight the problem in determining just what Miles Franklin meant by “specialist” and “widely cultured” readers. As Ward has argued, “bush-workers had a passion for reading and versifying. Next to a glass of rum, the loan of a book was the greatest favour one could bestow on a bushman” (Australian 103). This tradition of reading among bush workers was one that was evident throughout the nineteenth century. A small glimpse of what this tradition entailed can be read in Felix Furphy’s letter to his grandfather in 1883. Felix, ten years old at the time and working with his father Joseph, wrote in his own particular style that “I have no books hear [here] but the third book and the story of the too [two] dogs and father reads nothing but

shakespeare everybody carries books but they are yallow [yellow] novels” (Barnes, Order 119).

For Furphy’s characters the importance of books along with the opportunity to discuss their relevance to their lives plays a major role in the novels. Rigby’s Romance itself may be classified as a seemingly never ending debate or symposium among a circle of like-minded individuals. Furphy places particular emphasis on the educational aspect of his characters. One scene in Rigby’s Romance effectively drives this point home. While Tom Collins and the preacher Lushington are listening to the erudite discussion between Dixon, Thomson, and Rigby, Collins turns to Lushington and asks:

“What’s your opinion of that?”

“It takes my breath away,” murmured Lushington. “I’ve been strangely misinformed respecting the erudition of bullock drivers. Latin and Milton. Are they all like this?”

“Certainly not [replies Collins]. Other branches of knowledge are no less ably represented. They excel chiefly as linguists”. (RR 121)

“my few intimates”

To appreciate the extent of Furphy’s intellectual development that relied on his ability as a reader and autodidact one must consider the importance to him of his social relationships. Two such individuals, who worked at the same Shepparton foundry as Furphy, the foreman Alex Rodgers and the blacksmith James Gourlay, were instrumental in Furphy’s political education. Rodgers and Gourlay, while not literary minded, were nevertheless ardent socialists who contributed to Furphy’s “intellectual development” and paved the way for his “conversion to socialism”. And though, while living in Shepparton, Furphy took no part in political activities nor joined any political group there was no doubting his socialist sympathies (Barnes, Order 144).

The esteem held by Rodgers and Gourlay for Furphy resulted in him referring to them as “my disciples” (Letters 14). His disciples were rewarded in some respects with

the serialised publication, in 1905 by the Broken Hill Barrier, of Rigby's Romance, in which Tom Collins engaged with the dynamic of socialism, thereby satisfying Furphy's political philosophy "that Rigby says the last word on the Ethics of State Socialism" (Letters 176). In Miles Franklin's recollection, Rodgers and Gourlay were "above the ordinary in intelligence". As radicals influenced by Bulletin ideology they urged Furphy to write for the Bulletin (Joseph 36). As Lois Hoffmann has argued, although the "Bulletin did not teach Furphy how to become a novelist: ... it helped him to write ... [and] it nourished his confidence in the authority of his own voice, and it enabled him to see himself as a writer" (410).

Foremost in Furphy's network of like-minded individuals was William Cathels. Younger than Furphy by eleven years, Cathels was a blacksmith by trade and a foreman at the Tine Foundry Melbourne (Franklin, Joseph 37). Cathels, like Furphy, was an autodidact who lent a sympathetic ear to Furphy's ideas, ostensibly through exchange of letters written after personally meeting Furphy in late 1892. Furphy's delight in meeting a like-minded worker is evident in his first letter to Cathels (4 Jan 1893): "I am still haunted by the thought that I didn't get enough of the society of the only man of my acquaintance who knows whether Xenocrates was a man or a woman" (Letters 12). The letter ends with Furphy's plea to Cathels to "take a run to Shepparton for a week" (Letters 12-13). While it is not clear from Furphy's correspondence just how many times Cathels travelled to Shepparton he did so on at least one occasion in 1893. Eleven years later, in October 1904, just two months before Furphy moved to Western Australia, he was still reminding Cathels that he "would be delighted to welcome ...[him] at any time" (Letters 178).

To understand Furphy's enthusiasm toward Cathels one needs to consider their friendship within the wider context of 1890s Australian culture. And here part of

Martyn Lyons' argument surrounding reading communities of self-educated workers is relevant to understanding this relationship. According to Lyons, self-educated workers "formed a distinct interpretive community of readers" ("Reading" 378). Against the deprivations of material wealth and formal education these workers improvised a literary culture, which in Bourdieu's terms explains how "cultural appropriation" is a balance between a person's economic and educational capital. These deprived workers accumulated cultural capital through their own efforts. For workers intent on self-improvement time and money for books had to be set aside for the "acquisition of knowledge" ("Reading" 379).

The procurement of books was important to Cathels. And it was Furphy's need for reading material while in Melbourne that led to their first meeting. According to Miles Franklin, Furphy was staying at the same hotel at which Cathels resided. Furphy, the determined self-improver, wanted reading material on a Sunday and he was told by staff of the hotel that a certain William Cathels had a "room full of books". When his collection of books was sold, in 1934, it contained some 2000 volumes. Franklin does not indicate the range or genres within this collection but simply cites the valuer's opinion that it was a "very fine library" (Joseph 38). Cathels was a lifelong bachelor and would therefore have been more able to outlay money for books. For Furphy, however, his commitment to provide for his family meant he did not have a substantial collection of books and instead relied on the local Mechanics Institute. For example, when revising the typescript of Such is Life in 1901 Furphy wrote to Stephens to report his progress and remarked, "Also I find myself blocked by my own infernal ignorance, so that I have worn a pad from my sanctum to the Ency. Brit., [Encyclopaedia Britannica] at the Mechanics [Institute]" (Letters 68).

The extent of Furphy's commitment to learning is revealed in his correspondence. Writing to Cathels in 1895 Furphy explained:

My dear fellow-pilgrim ... I am about the busiest man in Shep. [Shepparton], for when the Adamic penalty of each day has been duly paid, my labour of love—ignorance-shifting—just begins. (Letters 23)

Other letters to Cathels reveal just what Furphy was reading in his “ignorance shifting”. In his first letter to Cathels (Jan. 4 1893) he begins with the salutation, “Dear Pylades-Pythias-Pollux-Cassius – anything but Mr. Cathels”. Furphy's unusual greeting has been occasioned, he explains, by his “study of the three Athenian masters” Eschylus, Sophocles and Euripides.

By the way, I am a little disappointed in Eschylus. He seems to me to strain after effect, like Milton.... Sophocles is beyond my expectations, and is decidedly my favourite. His character painting is most masterly. He excels even Bacon in the objective reasoning which is the life of tragedy. (Letters 12)

Furphy's mention of Milton can be expounded to reveal the differing attitudes of Furphy and Collins towards the seventeenth-century poet. While Furphy may have been critical of Milton for the strained effect in his poetry, Tom Collins in Rigby's Romance elevates Milton to a pre-eminent position among poets. Collins' friend Thomson explains how he came to fall in love as a result of Collins' literary recommendations.

“Do you [Collins] remember telling me then that there were ten master-pieces of poetry that nobody on earth, except yourself, had ever read clean through, or ever would? I took a list of them at the time, if you remember, but, in any case, I'm not likely to forget the names. Let's see—Paradise Lost and Regained, counting the two as one; Goethe's Faust, especially the second part; Dante's Divine Comedy; Spenser's Faerie Queene; Thompson's Seasons. Young's Night Thoughts; Cowper's Task; Tennyson's In Memoriam; Edwin Arnold's Light of Asia; and, lastly, any poem of Walt Whitman's.” (RR 53)

What is particularly interesting here is that the author of Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained is the only one who is not named. The texts were so well known that naming the author was not deemed necessary.

Furphy's emphasis on classical literature was an important part of his intellectual development. In an attempt to show the effects of a classical education Furphy has Tom Collins invest one of his bullocky friends Dixon with an over-reliance on using Latin. Furphy later realised this was not desirable as he explained to Stephens about possible alterations to the typescript of Such is Life: "Dixon's latin is somewhat overdone, and might be thinned out with advantage" (Letters 53). Furphy perhaps realised that his intended Australian audience of bush workers would quickly tire of a joke that was overstated ad nauseum.⁶ And instead Furphy has Tom Collins shift much of the humour of a classical education onto the displaced English gentleman Willoughby, with his ever-ready Latin phrase for every situation.

It was Willoughby's voice among the salt-bush; and, the next moment, half a dozen beasts leaped the wires and darted, capering and shying, past the wagons. "Quod petis hic est!" panted their pursuer triumphantly. "The mouse may help the lion, remember, according to the old"—
Then such a cataract of obscenity and invective from Price and Mosey while Cooper remarked gravely:
"Them ain't our bullocks, Willerby; them's station cattle...." (SL 42)

A more subtle humour, however, is used when Collins emphasises Dixon's education.

The true secret of England's greatness lies in her dependencies, Mr. Dixon ... and straightway the serene, appreciative expression of the bullock driver's face, rightly interpreted, showed that his mind was engaged in a Græco-Roman conflict with the polysyllable, the latter being uppermost. (SL 4)

Nevertheless, Dixon still has his moments. In a particularly humorous episode in Rigby's Romance, Dixon gets his come-uppance for his untimely interjection of Thompson's love story.

"This is my love story, and I'm telling it according to Tom's specifications. Better decide whether I'm to study your taste or his. Or if you like, I'll drop it altogether."
"Ne Jupiter quidem (adj.) omnibus," observed Dixon, sententiously.

⁶ Furphy's friend and confidante William Cathels, in his 20 page commentary on the original manuscript of Such is Life, stated that Dixon's Latin was "forced" and recommended to Furphy that some of Dixon's speech should be deleted (NLA MS1471, 19-20).

“Are you to the fore?” growled Thompson. “You ought to be yarded, without water or tucker, till you learn to speak English again.”

“Didn’t mean no (adj.) offence,” replied Dixon, scoring heavily with the ostentatious mildness of his tone. “I on’y shoved in a word, as a amicus (adj.) curiae, in a manner o’ speakin’.” (RR 54-55)

When Furphy, in the letter cited above, refers to Sophocles as excelling “Bacon in the objective reasoning which is the life of tragedy”, his extensive reading reveals a contradictory stance. The Bacon he refers to here reflects his seeming antagonism towards William Shakespeare. Furphy has been persuaded that Sir Francis Bacon wrote the plays attributed to Shakespeare. In a letter to William Cathels (6 June 1893) Furphy writes:

I trust that mature consideration has given a result in favour of Donnelly’s contention. Don’t say it doesn’t matter adam [sic] who wrote the plays. It does matter. It mattered a lot to Titania when she saw B-tt-m [Bottom] with unglamoured eye, even as I see Shacksper [Shakespeare] now. Why I used to have a photo copy of the vile old imposter [sic] as a frontispiece to my album, whilst holding a foggy idea that [Sir Francis] Bacon had something to do with the inventions of gunpowder and spectacles, as well as being the greatest, wisest &c. (Letters 17)

As Barnes has stated, Furphy had been persuaded by Ignatius Donnelly’s argument presented in The Great Cryptogram (1888) that Bacon was the real author of the plays attributed to Shakespeare (Letters 19).

However, one can ask the question why Tom Collins does not exhibit the same sort of antagonism towards Shakespeare. If Furphy is to be believed when he states that he adopted the name of Tom Collins so that he could make himself objectionable, why then does Collins not take the opportunity to do so in this instance? In Such is Life Francis Bacon is not directly mentioned. And only once is the author of the plays brought into question. This occurs when Collins engages in discussion with Warrigal Alf on the subject of jealousy.

By this time, I had made up my mind to humour him. “Well,” I replied; “it happens that I have given the subject some thought, as I intend, if I can find

time, to write a few words on the varied manifestations of jealousy in the so-called Shakespear Plays. (SL 150)

This is the extent of Collins' criticism. Moreover, Collins throughout Such is Life affects a certain respect for the name of Shakespeare.

But on the present occasion I had been quartered in the barracks for four whole days, as idle as a freshly-painted ship upon an ocean made iridescent by the unavoidable dripping and sprinkling of the pigment used. (A clumsy metaphor, but happily not my own). This lethargy was inexcusable. I had three note-books filled with valuable memoranda for a Series of Shakespearian Studies; and O, how I longed for a few days' untroubled leisure, just to break ground on the work. Those notes had been written in noisy huts, or by flickering firelight, or on horseback—written in eager activity of mind, and in hope of such an opportunity for amplification as I was now letting slip. (SL 206)

This would have been an ideal opportunity to amplify possible criticism on who wrote the plays but Collins (and Furphy) let this opportunity slip by: the Shakespearian studies were not written by either Collins or Furphy.

Furphy's love of Shakespeare's plays and his desire to study them can be gauged from his remarks to his sister in 1888.

I am in great trouble. Of course every life is chequered with woe, but some people (meaning myself) have more than their share.—My trouble is, whether the Ghost is an interpolation in the play of Hamlet? The idea is a new one: if I succeed in working it out to the satisfaction of the literary world, you will be known to posterity as Furphy's Sister. (Letters 10).

While there is a certain playfulness in Furphy's "trouble", what this letter indicates is that in 1888, before he had become a contributor to the Bulletin, he was seeking to expound his knowledge to be accepted within the literary field of the time. Moreover, Barnes, in his review of Julian Croft's Life and Opinions of Tom Collins, cites Bourdieu's Distinction ("an autodidact is ignorant of the right to be ignorant that is conferred by certificates of knowledge") to argue how Furphy's writing "constantly expresses his desire to be "accepted as cultured" ("The Life and Opinions" 103). While

Furphy did not complete a literary study of Hamlet, his novels do exhibit his knowledge of the plays as his quotations and allusions help Collins paint a fair picture of life.⁷

For Furphy his “labour of love” often came at the expense of getting on with his writing. To Cathels Furphy remarked in May 1899:

My dear fellow-cynic, I have been resolving and re-resolving to write, but always failed to break my routine of dissipation (my idea of dissipation is the reading of such writers as Swedenborg, Darwin, Matthew Arnold, &c.)
(Letters 47)

However, while one can readily believe that Furphy was genuine in emphasising that there never seemed to be enough time for writing and “ignorance shifting” one needs to take into account his gregarious personality. According to Miles Franklin, Furphy was a “spendthrift” of time.

He would engage in friendly conversation with all regardless of their years or their intellectual limitations. He was a natural philosopher—the bush yarner for which Australia is noted—and pursued talk on the major scale of conversation.
(Joseph 37)

Franklin reveals an important point here because it calls into question Martyn Lyons’ argument that autodidacts lived a somewhat solitary life, where “friendships were put at risk by the fervent determination to read and to know” (“History” 10). Rather than push people away Furphy was just as likely to spend his time in conversation with those around him.

There was never any “Out” or “Not at Home” sign on the sanctum. Rather than a private retreat it was a popular resort. Anyone and everyone could invade Furphy’s leisure. (Franklin, Joseph 37)

Nevertheless, Furphy did not gladly suffer foolish people whom he considered wasted his precious time.

⁷ For a study of Furphy’s use of Shakespeare see R.S. White, Furphy’s Shakespeare. (Appendices in this volume include lists of the quotations and the allusions in Furphy’s three novels).

It is late, and I have only just returned to my sanctum. Invited out to tea by a grass widow of my acquaintance ... I have, like Titus, lost a day. A conventional ass of a woman, too, not worth a sixpence as a study, who merely wanted to know if there was anything fresh in Melbourne. (NLA MS2022/5)

Time was needed for autodidacts because, as Lyons maintains, “their reading was concentrated and purposeful ... relying heavily on repetition, recitation and oralisation as aids to memory (“Reading” 379).

Although Furphy’s education involved gaining extensive book-learnt knowledge, his education cannot be considered separate from his love of yarning: both complemented each other. As Robert Zeller argues, yarning is essential to understanding the form and structure of Such is Life: “part of the experience of reading Such is Life is coming to understand that it creates an ideal Australian reader for the text. Not only is it a question of understanding the language and the local references, it is also partly a matter of being familiar with the yarn form Furphy employs in the book” (44). In writing his novel Furphy displayed his book learning through the power of conversation whereby the form of the novel itself, with its seemingly unconnected incidents and digressions, can be described as a long involved conversation with a new circle of friends: the Australian reading public.

Furphy’s use of the phrase “ignorance shifting” not only describes his lifelong commitment to self-education but could quite easily be put forward as an appropriate motto for the community of self-taught workers within Australian culture of the 1890s. As Lyons states, belonging to this community emphasises these workers’ “social context against a background of a shared social and cultural experience” (Lyons, “Reading” 370). To put this in terms of Furphy’s habitus one needs to understand that before he visited “the boys” of the Bulletin school of writers during his visit to Sydney in 1901 Furphy surrounded himself with those people whose lives matched his own cultural experiences. His circle of friends (“my few intimates” as he liked to call them)

comprised those people who sympathised with him through their shared experiences of working-class culture rather than a network like those associated with the literary circles of Sydney, such as the Dawn and Dusk Club or the regular gatherings held by A. G. Stephens, the Bulletin's literary editor. Furphy, however, can be said to have held an esteemed place among his intimates that marked him off as different.

Within his small circle of friends at Shepparton Furphy was often called 'Shakespeare', a reference to his love and detailed knowledge of the plays. It was a friendly nickname, but also one that set him apart. As in the Riverina, so in a Victorian country town, Furphy was recognized by his fellow-workers as 'of us, but not one of us'. (Letters 8)

William Cathels, therefore, proved important to Furphy, not only as a much admired acquaintance but also as a resource and researcher. Barely three months after meeting Cathels for the first time Furphy had begun using his new resource: "Who was the first to use the word 'Altruism', and about how long ago", he enquired. Furthermore, he asked of Cathels, "[w]ho originated the expression ... 'Following the line of least resistance?'" (Letters 14). The answer to this question was important to Furphy for the phrase "line of least resistance" appears in the introduction to Such is Life as a guiding principle for Tom Collins' reminiscences. And therefore the form of Such is Life, which Stephens, the Bulletin's literary editor, described as like no other he had seen, relied upon Furphy being sure of the factual evidence surrounding the terminology he used as he wrote and rewrote Such is Life. Checking facts and obscure references was one of the positions that Cathels, with his extensive knowledge, continued to occupy in his friendship with Furphy.

Paying back his acknowledged debt Furphy availed himself of the opportunity to create one of his characters based on Cathels. And he intimated as much to Cathels in July 1898.

I deliberately intended Rigby as a man of offensively large information, one who knows more than any person is justified in knowing; and the most amusing

feature of the case is, that Miss Baker, in a long review of the opus, uses, as nearly as I can recollect, these words:—‘It is easy to see where you got the character of Rigby. I wonder whether Mr. Cathels recognizes his own portrait?’
(Letters 45)

Unfortunately there does not appear to be any record of Cathels’ reaction to this. That he remained a close friend to Furphy is perhaps all the comment that is needed.

One consequence of the close attachment Furphy formed with William Cathels and Kate Baker within his circle of friends was delay in preparing the 1898 typescript of Such is Life. After taking back the handwritten manuscript from Stephens in mid 1897, Furphy produced a typewritten copy by early 1898. However, instead of sending it to Stephens for editing, Furphy took it with him on his yearly visit to Melbourne so that his friend Cathels could read the completed work. Cathels then produced twenty pages of editing notes as well as a review of the novel.

Furphy was certainly pleased to receive such a detailed editing of his first novel. To Cathels he declared: “Your grammatical corrections are ... absolutely invaluable. I shall, of course, avail myself of them all ...” (Letters 41). In July 1898, in May 1899, and again in 1900, Furphy wrote to Cathels to express his gratitude for the time and effort he took in editing the typescript of Such is Life (Letters 45, 48, 54-55). Furphy’s immense gratitude for Cathels’ friendship has been put quite succinctly by John Barnes: “Stephens was a recognized literary authority; [however] in Furphy’s personal universe Cathels was also an authority and one whose opinion of his writing mattered greatly” (Order 267).

While Kate Baker did not have the same intellectual stature that Furphy so admired in Cathels, Furphy nevertheless relied on her support throughout his writing career. His initial enthusiasm for her was couched in much the same terms as he had used to Cathels. In a letter to Cathels in June 1893 Furphy recalled his first meeting with Kate.

When I first met her ... she struck me as being the only girl in the Eastern hemisphere who knew who Belisarius was. And bye and bye when I heard her use the word 'laconic' in ordinary conversation, you could have knocked me down with a feather. (Letters 18)

In Kate Baker's recollection of this first meeting with Furphy, one can recognise those aspects of his personality that go a long way to understanding the form of Such is Life as revealed through his narrator Tom Collins.

He had much the same style in speaking as in writing, discursive, breaking off into side issues, but ever returning to the main topic.... Furphy was no mere scholiast He dug, he delved, he probed, he tested, he experimented. To whatever science or art Joseph Furphy applied himself, in that he would excel. (Franklin, Joseph 9)

According to Miles Franklin, "Furphy had hardly any support or inspiration from women: but he was extravagantly grateful to Kate Baker" (Joseph 38). Furthermore, both Cathels and Baker were essential to Furphy. "Cathels ... [with] his encyclopaedic knowledge and pedantry ... became Grand Vizier of research to Furphy's literary career with Kate Baker as assistant" (Joseph 45). For her part Kate Baker has stated that she was "flattered at his appeal" for her help (Joseph 45-46). Kate Baker's reward for her friendship with Furphy was proclaimed by him in his letter to her in June 1898. "I needn't say that Ime [sic] glad you like the opus ... particularly if you bear in mind that if it hadn't been for you, there would have been no opus at all" (Letters 39).

This chapter has argued for the need to consider Furphy's habitus in the context of his education in all its forms from his earliest years, when he learned to read and write at his mother's knee, through to his intellectual development empowered by his autodidact thirst for knowledge – his "ignorance shifting" as he called it – in his later years. From this one can appreciate how Furphy, equally at home in bush or library, came to infuse his writing with, what A. G. Stephens called, his ponderous style "labouring for the dignity of literature". From his "ignorance shifting" there emerges in

his letters and his literature an anxiety over the best uses of his accumulated knowledge. And although learning for learning's sake may provide a sweet solace, for Furphy education needs a greater purpose. His purpose in writing Such is Life can be seen as his attempt to provide a lasting reminder of a well-read and cultured writer deserving of his place within the Australian literary field. While Furphy's prodigious knowledge placed him above the ordinary in intelligence, he needed and cultivated a circle of friends who encouraged him to write. Because Furphy lived in Shepparton, his circle of friends can be seen as a substitute for a literary circle like A. G. Stephens' regulars or the Dawn and Dusk Club in Sydney. Furphy, however, was no literary recluse and his love of yarning would often interrupt his time set aside for writing. From this one can appreciate the style of Such is Life that can be seen as a continuing conversation with a new circle of friends, the readers of Australia.

Chapter 3: Christian Socialism and the “Colonel’s philosophy”

In a letter to Cecil Winter in January 1904, Furphy enquired of his friend what he thought of the “Colonel’s philosophy” (Letters 17). The Colonel, as readers of Rigby’s Romance know, is one of the many sobriquets Tom Collins gives to his learned antagonist Jefferson Rigby. And his philosophy – his message – is his particular understanding of Christian Socialism. However, unlike others inspired by Christian-Socialist movements during the nineteenth century, Furphy is antagonistic towards the religious orthodoxy of established Church institutions: “too much Churchianity and too little Christianity” is how he expresses his feelings on the matter (Barnes, Order 176).⁸ In his writing Furphy’s Christian-Socialist vision for Australia advocates a return to the Bible and, in particular, to the teachings of the proto-socialist Jesus Christ as set forth in New Testament scriptures. The role of government, to Furphy, assumes a fundamental role in ensuring the moral virtue of itself and its citizens. This is made explicit when Furphy remarks to Cathels at one point that Rigby’s Romance “says the last word on the Ethics of State Socialism” (Letters 176). However, while Rigby may have said the last word Furphy’s first words on the topic were written over a decade before the serialisation of Rigby’s Romance in 1905.

Just what kind of society was Australia during the 1890s when Furphy sat down to write his vision for a more perfect socialist society? According to Bruce Scates, the 1890s “were a time of excited imagining, where one utopian tract after another envisaged a world of plenty and equality in the open spaces of the bush” (A New Australia 204). Furthermore, he argues, utopian literature was “never idle fiction”

⁸ For the major figures of Victorian socialism during the nineteenth century see Edward Norman.

because it provided the political ideas for “social reform” (A New Australia 204).

Therefore, the 1890s can be seen as a time when Australian society talked, read, wrote and, in many instances, actively developed schemes to change society. It is the emphasis on reading and writing that has led Scates to declare:

The Legend of the Nineties was par excellence a literary legend. Whilst anarchist, socialist, and single-taxer differed in politics, personality and social origin, they were without exception omnivorous readers. (A New Australia 38)

Although Furphy was past forty when he began his literary life, his ever-present thirst for knowledge made him part of a class of readers and writers who sought a better Australia. The key to understanding the reading habits of autodidacts like Furphy is that texts by themselves had little “intrinsic meaning” and therefore the “meanings that matter are those constructs by their readers who ‘rework and re-imagine’ their texts to suit a personal and political agenda” (Scates A New Australia 44). Furphy was certainly no political activist and was over sixty before he showed his political allegiance in joining the Labor Party in Western Australia. Nevertheless, the extent to which Furphy reworked and re-imagined the texts he read eventually found voice with the serialisation of Rigby’s Romance in the Barrier Truth in 1905. Gilbert M Wallace has described meeting Furphy during the 1890s and their ensuing discussion, which centred on some well known literary texts. After discussing the Bulletin and its writers their talk turned to “Donnelly’s Caesar’s Column and Bellamy’s Looking Backward, and Morris’s News from Nowhere, and Bacon’s Lost Atlantis and More’s Utopia, Plato’s Republic and other books of that type” (62). As Furphy himself indicated, Edward Bellamy’s utopian novel Looking Backward with its story combining a socialist message and romance eventually provided the model for Rigby’s Romance (Letters 178-79).

Given Scates' assessment of Australian society during the 1890s, it is worth considering two contemporary views. The first of these are observations made by Albert Métin, a visitor to Australia. Métin visited Australia for six months in 1899 and published his findings in Le Socialisme sans Doctrines in 1901.⁹ As Russel Ward argues, Métin's observations are significant for understanding Australian society at the turn of the nineteenth century because they stress "aspects of life in the colonies which contemporary British visitors, and even gifted colonial observers ... simply did not notice or at any rate did not think worthy of remark, perhaps because they were so 'obvious' as to be taken for granted" (Fwd Socialism ix).

A particular comment relates Métin's observations of Australian workers.

Except for a tiny handful of doctrinaire socialists they were ... churchgoers almost to a man and patriotic supporters of Queen and Empire. Rationalist, pacifist or internationalist ideas were harboured by very few.... In his [Métin's] view they [Australian workers] were not in the least interested in building a socialist society, but in aping the bourgeoisie [sic] and in winning for themselves all the concessions and advantages possible within the capitalist system.

(Fwd Socialism ix)

Furphy was no doctrinaire socialist, and he had no little time for institutional religion. However, Furphy's vision was to persuade Australians to turn away from what he saw as the greed of individualism and materialism inherent in the capitalist system destroying Australian society.

A second view of Australian society was written in the pages of the Bulletin by A. G. Stephens in 1899, the same year Métin was making his observations. Although Métin may have observed Australia as a nation of "churchgoers", Stephens' argument suggests this did not mean Australians were necessarily religious. As he remarked,

In the religious sense, probably nineteen-twentieths of Australians are heathen. In this country the rudiments of religious faith have been uprooted or were never rooted.... Our fathers went regularly to church and chapel as a matter of conscience, and were none the worse for it; we go chiefly as a matter of custom,

⁹ This book was not published in an English translation until 1977.

and are none the better for it in any vital sense. The holy Sabbath, degenerated to the formal Sunday, has become the weekly holiday in city and bush. Beyond the perfunctory observances associated with it the day is meaningless....No one who knows Australia can doubt that these statements are generally true.

(“For Australians” 394)

Stephens in this article also makes reference to the followers of O’Connell’s creed, which is an indicator of Stephens’ and the Bulletin’s essential anti-Catholic bias. The article is a reminder that despite being described as a heathen society by Stephens, Australia was a country of continuing sectarian rivalries.

The 1890s literary field therefore was a time and a place when competing ideologies fought for the hearts and minds of Australians. This chapter focuses on Furphy’s Christian Socialism. Furphy’s belief in the evils of modern Christianity condoning the individualism and materialism in society is the basis of Furphy’s 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.

“Too much Churchianity”

Little extant evidence remains concerning Furphy’s reminiscences of his schooling. According to John Barnes, Furphy never felt inclined towards recalling or reflecting upon the experiences of growing up. His childhood at Kyneton and Daylesford “held no treasured memories, and he seems never to have liked either place” (Order 63-4). Nevertheless, Furphy’s letters do reveal his anxiety over his lack of formal education. Writing to William Cathels (6 June 1893), Furphy bemoans the fact that he never had the opportunity to acquire what could be called a classical education, which would have included Latin, Greek and History as core constituents of its curriculum.

It makes me wild to think that if my enslaved forefathers had stood up for their citizen rights instead of shouting, “To Gehenna with the Pope!” I would have been able to speak as familiarly of Polybius & Herodotus and Xenophon & Strabo & such like as girls of thirteen do of puppy dogs. (NLA MS2022/5)

This particular section of the letter is significant for two reasons. Firstly, Furphy’s concern over his juvenile education is indicative of his state of mind in 1893 when he was attempting to write Such is Life. These comments on his lack of formal education must be seen in the context of his other comments at this time that reflect his anxiety over the time he needed for his writing and “ignorance shifting”. Too much of his time was taken up with learning what, given a proper education, he believed he should have already known.

Furphy’s concerns on a classical education are at odds with views expressed by A. G. Stephens. In his article entitled “Australian Education”, Stephens is critical of any so-called advantages of a classical education. “What relation do dead languages bear to our living problems” is how he begins his argument (428). He is particularly keen to stress that as a new nation Australia needs specialists in all works and the time taken to learn Latin and Greek would be time wasted and a “perversion of talent” (428). The study of these languages, he argues, is best left to the fortunate few who advance to university education. For the rest, the ideas expressed in ancient writings are readily available in vernacular translations. Moreover,

The values of Greek and Latin are to a large extent traditional. There are noble passages in Shelley, who transfused Plato, as there are in Plato himself; there is a poetry as exalted in Shakespeare as in Aeschylus. One can absorb only a limited amount of literature, and for most of us there are sweet influences enough in our own English tongue. (429)

While Furphy himself was unhindered by not having English translations of Latin and Greek authors, as an autodidact he was driven, especially in later life, by a drive to “absorb” as much literature as time would allow.

Furphy's comments are indicative of the sectarianism in Australian society during the 1890s. The founding fathers of Australia's constitution, in a spirit of non-partisan unity, included freedom of religion for Australia: Clause 116 of the Australian Constitution declares that

The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office of public trust under the Commonwealth. (Federation 176)

However, sectarianism was an ever present divisive fact of life facing the new nation. A significant indicator of the divisiveness of sectarianism in Australia occurred on Federation Day in 1901. As Brian Mathews has reported:

Numbered among the dignitaries was the Anglican primate of Australia, William Saumarez Smith, who would bless the proceedings and the new nation at the appropriate moment. In miniature prefigurement of what would be Australia's profound sectarian division for more than half the coming century, the Catholic spiritual leader, Cardinal Moran, was not a part of the official protocol. Outraged by not being recognised as the senior ecclesiastical figure and by the absence of Catholic prayers from the ceremony, he boycotted the procession and conducted a rival function on the steps of St. Mary's [Church]. (Federation 118)

Sectarianism, however, did not begin with Federation.

Sectarianism was central to the ongoing struggle between government and religious institutions over the proper education of children in the Australian colonies in the latter half of the nineteenth century, especially so with the increasing influence of Roman Catholicism in the colonies. The main thrust of Australia's colonial governments' position was directed towards providing secular education for children. As Attorney-General Stephen of Victoria stated in Parliament (12 September 1872), religious education was best left to others beside schoolmasters.

It is not necessary for the teaching of religion that it be taught in schools. Religion can be better taught by other persons than by the schoolmasters; and every truly religious person feels it to be his or her duty to assist, or promote in some way, the teaching of religion. It will be taught where the community is

truly religious, and it will not be taught by any machinery of the state in a community which is not truly religious. (Clark Select Documents 2: 712)

Furthermore, argued Stephen, compulsory education was deemed necessary because free education alone would not induce parents to send their children to school, especially those children in isolated communities. And therefore, by legislating free and compulsory education, colonial governments hoped to persuade parents to see the benefits for themselves and their children and therefore for the whole community (Clark Select Documents 2: 713).

These initial debates over government-sponsored education ended with the passing of a succession of bills throughout the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Leading the way was Victoria in 1872, then South Australia and Queensland in 1875, followed by New South Wales in 1880, Tasmania in 1885, and finally Western Australia in 1895. The debate in New South Wales in 1880 is significant. When the government finally ended its sponsorship of denominational schools it aroused what Frank Crowley has called, “a welter of public controversy and sectarian conflict”. The system became known as free, compulsory and secular education, but, as Crowley further emphasises, “many years were to elapse before it became absolutely free to parents and almost compulsory for young children, and it never became entirely secular” (Doc. Hist. 3: 76).

Given Furphy’s early childhood experiences with religion, when he learned to read by reciting passages from the Bible, it is no surprise to find him comment on religion in his writing. Despite the push to secularism in government schools, education for children was still being debated after 1880. Of particular interest, given the Bulletin’s influence on Furphy’s intellectual development, in the magazine’s article (12 September 1890) entitled “Australia for the Australians”. This article promotes The Bulletin line on secular education – the “Complete Secularisation of State Education” –

that was in line with its republican stance that denounced “Religious Interference in Politics”. Furphy’s contribution to the argument over religious education is revealed in his Bulletin article (27 January 1894), entitled “The Bible”, where he writes:

Dear Bulletin,—Re the evergreen question of Bible literature in State schools, it is pretty certain that if this branch of learning is entirely excluded from the curriculum, the gap will not be filled up in after life.

Furphy in this article appears to advocate religious instruction in schools. If so, this would not be in line with government and the magazine’s promotion of secular education in government schools with religious education best left to religious institutions. However, Furphy’s agenda becomes clear when one grasps the meaning underpinning his conclusion to his article, from which one may infer calls for the abolition of established church institutions.

Be this as it may, there is no doubt that the healthy recoil from priestcraft is carrying us too far. The Bible-hater is no less irrational than the Bible-faddist. The O.T. [Old Testament] is the most interesting, instructive, and authentic section of ancient history within the range of literature, and an inexhaustible mine of fearless philosophy and sublime forecast. The N.T. [New Testament], rightly read, will be the textbook of ideal Socialism when its professional perverter is more extinct and less regretted than the Tasmanian blackfellow. In the interests of moral progress, the Bible must be read; and in the interests of honest interpretation, the parson must go. (“The Bible” 398)

Furphy advocates the Bible as an essential “textbook” needed for its fundamental lessons in “moral” behaviour for Australia as it moved, he hoped, toward a socialist society. Interpreting the Bible, and presumably its explication for young school children, is best left to right-minded “moral” educators. In this there is no role for parsons or priests and their misguided interpretations and religious dogma. Without the need for “priestcraft” as moral educators in society, a model of Australian society is advocated here devoid of Church institutions. And indeed in the literature of the time the priest or parson bears the brunt of secular Australia’s attacks on the clergy.

Furphy's anticlericalism is in keeping with other authors of the 1890s, especially those associated with the Bulletin school of writers. Steele Rudd, Barbara Baynton, and Henry Lawson all provide comical, at times farcical, biting satire on clericalism in Australian, especially so in their sketches of bush society. However, even within this Bulletin framework a number of divergent positions are adopted. This stems directly from each author's point of view from their own perspective within the field. As the following analyses reveal, their engagement with anti-clericalism allows them to distinguish themselves from one another.

In the chapter entitled 'The Parson and the Scone' from Steele Rudd's On Our Selection (1899) the parson is an unwelcome visitor and is the cause of mayhem in the Rudd family with his unexpected visit.

There was commotion. Dave finished his tea at a gulp, put on his hat and left by the back-door. Dad would have followed, but hesitated, and so was lost. Mother was restless—"on pins and needles." (188)

Mother's anxiety is caused by the lack of food she has to offer the reverend with his cup of tea. The last remaining scone is snatched from young Jim to offer the Reverend Daniel McPherson. The Rudds are poor country folk and such is the relationship that exists between the parson and his flock that Mum feels the need to explain their circumstances.

Mother passed the rescued scone along, and awkwardly apologised for the absence of plates. She explained that the Andersons were threshing their wheat, and had borrowed all our crockery and cutlery—for the use of the men. Such was the custom round our way. But the minister didn't mind. On the contrary, he commended everybody for fellowship and good-feeling, and felt sure that the district would be rewarded. (189)

The irony here is that the "good-feeling" did not extend to the reverend. And he only makes matters worse by asking for another scone.

Mother muttered something like "Yes, of course," and went out to the kitchen just as if there had been some there.

...

“Well?” Dad whispered at last; “what are you going to do?” Mother shook her head. She didn’t know.

“Tell him straight there ain’t any, an’ be done with it,” was Dad’s cheerful advice. Mother several times approached the door, but hesitated and returned again.

“What are you afraid of?” Dad would ask; “he won’t eat y’[you].” (191)

While the scene produces its comic effect for readers, the sketch also highlights the general unease and the relative gulf that exists between bush folk and the clergy and contributes to the literature of Bulletin-style anti-clericalism.

The gulf between bush-folk and clergy is presented more critically in Barbara Baynton’s short story “The Bush Church” where the parson is presented as an inept, unrecognised and an unwanted intruder in the lives of bush folk. The narrative begins with an episode that serves as a precursor for the events that follow later.

The hospitality of the bush never extends to the loan of a good horse to an inexperienced rider. The parson bumping along on old Rosey, who had smelt the water of the "Circler Dam", was powerless to keep the cunning experienced brute from diverting from the track. With the bit in her teeth, her pace kept him fully occupied to hold his seat. At the edge of the Dam, old Rosey, to avoid the treacherous mud, began, with humped back and hoofs close together, to walk along the plank that pier-wise extended to the deeper water. The parson's protests ended in his slipping over the arched neck of the wilful brute, on to the few inches of plank that she considerately left for him. The old mare drank leisurely, then backed off with the same precaution, and stood switching the flies with her stunted tail. The parson followed her and thankfully grabbed the reins. After several attempts to get up on the wrong side, he led the exacting animal to a log. He removed the veil he wore as a protection from the sticky eye-eating flies, so that Rosey might recognize him as her erstwhile rider.

(“Bush Church” 110)

The parson’s powerlessness to guide as well as to be recognised highlights just how out of place he is in the bush. He has no better luck when it comes to dealing with members of his human flock as he conducts his church service and christening.

The minister was very busy, meanwhile, blushing and getting his books in order, and with his congregation of ten adults and eighteen children he began, “Dearly beloved brethren—”. (“Bush Church” 123)

But this is as far as he gets at his first attempt. While “Alick’s father, who “was from the North of Ireland, and, for all his forty years in the bush, had not lost his reverence for

the cloth”, the same could not be said for the rest of the congregation, especially the children for whom the parson is an object of curiosity and novel distraction:

The children wandered about the room. Jinny and Sis invited their little sister to "Cum an' see ther pooty picters in the man's book," and they assisted the minister to turn over the leaves of his Bible. (“Bush Church” 123)

The parson’s only recourse is to recite bible prose at them: “We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep” (“Bush Church” 124). But for clergy who do not become part of the day-to-day, hand-to-mouth existence of their flock, disinterestedness and lack of respect are seemingly no more than they deserve. And the call from the minister to “Let us pray” results in his “host, hostess, and Alick’s father” kneeling “but the rest sat as usual” (“Bush Church” 126).

Moreover, the seemingly innocent duty of a family christening is, in a reminder of the Bulletin’s stance, an attack on clericalism and its involvement with political power and bureaucracy.

The sermon was over, and the worried minister began the christening. The naming of the hostess's baby was plain sailing. He then drew towards him a child of about two years, and asked, "What is this child's name?" "Adrarian," said Liz. An old shepherd reading to her a love-story had so pronounced the hero's name. It staggered the minister, until his hostess spelt "Adrian". "What is its age?" "About two year." This was too vague for him, and he pressed for dates. But for these dwellers in the bush the calendar had no significance. The mother thought it might be in November. "Cos it wus shearin', an' I'd ter keep Teddy at 'ome ter do ther work." Teddy was "about ten". From these uncertainties the clergyman had to supply the dates for his official returns to the Government. (“Bush Church” 130)

The identity and purpose of the black-coated stranger and the fear of government bureaucracy is what enables flash Ned to initially deceive, and ingratiate himself with his fellow bush folk. Ned Stennard was no “favourite among the women” in the area mainly because of his personal “philosophy” that it was the “proper thing to hit a

woman” (115). However, to ingratiate himself with these women Ned intimates that the stranger is a government official come to check the legitimacy of their land deeds.

Flogging and flashness were lost sight of by these anxious women, as they listened to all he had to say. They coaxed him to wait while they searched among the few spare clothes in the gin-cases with hide-hinged lids, for land receipts, marriage lines, letters from Government Departments, registered cattle brands, sheep ear-marks, and every other equipment that protects the poor cockey from a spiteful and revengeful Government, whose sole aim was "ter ketch 'em winkin'" and then forfeit the selection. All of these documents Ned inspected upside down or otherwise, and pronounced with unlegal directness that "a squint et them 'ud fix 'im if thet's wot 'e's smellin' after". He told them to bring them next day. Those of the men who had swapped horses with passing drovers, without the exchange of receipts, were busy all afternoon trumping up witnesses. ("Bush Church" 116-17)

Ned's deception only works because the parson is such an infrequent visitor that he is not personally known or even recognised for who, or what, he truly represents. He is not an integral part of bush society. And one may extend this to argue that Baynton's short story provides a basis for investigating the purpose and effect of religion in people's lives, something Baynton herself expands upon in her only novel Human Toll.

In Lawson's "The Union Buries its Dead" (1893) readers are introduced to the third of the religious duties (burying the dead, the other two being marriage and christening) that society seemingly still regarded as important duties for priest or parson. Lawson's pen, however, turns this simple function into biting satire. A young drover is being buried at the local cemetery after accidentally drowning in a river.

Lawson's narrator continues:

We plodded on across the railway line and along the hot, dusty road which ran to the cemetery, and some of us talking about the accident, and lying about the narrow escapes we had ourselves. Presently someone said:

"There's the Devil."

I looked up and saw a priest standing in the shade of a tree by the cemetery gate.
(82-83)

The burial ceremony begins and it is at this point that the narrator paints a farcical picture of the proceedings.

Just here a man's ignorance and vanity made a farce of the funeral. A big, bull-necked publican, with heavy, blotchy features and a supremely ignorant expression, picked up the priest's straw hat [previously discarded] and held it about two inches over the head of his reverence during the whole of the service. The father, be it remembered, was standing in the shade. A few shoved their hats on and off uneasily, struggling between their disgust for the living and their respect for the dead. . . . To do the priest justice, perhaps he didn't notice the incident. A stage priest or parson in the same position might have said: "Put the hat down, my friend; is not the memory of our departed brother worth more than my complexion?" A wattlebark layman might have expressed himself in stronger language, none the less to the point. Besides the publican was a great and important pillar of the Church. He couldn't, as an ignorant and conceited ass, lose such a good opportunity of asserting his faithfulness and importance to his Church. (83)

The publican is representative of those materialists in society who place the acquisition of power and prestige above the needs of others, even in a simple ceremony such as burying the dead. Furthermore, Lawson's narrator here also confronts the question of social class in society when he criticises the power that the church holds over people.

Although this sketch shows the divisions within society, early in his life Lawson, like Furphy, promoted through his writing a levelling democracy for Australia. Lawson, early in his writing career, advocated trade unionism as providing the answer to the evils of individualism, materialism, and church religion. He wrote of ideal trade unionism in an article for the Albany Observer while he was in Western Australia in 1890. The article entitled "The New Religion" has within its few short paragraphs a vision for Australia and beyond. While his article is full of the youthful visionary ideas of a young writer not yet disillusioned by life's future struggles, for him and for trade unionism, it does nevertheless contain the central message of levelling democracy: "Trades unionism really aims at the abolition of all unions and class distinctions". That is,

Trades unionism is a new and grand religion; it recognises no creed, sect, language or nationality; it is a universal religion – it spreads from the centres of European civilization to the youngest settlements on the most remote portions of the earth; it is open to all and will include all – the Atheist, the Christian, the Agnostic, the Unitarian, the Socialist, the Conservative, the Royalist, the

Republican, the black, and the white, and a time will come when all the “ists”, “isms”, etc., will be merged and lost in one great “ism” – the unionism of labour. (16-17)

Furphy at times does express sectarian views. In a letter to his mother in 1903 he declares: “In spite of the Strike, and The Depression, and the Catholics, we are all well, and as contented as it becomes us to be” (NLA MS2022/5). However, Furphy here may be just expressing sectarian feelings out of respect for his mother’s protestant Wesleyan beliefs. On another occasion Furphy began one of his letters to his mother by hoping that she did not “object” to him writing to her on a Sunday (NLA MS2022/5). Furphy’s real antagonist was institutional church religion. In a letter, written this time to Miles Franklin in August 1904, Furphy makes clear his dissatisfaction with church religion.

Would you believe it—I tried Religion (Church of Christ); but had to give it best; not because it was too exacting, but the other way about. I didn’t want a church that prohibited actual vice—for I’m not vicious—but I wanted one that would expel me with contumely for having two coats while another bloak [sic] had one. At present I belong to a church which has only one member: there were two of us, but the other blōk [sic] got fired out on his ear for being an Imperialist during the S. African [Boer War, 1899-1902]. (ML MSS364/67)

One is able to recognise in this passage those aspects of basic Christian and socialist teaching that posit individualism and materialism as evils in an egalitarian and co-operative society. Made plain in this also is one of Furphy’s political stances, anti-imperialism and anti-British sentiment that was in evidence throughout the 1890s as Australia decided on independence from Britain. Imperialism is seen by Furphy as another of those evils driven by greed and materialism on a large scale that acts against the interest of peoples’ rights to determine their own destiny.

In a letter to William Cathels (January 1894) Furphy interprets his “textbook” Bible for its “sublime forecast” to highlight his future for Australia.

The time is to come when “They shall plant trees and eat the fruit thereof; they shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall not plant and another eat; they shall not build and another inhabit; for as the days of a tree so shall my people be”. (Letters 20)

In this letter, one may recognise Furphy's desire for a co-operative socialist Australia that has eliminated the evils of materialism and individualism. This new Australia is needed because, as he further explains to Cathels:

The fact is that our forefathers were a bad class of people. Their ethics were Darwinism, and their religion Antinomian, the survival of the thriftiest, and somebody else, anybody else, to be sacrificed. They were fine enterprising men, but they have Somersotted the country, and I wish we were out of it. Too much premium on the wisdom of the Serpent and too much penalty on the harmlessness of the dove. (Letters 20)

Furphy's desire to be "out of it" is a reminder that this was the time when William Lane and his people had set sail for Paraguay to found their co-operative society. As he remarked to Cathels in mid 1893:

What about Paraguay now? I should like to compare notes with you about it. Considering the moral principle which guides the self-segregation of the emigrants I think it is the grandest experiment up to date. I only wish we were both in it. (NLA MS2022/5)

Although William Lane's New Australia experiment in Paraguay eventually failed it was nevertheless part of the pragmatic efforts of agitators, who lacked real political power, to reform society. As Bruce Scates has argued:

In a sense New Australia was the culmination of nineteenth-century radicalism. It had all the ingredients of the alternative culture... the belief in socialism by example and the experience of individual conversion, the faith in the efficacy of a radical community and a blinding confidence in human destiny, the determination to make the world and oneself anew. (A New Australia 205)

The climate that made such utopias possible informed Furphy's own, less radicalised utopianism: the possibility of making a new and better socialist society in Australia.

Victoria at this time was in the grip of economic depression and experiencing collapse of the banks. People were suffering and Furphy makes clear his anger over the individualism and materialism as evils plaguing Australian society. In a letter to William Cathels in mid 1893, at a time when the Bank Collapse and the Depression were occurring Furphy declares:

Personally, I hope and trust that one whom I have learned to value as I have you is not a victim of the hideous depression brought on by the unbridled greed of vile men in high places. My own pity for the unfortunate is swallowed up in anger at the so called Christians who could not see prosperity in the country without looting it. Christian as I am, myself, I say, Damn them. (Letters 15)

And again in January 1894 Furphy writes to Cathels: “Our forefathers made a slippery hitch in their apotheosis of Individualism and we have to suffer for it. The only hope of my own petty little soul is to spoke the ole [sic] chariot along toward the right track” (Letters 20). Writing was Furphy’s salvation. As he remarked to Miles Franklin in 1904, “In desperation I turned to the Inky Way” (Letters 172). With the publication of Such is Life and the serialisation of Rigby’s Romance Furphy began the project of starting Australia on the “right track” to a fundamental Christian and socialist future.

Furphy writes of his disaffection with established religion and his call to fundamental Christian principles revealed in the teaching of Jesus Christ in his Bulletin article “The Teaching of Christ”. In essence this article gives voice to Furphy’s vision, first raised in his Bulletin article on the Bible, that the New Testament provides the basis of “ideal Socialism”, which is in effect a levelling democracy.

The founder of a religion which aimed at making things new by the obliteration of meretricious distinctions could not count aristocrat, bourgeois, pauper, common or unclean. All were potential material for the perfect democracy He purposed. Again, the law of liberty commands no one to sell all that he has to give to the poor. This is purely discretionary. But the man who feebly fences with the question has already made the great refusal, and has every reason to go away sorrowful; for no more is to be expected from him who fears poverty than the respector [sic] of persons—and heaven knows that is little enough. It is just here that Christ applies the uncomfortable metaphor of the camel and the needle’s eye. (Bulletin 31 March 1894)

Furphy here is using the Bible as “textbook” to emphasise Christ’s teachings. The quote below is taken from the Authorised (King James) Version and concerns a young man desiring to know how to be perfect.

Jesus said to him, If thou wilt be perfect, go, and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto

you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. (Matthew 19: 21-24)

Furphy is more critical in his poem, “Virtues that Pay”, published in the Bulletin (22 April 1899). This biting satire condemns those so-called Christians who seek material wealth.

You must race, like St. Paul – you must race for the dollar –
 No pause of compunction must ever intrude:
 You must watch, you must pray, never missing a collar
 The course is severe, and the company good.
 You must reverence the Thrift-God, and earnestly pray
 To be grounded and built up in virtues that pay. (31-36)

And just to underscore the “virtue” in man’s rush for material wealth the verse ends by highlighting the complicity of parson and church in sanctifying man’s individualism, materialism and greed.

By this means you will serve the Almighty and Mammon,
 And die in a state of salvation and wealth;
 When the clergy, without a suggestion of gammon,
 Will furnish your soul with a clean bill of health.
 So you’ll sweep through the gates in your spotless array
 A shining example of the Virtues that pay. (37-42)

In a letter to his mother Judith, Furphy emphasises his disaffection with institutional religion. Commenting on the article “Christ’s Object Lessons” sent to him by his mother Furphy declares that the “authoress” of the article is “too amiable”.

And excess of amiability always drifts into toleration of many things that are abominable in the sight of God. It is a far cry from the teaching of the churches to the possible righteousness of the human race. Apropos: the Bulletin is going to reprint my “Virtues that Pay”. (NLA MS2022/5)

Again Furphy emphasises the distinction between church religion and Christianity. However, the Bulletin, for whatever reason, apparently changed their mind about reprinting the verse and Lois Hoffmann does not include any mention of a reprint in her checklist of Furphy’s Bulletin items (“Joseph Furphy” 414).

Furphy also highlights how religious dogma acts to the detriment of man's basic Christian sensibilities. Rory ("Dan Connell") O'Halloran wants his daughter Mary properly buried in a Catholic cemetery.

"As soon as we reached the station, I helped Andrews, the storekeeper, to make the little coffin. Dan would n't have her buried in the station cemetery; she must be buried in consecrated ground, at Hay. So we boiled a pot of gas-tar to the quality of pitch, and dipped long strips of wool-bale in it, and wrapped them tight round the coffin, after the lid was on, till it was two ply all over, and as hard and close as sheet-iron." (SL 193)

However, Roman Catholic dogma prohibits Rory's wishes for Mary.

Catholic priest in Hay sympathised very strongly with him, he told me, but could n't read the service over the child, on account of her not being baptised. So Ward read the service. His people are English Catholics. (SL 194)

As Devlin-Glass and her co-editors state, the period in which Such is Life takes place is a time when there was a perceived difference between "English and Irish Catholicism".

And therefore,

Because Mary was unbaptized ... she could not technically be buried as a Catholic if the rules were rigidly adhered to, as they tended to be by the Irish clergy.... The English episcopacy and clergy in their colonial Benedictine form (especially under Polding) were more liberal, tolerant and humane in operating the rules, especially in matters where "complications" existed. (SL 415)¹⁰

Rules, therefore, are meant to be broken, especially in the interests of a shared basic humanity. Furthermore, Furphy, to further emphasise his anticlerical message does not have an English Roman priest conduct the service but instead Ward, a station "narangy" and presumably a "wattle-bark layman", is invested with the honour of sharing man's common humanity with Rory.

Belonging to a church with only "one member" produced "fundamental differences" in thinking between author and publisher (Barnes, Order 300). Stephens wrote to Furphy (1902) with comments on the proofs of chapter three of the novel.

¹⁰ For the history of the rise of Irish Catholicism in nineteenth-century Australia see Patrick O'Farrell's The Catholic Church and Community.

Furphy's reply centres on the religious message in his novel, which he vigorously defends.

I am double-damned, in the most literal sense. The church-goer stigmatises me as an infidel and a blasphemer, whilst the Bookfellow [i.e. A. G. Stephens] calls me a sanctimonious nameless and a canting, blanky hypocrite. Pour on; I will endure. But I will not swim with the stream—with any stream. Partly because Pessimism and Scepticism are the correct capers just now, I am an Optimist and a Christian—just as I am Biological Gnostic because Darwinism is unduly boomed. (NLA MS2202/5)

Furthermore, in his typical self-deprecating style he argues:

I am willing that such capricious sentiments should show through such drivel as I may write. And pardon me for saying that if you think these crotchets will offend the public ... Say what you will—underneath the cultivated materialism of modern thought there sweeps a strong current of what you will be pleased to call Superstition. “And I'll write my thoughts in the knowledge strong that thousands think the same.” (NLA MS2202/5)

For a first-time (and as yet unpublished) novelist Furphy voices his opinions confident that at this last stage of pre-publication his editor and publisher – his ‘symbolic banker’ – would not abandon him and his novel. Although Furphy's views on the Church and pseudo-Christians had been published in the Bulletin, Stephens' concerns appear to indicate a dislike for the message delivered in his novel. Nevertheless, Furphy adds one final point to support his position.

What says Lessing? “The Christian religion has been tried for eighteen centuries; the religion of Christ remains to be tried.” And seeing that the latter is essentially a manly thing, present writer intends to spoke it along—counting on the unconscious alliance of present reader. (NLA MS2202/5)

This appeal to Stephens indicates Furphy's strategy of aligning himself with those people who also fought against orthodoxy and tradition to deliver their message of reform to better society. In effect these can be seen as a class of individuals, in the Bourdieuan sense, in while not really constituting a real social class can nevertheless be constructed so as to explicate the functioning of the literary field that highlights the strategies and actions possible to agitate and possibly reform society. This does not

mean that Stephens represented or advocated any sort of traditional religious orthodoxy against which Furphy felt he needed to reply. Rather the point here is that Stephens represents a power (like religious orthodoxy) within the literary field that struggling authors must overcome to have their works published. The poet, philosopher and critic Gotthold Lessing was a leading figure of eighteenth-century German enlightenment. A few years before he died in 1781 he was embroiled in a controversy with the hierarchy of orthodox German Protestants over his attempts to liberalise religious thought.

Against the dogma of traditional religion he published his message of reform in 1778 under the title of “The Education of the Human Race”.¹¹ Lessing’s writing received new attention in the late nineteenth century through T.W. Rolleston’s Life published in 1889. Lessing’s appeal for Furphy lies in his enthusiasm on ‘The Religion of Christ’, implicitly understood through textual study of the Bible, rather than religious institutions; an emphasis intrinsically linked in Furphy to the education of the masses through Biblical study. In a reminder of Furphy’s previous writing in “The Teachings of Christ” with its emphasis on the bible as textbook, Lessing’s tract declares:

the time of the perfecting, when man, the more convinced his understanding feels itself of an even better Future, will nevertheless not be necessitated to borrow motives of action from his Future; for he will do the Right because it is right, not because arbitrary rewards are annexed thereto, which formerly were intended simply to fix his unsteady gaze in recognising the inner, better, rewards of well-doing. It will assuredly come! the time of the new eternal Gospel, which is promised us in the Primer of the New Testament itself.

(“The Education” [n.p.])

Inherent within this tract is an emphasis on a better future for mankind. However, as in Furphy’s calls for social reform in Such is Life and Rigby’s Romance, there is no time specified when this better future will be realised. Unlike other utopian writers of the period, Furphy and Lessing see utopia through the lens of the autodidact, as a form of individual self-improvement.

¹¹ For a recent study of Lessing see Yasukata (2002).

Another social reformer who had a profound influence on Furphy was Dr Charles Strong. Like Lessing one hundred years before, Charles Strong also fought against protestant orthodoxy in his endeavours to liberalise religious thought. He is probably best known today as the founder of the Australian Church in the 1880s. He formed this church after his split with the Presbyterian church to be free of the religious dogma and tradition. As C. R. Badger remarks:

The underlying idea of Strong and his associates was to found a religious society which should attempt to provide a favourable climate and home for those who were convinced of the significance and importance of religion, but who were unable to accept the traditional formulae of the churches and a theology derived from the past. It was unquestionably the hope of some of the original founders that this church might in time become truly national. (106)

Moreover,

Strong's social views and his efforts to reform the society of his day were an integral part of his religious outlook. He emphatically rejected the idea that religion had nothing to do with the affairs of his life, with social welfare and economics. (108)

And like Lessing, Strong

scorned the notion of religion which conceived it as principally concerned with the preparation for an "after life", with "salvation from hell and damnation", and as dealing mainly with prayer and the Bible, with sacraments, services, vestments and sermons.... What the Church must endeavour to do above all, was to point to and to work for the Kingdom of God on earth. (108)

Strong's views and his practical concerns for an earthly society position him as a Christian socialist. In an article entitled "Social Teaching", Strong links his Christianity with socialism.

What I claim is that every real Christian is consciously or subconsciously socialistic at heart, and that the great work of the Christian Church is to inspire mankind with this gospel ideal of a Kingdom of God which is a Kingdom of humanity founded not on covetousness, not on everyman for himself, and a "laissez faire" economic ideal, but on the scientific biological as well as religious foundation that we are members one of another, stand or fall, progress or degenerate together. (qtd. from Badger 308)

The link between science and religion is an essential part of Strong's beliefs. As Melissa Bellanta has remarked: "As an unorthodox Presbyterian clergyman, Strong argued that theology was a science - and that it was therefore subject to change as in the physical sciences. Strong also sought rational explanations for miracles, and regularly quoted British scientists during his weekly sermons" ([n.p.]). Strong faced challenges in promoting this science-religion concept. In one of the early issues of his religious-social magazine he outlined the problem.

Science and religion can only go hand-in-hand when the sphere of each is clearly recognised. Science should be the purifier of religion's form—the hand with which religion works—while religion should be the enabler of science, teaching it to recognise its own dignity as the minister to Truth, and to the progress and elevation of Man. ("Science and Religion" 2)

The practical side of Strong's Christian socialism meant he did more than just preach his new Gospel and actively sought to improve society. In the early 1890s therefore he was one of the instigators of the Tucker Village Settlements designed to alleviate the unemployment in Victoria caused by the economic depression. Although the scheme eventually failed it was nevertheless an attempt to prove the efficacy of Christian Socialist ideas to build a better future. Furthermore, it is likely that the failure of these first attempts induced Strong to expand his horizons to seek other solutions to society's evils. In 1895 he was one of the founding members of the Melbourne Fabian Society. As Race Mathews has argued, after the failure of the Village Settlement Movements:

It was natural, in such circumstances, that he [i.e. Strong] should warmly welcome the arrival in Victoria, and subsequent involvement in the [Australian] Church's affairs, of London Fabians such as Besant-Scott and Champion and that he should associate himself with Champion in a range of activities which included not only the Melbourne Fabian Society but also the Australian Co-operative Society, the Australian Criminology Society and the National Anti-Sweating League. (108)

Furthermore,

Although the Tucker Village Settlements were prompted primarily by the hope of relieving the plight of the unemployed, they were also deeply influenced by

the strain of the utopian socialist and co-operative idealism of the time, which found expression in William Lane and in Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward — possibly the most influential book in Australia in the 1890s. (Badger 131)

While Furphy had few opportunities to hear Strong preach, he did nevertheless read with great interest the articles in the publication produced by the Australian Church. In a letter to his mother in 1909 Furphy once declared “But of all the professing Christians that I know the one by their writing, the one who comes nearest to my idea is Dr. Charles Strong. I have read every issue of his paper since coming to the west” (Letters 247). A year later and seemingly resigned to only having his verse published he wrote to Kate Baker: “But ain't it anomalous that ... the saintly Dr. Strong, and the perverse T.C. [Tom Collins] should be working strenuously toward the same goal, namely, the uplifting and upbuilding of Australia” (Letters 259).

From an understanding of Furphy's admiration for and knowledge of the writing of Lessing and Strong it is possible to comprehend why he was so persistent in persuading Stephens not to change the section on poverty in Such is Life. Just what Furphy intended to “speak along” is presented in chapter three of the novel at a point where the “pipe” (as the voice of reasoned opinion) lectures Tom Collins (as well as the reader) with a “touch of severity”. For David Headon, the “application of such purposeful sentiments is unmistakable ... such as in chapter three where Furphy, thinly disguised as Tom Collins, spends half a dozen pages sketching a re-ordered set of social values” (39). This section on poverty is the longest of the digressions in Such is Life. Stephens' objections to the extended discussion of religion in the novel are not with the argument as such but can be traced to his dislike of the novel with a purpose. In his critique of Anne Brontë's The Tenant of Wildfell Hall Stephens remarked that the story “is dull as most stories with a purpose” (“The Brontë Family” 322) – a didactic tenor that also informed chapter three of Such is Life.

The theme of the pipe's lecture centres on the inherent injustice of modern Christianity, which espouses equality for all in death in the Kingdom of God but "tacitly countenances widening disparity in condition, and openly sanctions that fearful abuse which dooms the poor man's unborn children to the mundane perdition of poverty's thousand penalties" (SL 88). The institutional Church is therefore condemned for ignoring the original lessons of Christ by institutionalising an individualistic and materialist society. And the "pipe" further chastises its audience:

Eighteen-and-a-half centuries of purblind groping for the Kingdom of God finds an idealised Messiah shrined in the modern Pantheon, and yourselves "a chosen generation," leprous with the sin of usury; "a royal priesthood," paralysed with the cant of hireling clergy; "a holy nation," rotten with the luxury of wealth, or embittered by the sting of poverty; "a peculiar people," deformed to Lucifer's own pleasure by the curse of caste; while, in this pandemonium of Individualism, the weak, the diffident, the scrupulous, and the afflicted, are thrust aside or trampled down. (SL 88-9)

The emphasis here is not only on the evils of individualism and materialism but also on disparity between "caste" (social class) propped up by Church power; that both needed to be changed allowed Furphy to align himself with Christian Socialist reformers like Dr Charles Strong in an attempt to educate and re-educate people to the possibility of a better future for Australia.

"the grand old Stoic"

Furphy's desires for a better Australia are also located in his belief in the values and lessons to be learnt from Stoic philosophy, especially as to be found in the writing of Epictetus (55-135 AD) and Marcus Aurelius (121 -180 AD). In a letter to William Cathels (10 August 1897) Furphy mentions Aurelius.

I need not expatiate upon my pleasure hearing from you, and gathering from the tone of your letter that Aurelius has still one disciple left. Whilst that old philosopher holds sway in a man's mind, that man may be said to live, and certainly not in vain. (Letters 36)

Unfortunately no record exists as to what pleased Furphy in Cathels' letter.

Nevertheless, an understanding of Aurelius' philosophy may aid one in determining just why the like-minded friends placed such value in this Stoic philosopher.

Marcus Aurelius, Roman Emperor, is known for his Meditations. His writing takes the form of a personal notebook whose entries do not seem to be designed to be a cohesive statement of philosophical theory.

Marcus' personal reflections in the Meditations may be read as a series of written exercises aimed at analyzing his own impressions and rejecting his own unwarranted value judgements.... For Marcus, human well-being or happiness (eudaimonia) is entirely dependent upon correctly examining one's impressions and judgements. For once one has overcome false value-judgements – that wealth and social standing are valuable and that one should compete for them against others, for instance – one will experience the cosmos as a single living being (identified with God) rather than a site of conflict and destruction.

(Sellars [n.p.])

For Furphy, society's striving for "wealth and social standing" were evils that had led to the social and political "conflict" and economic "destruction" of Australian society of the 1890s. It is not clear why or when Furphy first became interested in Marcus Aurelius. However, although Furphy was influenced in his thinking by the Bulletin, one should not ignore his appreciation for Charles Strong's religious-social magazine. Marcus Aurelius was the topic of a certain W.G. in Our Good Words in July and continued in the Australian Herald in August 1889. A change of name had taken place with the August issue but the magazine was the same except for an increase in price from threepence to sixpence. The particular strength of Aurelius for many modern Christians, according to the author, was that in Aurelius "the hardness of Stoicism was tempered by the spirit of love towards his fellow-men, the presence of which in Christianity is its true distinguishing mark, and the absence of which is too often the distinguishing mark of professing Christians" ("Our Good Words" 16).

The philosophical theory that Aurelius puts into practice is based on the teachings of the Stoic philosopher Epictetus. Writing to Cecil Winter (28 January 1904) Furphy comments on the personal decline of Henry Lawson.

Yes, I noticed Lawson's par. on drink. It is about time to write his requiem. Foremost of Australian poets, how soon he has fallen; and what a miserable collapse at that... What is the remedy? Well, I should say that the safe guard against such besetments [sic] as overcame Lawson would be an exhaustive study—not of the Bible, but Epictetus. Nowhere that I know of is the path of self-respect made so plain, so attractive, and so practicable, as in the pages of the grand old Stoic. (Letters 147)

To his friend Dick Hindson Furphy again mentions the decline of Lawson and his possible cure through Stoic philosophy.

Letter from Dwyer to-day. Tells me he met Lawson in the "B." [Bulletin] office ... and has never in his life seen a more complete wreck, mental and physical... Have you read Epictetus? Without waiting for your answer, I would send you my copy, only that it is lent, and I'll probably never see it again. No odds, so far as I'm concerned, for wherever the book is now, it is doing good work. It is the half-dozen copy I have had since coming to Shep. [Shepparton] Now if that book had been flogged into Lawson in his younger days, he would not have been a broken reed at the present time. (Letters 163)

The "book" Furphy means is the Enchiridion (Manual or Handbook) of Epictetus.

George Long's translation of Epictetus' Enchiridion was published in the latter half of the nineteenth century; two other books containing all of Epictetus' writings were also available in translation by 1888, a translation by George Long and another by T. W.

Rolleston. While Furphy himself does not quote from the Enchiridion in his letters or other writing, one is able to see an example of Epictetus' teaching influencing Furphy as he mentions the book. The first sentence of the Enchiridion begins:

Of things some are in our power, and others are not. In our power are opinion, movement toward a thing, desire, aversion (turning from a thing); in a word, whatever are our own acts: not in our power are the body, property, reputation, offices (magisterial power), and in a word, whatever are not our own acts. (11)

Furphy may influence others directly through his own opinion and desires but he should not be concerned over the loss of his book (his property). That Furphy accepts this is

revealed by his remark that he cares not for the “whereabouts of his book” (his property) and accepts that he no longer has control (power) over its whereabouts.

As Keith Seddon states:

The central claim of Stoic ethics is that only virtue (excellence of character) and actions motivated by virtue are good, and that conversely, only vice and actions motivated by vice are bad The sorts of things that people usually value and pursue, such as pleasure, wealth, possessions, health, status and so forth, are commonly regarded as good (and being deprived of these things, bad) – but the Stoics deny that this is so, saying that such advantages do not benefit those who possess them in all circumstances: wealth, for example, can be put to bad uses, and health does not benefit you if, because you have it, you are conscripted and marched off to war. Virtue, on the other hand, understood as the capacity to make use of such advantages wisely, can never fail to be beneficial, and is thus held to be the only good thing ([n.p.]

As Dianne Osland has rightly stated: “the influence of Epictetus, and of Stoic philosophy in general, is evident throughout Furphy’s work (most obviously in the title and chorus of Such is Life)” (227). To this one may conclude with the remarks of John Barnes.

In his [Furphy’s] writing the phrase [such is life] is resonant with the ironical stoicism with which Furphy had learned to confront the apparent vagaries of his own life, both painful and absurd. It was as the disciple of Epictetus that he faced life and attempted to describe it in his novel. (Order 244)

Just when Furphy first became interested in Stoic philosophy is not entirely clear. Nevertheless, as someone who appreciated and was profoundly influenced by the eighteenth-century writing of Fielding and Sterne, Furphy, as Osland observes, would have read the motto of the title page of chapter one of Sterne’s Tristram Shandy: “It is not things themselves, but opinions concerning things, which disturb men”. And therefore, Furphy was inspired by the “disparity between things and opinions concerning things” (Sterne qtd from Osland 227-28).

The motto cited above begins number five in the Enchiridion. In the concluding part Epictetus outlines the progression for one who would follow Stoicism.

When, then, we are impeded or disturbed or grieved, let us never blame others, but ourselves, that is our opinions. It is the act of an ill-instructed man to blame others for his own bad conditions; it is the act of one who has begun to be instructed, to lay the blame on himself; and of one whose instruction is completed, neither to blame another, nor himself. (14)

Furphy neatly encapsulates this sentiment in his poem “A Psalm of Fortitude”, published in the Bulletin in 1910 and reprinted in Kate Baker’s collection of Furphy’s verse.

Are you like me, a peevish brat,
 With feelings extra-fine?
 Are you disposed to whip the cat
 When misadventure lays your [you] flat?
 Then paste this memo in your hat –
 A Man Should Never Whine. (1-6)

Miles Franklin, according to John Barnes, is even more succinct in her appraisal of the Enchiridion. After Furphy had sent her a copy Franklin, in typical Australian vernacular, “decided that the message of Epictetus was ‘keep your hair on’” (Barnes Order 347).

Using what was within his power, Furphy claims to write, not for the symbolic capital provided by reputation nor for the economic capital provided by material reward, but instead simply to lay the foundation for a Christian-Socialist society. As Tom Collins writes in his introduction to Such is Life: “the impulse of reminiscence, fatally governed by an inveterate truthfulness, is wayward enough to overbear all hope of local pre-eminence, as well as a sense of literary propriety”. The message is mightier than the messenger. And therefore to understand the basis for Furphy’s Christian-Socialist message one must now focus on Furphy’s strategy within the literary field as he explicates his position in relation to social class in Australian society.

“a voice in the wilderness”

The social class structure on Ryrie Station in the 1840s was one aspect of Joseph’s early life that formed a basis for his social criticism that he enlarged upon in his later writing. Barnes has reported Ryrie Station was governed by “almost feudal social attitudes” (Order 12). This ‘feudal’ arrangement provided Furphy with most, if not all, of his experience of a structured social environment up to the age of seven. Family experience informed one part of Furphy’s social criticism in the depiction of station life of the Riverina: described by Tom Collins in Such is Life as the gentleman squatter of the 1840s dominating his “immigrant servants by moral force” (Order 18).

Just as Joseph’s love of literature was inculcated from an early age so also was his awareness of social class, however imperfectly it may have been understood at the time. In later life his memory of childhood events, when combined with his experiences as a bullocky in the Riverina, contribute to his intellectual development as given voice through his narrator Tom Collins in Such is Life. As Tom observes on Runnymede Station:

Social status, apart from all consideration of mind, manners, or even money, is more accurately weighed on a right-thinking Australian station than anywhere else in the world. (SL 204)

This attack on the social divisions within pastoral Australia also forms the basis of Collins’ criticism of Henry Kingsley’s depiction of Australian pastoral life. There is clear evidence of both Joseph Furphy’s and Tom Collins’ disapproval of Henry Kingsley. The basis for their antagonism centres on differing ideas of Australian literature and Australianness. In a letter to William Cathels (1898) seeking information, Furphy desires to

ascertain the name of Sam Buckley’s station, (in Geof. Hamlyn.) Also the Christian name of S. B.’s infant daughter—who is Mrs Beaudesart. You will

judge this is a breach of literary etiquette on my part. So be it. The author of Geof. Hamlyn deserves no courtesy. (Letters 42)

In another letter to Cathels written a month later Furphy again expresses his dislike of Kingsley.

Respecting Geof. Ham., I merely wanted to get a cowardly welt at Henry Kingsley, a la Fielding-Richardson. I hate that beggar.... Mrs Beaudesart was intended to serve as a sequel to Geof. Ham. Then Brunton Stephens would have gone for me; and I would have laid that kid-glove democrat out in my own cowardly way. But I'll sheathe the stiletto. (Letters 44)

Furphy, however, had no qualms about unsheathing his “stiletto” — Tom Collins — to deliver a thrust at Kingsley.

Those whose knowledge of the pastoral regions is drawn from a course of novels of the Geoffrey Hamlyn class, cannot fail to hold a most erroneous notion of the squatter. Of course, we use the term “squatter” indifferently to denote a station-owner, a managing partner, or a salaried manager. Lacking generations of development, there is no typical squatter. Or, if you like, there are a thousand types. Hungry M’ntyre is one type; Smythe—petty, genteel, and parsimonious—is another; patriarchal Royce is another; Montgomery—kind, yet haughty and imperious—is another; Stewart is another. My diary might, just as likely as not, have compelled me to introduce, instead of these, a few of the remaining nine-hundred and ninety-five types—any type conceivable, in fact, except the slender-witted, virgin-souled, overgrown schoolboys who fill Henry Kingsley's exceedingly trashy and misleading novel with their insufferable twaddle. There was a squatter of the Sam Buckley type, but he, in the strictest sense of the word, went to beggary; and, being too plump of body and exalted of soul for barrow-work, and too comprehensively witless for anything else, he was shifted by the angels to a better world—a world where the Christian gentleman is duly recognised, and where Socialistic carpenters, vulgar fishermen, and all manner of undesirable people, do the washing-up. (SL 164)

Furthermore, in case readers have missed the point, Collins delivers his mortal blow to Kingsley with more of Sam Buckley’s downfall in the “sequel” to Geoffrey Hamlyn. In another of his digressions Collins recounts his ‘history’ of Mrs Maud Beaudesart, the daughter of Sam Buckley.

Mrs. Beaudesart was well-born. Don't study that expression too closely, or you'll get puzzled. Her father, Hungry Buckley, of Baroona—a gentleman addicted to high living and extremely plain thinking—had been snuffed-out by apoplexy, and abundantly filled a premature grave, some time in the early 'sixties, after seeing Baroona pass, by foreclosure, into the hands of a brainy and nose-y financier. People who had known the poor gentleman when he was very

emphatically in the flesh, and had listened to his palaver, and noticed his feckless way of going about things, were not surprised at the misfortune that had struck Buckley. (SL 209)

This misfortune was also visited upon his children. The son, by virtue of his “hopeless impecuniosity, not worth lenient treatment”, was reduced to earning a living as a blacksmith. The daughter Maud slid from wealthy high society hostess “where the elegancies of life were necessities to her” to that of housekeeper on Montgomery’s station Runnymede (SL 209-10).

Although this is Tom Collins in one of his most imaginative and humorous veins at Kingsley’s expense, one, nevertheless, needs to emphasise Furphy’s underlying criticism. His desire for an authentic Australian literature (influenced as he was by the Bulletin) meant he would have sided with A. G. Stephens’ review of Kingsley’s Geoffry Hamlyn in the Bulletin (28 Sept. 1895).

No wonder Englishmen admire Geoffry Hamlyn, which flatters their foibles so naturally and continually. And Geoffry Hamlyn is an excellent romance, with a perfect right to admiration. But when it is called ‘Australian’—Australia must protest warmly.... His [Kingsley’s] work has no particular intellectual merit, but it will always have a kind of value as a picture (from one point of view) of a bygone Australian time. Good old Tory! Maybe he lived better according to his lights than we to ours, though we have (or think we have) the better lights.

(Cantrell A. G. Stephens 170-7)

In Such is Life the displaced English gentleman Willoughby bears the brunt of Collins’ attacks on English sensibilities. Willoughby is portrayed as a typically English gentleman whom Tom Collins delights in showing as ineffectual and unsuited to Australian life in the Bush. However, by using Bourdieu’s concepts one can posit Willoughby as a logical member of a class of people, and not just English immigrant gentlemen, with similar dispositions whose education makes them unsuitable for life in the bush.

The diversity of station life, with its range of social classes and nationalities, can also be found in Edward Curr's *Recollections: an account of a 'gentleman squatter' in Victoria in the 1840s*. In a chapter entitled "My Servants" Curr declares:

In the bush, as elsewhere, a good deal of one's success and comfort depend on servants, and when I began squatting, servants seemed little calculated to make their masters either successful or comfortable. Convictism at that time had not gone out, but was on the wane; and my men, when I got them, were an average lot of ruffians From first to last they were a motley crew, composed of housebreakers, thieves, drunken soldiers, and a Paddy or two.... (437)

In an earlier chapter Curr describes his first experience in hiring labour from just such an assortment of men.

I engaged a fresh lot of servants. I may add that hiring men in Melbourne in 1841 was by no means an agreeable job, as wages were high, and labourers (almost all old gaol-birds and expirée convicts exceedingly independent and rowdy, so that my first experiences in this line were anything but pleasant. (Curr 40)

The men for hire could only be found at various local public houses where the "proceeds" of their labour were spent. Confronting him was a scene of bacchanalian drunkenness and offensive belligerence and from "amongst these worthies" he hired the men he required after first "making each of them an advance of a pound" (Curr 43). But his troubles were only just beginning.

In the first place, my men were anything but satisfied with their master's run—for servants in those days were fastidious and outspoken—and mine complained that the station was scrubby, without feed, and almost impossible to shepherd on.... The bullock driver, too, was no less dissatisfied than the shepherds.... As far the shepherds were concerned getting them to work was a matter requiring some tact, and it was only effected, after much trouble, by the overseer and myself going out with them for a day or two so as to accustom them a little to the run.... As for compelling them to perform their agreements, under which they had all received money advances, it would have been simply impossible under the circumstances. (Curr 43-44)

One cannot imagine any sort of "moral force" inducing these men to work for their master.

With the decline of labour from convictism the arrival of immigrants should have provided for a more stable source of servant class. However, Curr is also dismissive of these as well.

In my experience the new chums (as lately arrived emigrants were called) were the least satisfactory servants, though often sober men; as, besides being poor hands in the bush, they were generally dissatisfied, and had a very faint idea of obeying orders. (Curr 444)

Curr's recollection of the men who worked for him during the 1840s also provides an interesting pointer to Australian literature of the 1890s.

Whether it arose from the lonely life the men led or what, I cannot say, but we used to notice that a few of them became somewhat eccentric after several years' residence on the station, and that occasionally men passing by inquired for work who were evidently somewhat silly.... Besides the eccentricity induced by station life, there seemed to me to be a tendency to insanity in some of the men who were left without companionship. (Curr 440, 442)

One only has to recall Henry Lawson's "Rats" to be reminded that visitors to the Australian bush could face eccentricity and insanity in bush folk. After witnessing at a distance what looked like a fight between a bushman and his woman the shearers Sunlight and Macquarie arrive at the site of the fight.

They reached the scene of the trouble, and there stood a little withered old man by the track, with his arms folded close up under his chin....He was scowling malignantly at a stout, dumpy swag which lay in the middle of the track. "Well, old Rats, what's the trouble?" asked Sunlight. "Oh, nothing, nothing," answered the old man, without looking round. "I fell out with my swag, that's all. He knocked me down, but I've settled him."
(Lawson "Rats" 57)

In Curr's recollection the relations between himself and his men – or between master and servants – were more congenial when honest materialism became the source of stable station life. In the following passage one can identify the beginning of a materialist tradition that was entrenched in Australian society by the 1890s.

The more property a man acquired, the less he used to drink, that acquisitiveness, once set agoing, not unfrequently beat inebriety.... Having a few head of horses, for the grazing of which no fee was charged, tended also to render men stationary.... As they improved in their conduct I naturally came to

have a kindly feeling towards them, which soon became mutual; and though I was a little stern with my rogues, and kept them at arms length, I experienced several instances of goodwill on their parts which proved their disinterestedness.
(Curr 439-40)

Furphy's opposition to the materialist tradition in Australian society is explicated by Rigby in Rigby's Romance when he lectures on the evils of the master servant relationship. Rigby is at pains to explain how workers in society are considered even lower than that of slaves.

“And the grade of the ‘servant’ is, in reality, much lower than that of the ‘slave’. At a time when slavery was not the exclusive badge of inferior races, but stood fairly on its merits, the slave looked down on the wages man, and was entitled to do so. You will find this statement supported by all the available evidence. ‘Hireling’, or ‘hired servant’, in our translations of sacred and classical literature, is always a term of reproach; whilst ‘servant’—which in every instance, means either bondman or vassal—carries the idea of servitude. You may remember that passage from Œdipus Tyrannus of Sophocles, wherein a slave plumes himself upon belonging to his master. ‘Born in this house; no hireling I,’” he says. (RR114-5)

The theme of workers as slaves is one that develops throughout the nineteenth century, especially so with the abolition of slavery in England (1834) and America (1863). Into the English language arise new terms – the OED indicates that the term wage-slave enters the English language around 1866 – to describe the relationship between masters and their servants. In Such is Life Tom Collins describes the relationship between the squatters and their station hands. Regardless of individual differences in the attitude of a station owner towards his workers: “on no station ... has imagination bodied forth, or tradition handed down, any such vagary as might imply that a wage-slave saw the inside of the house or barracks” (SL 204).

For Rigby there is an essential evil in a society where men are compelled to work for masters as “chattels in the market”. Rigby recognises that there may always be a distinction between master and servant in the “scheme of human life” but this is “immaterial”. And therefore, while “the Man Friday may be a permanent institution”

what really matters is how this relationship exists. “Personal service to a personal master” is far different from class servitude in an unequal society. And therefore, progress toward a better Australia can only happen when society ends “that ghastly dislocation of order which occurs when the personal service is one of ignominious necessity, not of self-respecting fidelity” (RR 115). The “self-respecting fidelity” between hirer and hireling when extended to encompass the relationship between the government and its people underscores what Furphy means when he says at one point in his letter to Cathels (1904) “that Rigby says the last word on the Ethics of State Socialism” (Letters 176). And to Miles Franklin (28 April 1905) Furphy declares “Socialism is in the atmosphere just at present, and I flatter myself that ‘R’s R.’ [Rigby’s Romance] speaks the last word on the moral aspect of that movement” (Letters 200).

Within the political, social, religious, and economic upheaval that characterised Australia in the 1890s, Furphy did not produce a definitive program for reforming society. Instead he contributes more as an educator instructing his fellow citizens toward a better future for the Australian nation. In this sense he was a visionary and his writing contains within it the core of his beliefs. This vision is explicated by Rigby. At one point Tom Collins accuses Rigby that as a “reformer” he “ought to have a programme” but he has not provided one. Rigby replies:

“Don’t mistake me for an organiser. I’m merely an agitator, a voice in the wilderness, preaching preparation for a Palingenesis. The programme is hidden in the order of events, and will be evolved in its own good time. To be fettered by a programme now would be fatal. The ‘man of affairs’ will not be lacking; let us recognise him when he appears. The formulation of a hard and fast system is the prevalent mistake amongst apostles of our cult. Principles only are vital; and how often have these been obscured and subverted by insistence on details. If we assuaged our zeal by bearing in mind that Socialism is relative, not absolute—that it must come by evolution, not by miracle—we should be much further ahead than we are. As matter of course, each parable relating to the Kingdom of God gives us one aspect of Socialism.” (RR 231)

Rigby's Socialist ideals are couched in biblical language, which serves to underpin the inseparability of Christ as proto-Socialist (with the Bible as textbook) and the revelation of the new word in State Socialism.

Tom Collins also criticises Rigby for being “on a religious racket” (RR 232).

Again Rigby replies with an answer that reveals how State Socialism is a particular brand of Christian Socialism whose message must be explained to all.

“Talking to an agnostic, I dwell on Proudhon's ‘Property is Robbery’; talking to a so-called Christian, I dwell on the Psalmist's ‘The earth is the Lord's’—the same axiom, varied slightly in expression. . . . I'm always on a religious racket; for my game is man, and man is a religious being; moreover, the person whom you would call non-religious, I usually find the most apt, inasmuch as he is already free from the incrustation of sanctified selfishness. (RR 232-3)

Rigby's citing of Proudhon offers more than just an opportunity to further popularise a well known slogan. A particular passage from his book What is Property? is a pointer to Furphy in proposing an evolutionary not revolutionary agenda for his explication of State Socialism.

PROPERTY IS ROBBERY! That is the war-cry of [17]'93! That is the signal of revolutions! Reader, calm yourself: I am no agent of discord, no firebrand of sedition. I anticipate history by a few days; I disclose a truth whose development we may try in vain to arrest; I write the preamble of our future constitution. This proposition which seems to you blasphemous--PROPERTY IS ROBBERY--would, if our prejudices allowed us to consider it, be recognized as the lightning-rod to shield us from the coming thunderbolt; but too many interests stand in the way! . . . Alas! philosophy will not change the course of events: destiny will fulfil [sic] itself regardless of prophecy. Besides, must not justice be done and our education be finished?

The Christian-Socialist message in Rigby's Romance may itself be labelled Furphy's “preamble” for a future Australian constitution. Moreover, Rigby and his Christian-Socialist message must continue to agitate against competing “interests” infected with the evils of individualism and materialism that stand in his way. And although philosophy may not change the course of events Rigby's message is underpinned by an essential Stoicism. As Dianne Osland points out, Rigby's “interest in Stoicism lies in its

teaching of the true elevation of the self through the ‘abnegation of all measly personal interests’ which he sees as the first step towards the elevation of humanity through Christian Socialism” (230-1).

Chapter 4: Language and Identity

Within the literary field, language and identity are interrelated discourses informing Furphy's struggle to produce his indigenous Australian literature. Michael Wilding has argued that in Such is Life "there is a lot said, but not said". Much therefore is "implied". On the opening page of Such is Life there is a row of dots immediately following the opening line "Unemployed at last!" The elision, according to Wilding, implies the social comment that "it is only through unemployment that working men and women can ever attain the state of leisure and relaxation available to the upper classes" (109). Wilding's argument reveals social discourses expressed by what is not written as well as what is on the page. This chapter focuses on explicating discourses which reveal how Furphy promotes his ideas of an indigenous literature from his particular position within the literary field. In this chapter, Bourdieu's concepts of field, habitus, capital and class underpin cultural literacy and linguistic capital to analyse the complexity of Australian culture and the strategies Furphy uses to engage with the interrelated discourses of power, identity, and indigeneity.

In his synopsis of Such is Life published inside the back cover of the Bulletin (6 August 1903) Furphy indicates to potential readers the importance of language in his novel. And, like Furphy's diverse Riverina landscape, his characters' ethnic diversity and dialects represent a microcosm of Australia towards the end of the nineteenth century. Furphy's synopsis asserted:

Beyond all other Australian writers, Tom Collins is a master of idiom. There is no confusion of patois, nor exaggeration of grammatical solecism, in his dialogue. As in actual life, the education of each speaker is denoted by his

phraseology; the dialect of each European bespeaks his native locality; and, above all the language of the most unbookish bushman never degenerates into “coster”.

Idiom, patois, solecism, dialogue, phraseology, dialect, and coster (slang) are all terms that are 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. If “Cultural capital concerns forms of cultural knowledge, competencies or dispositions” and can be defined 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), then linguistic competency is a key method through which cultural knowledge is transmitted, acquired or deciphered. Cultural capital is brought to bear whenever agents act within fields.

From this concept of cultural capital one is able to develop a concept of cultural literacy. Schirato and Yell provide a useful definition of cultural literacy – a concept which integrates Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus, field and cultural capital. Cultural literacy is a knowledge of meaning systems as well as the ability to negotiate those systems within different cultural contexts. In this Bourdieu’s ideas are an aid to understanding communication because of his suggestion that what people actually do is both constrained by, and develops as a response to, the rules and conventions of a culture (2). More specifically,

Cultural literacy ... [is] a familiarity with, and an ability to read and make use of, the various meaning systems (and the practices that inhabit them) that characterise the various cultural fields of a society or societies. For Bourdieu, the extent to which agents can attain knowledge of, and negotiate, various cultural fields is dependent on, and can be explained in terms of, what he terms a “practical sense” or a “logic of practice”. What Bourdieu is referring to here is a knowledge of the game that is played out between agents and cultural fields; that is, a knowledge of the various rules (written and unwritten), genres, discourses, forms of capital, values, contexts and imperatives which inform and determine agents’ practices, and which are continuously being transformed by those agents

and their practices. This knowledge provides agents with a field-specific literacy that allows them to make sense of what is happening around them, and to make strategic decisions as to how that field should be negotiated (in other words, what practices, genres or discourses are appropriate in certain circumstances). (Schirato, “Cultural Literacy” 26)

In this chapter of my thesis a particular emphasis is placed on “field-specific literacy” and the “strategic decisions” agents adopt in “certain circumstances”. Cultural literacy, therefore, is a way of understanding what happens when agents and 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 able to exercise positions of power in interactions with others. Cultural literacy is in part determined by a command of linguistic capital.

In Furphy’s novels the most dominant characters are those with the greatest linguistic capital: Tom Collins and Jefferson Rigby, both of whom speak not in any limited regional dialect but in a more recognisable Standard English. This reference to a standard English is not meant to argue that there was a universal English among the English speaking peoples of the world. Rather the point is that authors are essentially conducting a dialogue (i.e. communicating) with their readers. An over-reliance in using a localised vernacular in their writing means readers could possibly struggle to comprehend what the author is trying to “say” to them and furthermore could negatively impact on publishers’ decisions about publication. This is made clear when one considers the comments made in 1927 by the English critic Edward Garnett. Having just enjoyed reading Such is Life and Rigby’s Romance (abridged 1921 edition) Garnett remarks:

Tom Collins was a man of great parts & his work gets through to me – but I doubt if there are one hundred English people who could seize hold of the books as they are. Not only is Collins a local writer, but he has the most damnable style, for a man of such discernment, that ever cursed a writer of talent. If he only could have written in everyday English he might reach a thousand readers, here, instead of ten. (Barnes, “Edward Garnett” 42)

One can infer that from Garnett’s remarks that only readers with the linguistic capital like himself could possibly enjoy and understand the localised varieties of English in which authors choose to write. And therefore Furphy’s style meant Garnett could not “recommend either of the books to a London publisher” (Barnes, “Edward Garnett” 42). Having his main characters speak in easily recognisable English Furphy wanted to reach as wide an audience as possible. In writing ‘for Australia’ Furphy not only intended to produce, and contribute to, an easily recognisable indigenous Australian literature but also intended for all Australians and English speaking peoples to read his novel.

Power struggles involving language and identity revealed by the publication and reception of Such is Life also inform important discourses within the novel. The first part of this chapter analyses discourses of language and identity in order to reveal the competing influences within the literary field at the time of the publication of Such is Life in 1903. Following this section an analysis using the concepts of cultural literacy reveals 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 methodology to reveal discourses of race and identity concerning the place of Aboriginal Australians in white Australian culture in Furphy’s writing.

“master of idiom”

For some reviewers of Such is Life its language and associated ethnic identity raised doubts as to the literary talent of the newcomer, Tom Collins. Banjo Paterson was one such reviewer who criticised Such is Life not only for its poor literary methods but also

because “its powers of reproducing dialect phonetically are mediocre” (Evening News 8 August 1903). By 1903 Paterson was well known and well established as a producer of authentic Australian literature as promoted and published by the Bulletin and Angus and Robertson. Therefore his position as poet and journalist meant he was someone who would be listened to when he passed judgement on other Australian writers (especially unknown authors like Tom Collins). As a critic and reviewer, he can be seen as a gatekeeper whose opinions could not only add to or detract from a potential author’s recognition but also influence what constituted dominant genres within the Australian literary field. By criticising Tom Collins and Such is Life as he did, Paterson positions himself as a truer depicter of Australian character whose writing has greater literary merit.

Paterson’s review was relatively short – around 250 words. He does not go into much depth in his criticism given he was also comparing another novel, Dewdrop Dandy, with Such is Life. One is entitled to be somewhat suspicious of Paterson’s critique, which interestingly appeared just two days after Furphy’s synopsis in the Bulletin. Paterson no doubt felt he had to respond to Furphy’s assertion that “Beyond all other writers, Tom Collins is a master of idiom”. An example from each writer shows that there is more similarity than difference in their representations of vernacular language. In Paterson’s sketch – “White-When-He’s-Wanted” – he has the Scots McGregor say: “Ah, weel” he said, “we ha’e na much use for a camp horrse [sic] here, ye ken; wi’oot some of these lads wad like to try theer han’ cuttin’ oot the milkers’ cawves frae their mithers” (271). Similarly, in Such is Life Furphy represents the speech of the Scots boundary rider Tom Armstrong thus: “Ye’ll be no yin o’ the M’Callums o’ Auchtermauchtie?” he inquired eagerly. “A kent them weel” (SL 156).

While Furphy was serious in his endeavour to promote his novel as genuinely representative of Australian literature and culture, it is also true that Furphy (through his alter ego Tom Collins) in his synopsis sought to encourage, even dare, readers to buy his book. This in effect can be seen as a clever marketing strategy from a first time novelist and shows Furphy learned an important lesson from Stephens' earlier advice (22 May 1897): "How many people want to buy Tom Collins's book?—unless you make them" (NLA MS2022/5).

Furphy's strategy means he was aware that to play the game of literary producer his success depended not only on favourable peer reviews but also on sales of his novel. Although he would have liked to have had Such is Life published as he originally intended, the extensive revisions he made to accommodate his editor and publisher meant he was not producing "art for art's sake" but a marketable commodity for as wide a readership as possible. And while the majority of reviews of Such is Life were favourable, Paterson's critique, limited as it was, is a prime example of the dominating effect that critics have over up-and-coming entrants in the literary field. This is made clearer if one considers that Furphy's reply to Paterson's critique was not made in any public arena (Furphy did not have the reputation or status to succeed in openly challenging a favoured son of the Bulletin). Furphy had to content himself with appealing to another authority, someone whom he believed would agree with his sentiments: his 'symbolic banker' A. G. Stephens.

Writing to Stephens (19 August 1903) Furphy comments that Paterson (the "Banjo") "must have taken to dr-nk" evidenced by his "inept criticism" of Such is Life (Letters 120). To Miles Franklin he writes (23 March 1904) that the "second-severest critique I endured was that of the Sydney EVENING NEWS". In typical Tom Collins

humour, however, he explains that the “severest” was written with “malicious relish” (his synopsis) by none other than himself (Letters 155).

Criticism of Such is Life was not confined to Australian reviewers. A longer and more sustained critique of Such is Life appeared in the London Athenaeum. This reviewer makes clear his objections to the representations of language and ethnicity. And it is perhaps not surprising that an English reviewer would find fault with a “typical Australian writer ... aggravated by the influence of the Sydney Bulletin” for his characterisation of an English gentleman (qtd. from Franklin, Joseph 105). According to the reviewer Tom Collins “shamefully forsakes his realism” when he makes the English gentlemen Willoughby speak as follows:

“Precisely, Mr Collins”, replied the Whaler [that is Willoughby]. “Nature produces such men expressly for rank and file; and I should imagine that their existence furnishes sufficient rejoinder to a levelling theory,” ...
 “Well to quote Madame de Stael,” replied Willoughby, “he abuses a man’s privilege of being ugly.” (qtd. from Franklin, Joseph 104)

This rendering of Willoughby’s speech is false, argues the reviewer, especially so when it is part of the conversation with the other bullockies “whose manners and habits are savagely primitive”.

“No, by cripes! Not me. That cove’s an (adj.) liar. He don’t give a dam, sposin, a fellow’s soul gets bashed out. Best sight I seen for many a day was seein’ him get kicked. If the mean beggar’d only square up with me, I’d let summedy else do his work.” (qtd. from Franklin, Joseph 104)

These are the only examples that the reviewer cites from the novel. But they are important for his overall critique in which he is consumed with a passion to defend England and by doing so put Australia and Australian literature in its place. Tom Collins and Such is Life merely provide the excuse for his diatribe. His argument juxtaposes civilised England (as exemplified by Willoughby) against the untamed barbarism of Australia (as typified by the bullockies).

The critique continues with a strong anti-colonial bias against Australia and Australian literature. Collins' crime is that he had allowed himself as an "ardent son of the colonies" to place little value on Englishmen "other than tradesman". And this is a fair reading of the novel. However, the reviewer asserts that Collins, although knowing "something of the history of his own country" is too close-minded ever to consider that those who preceded the "native born" were able to achieve "for themselves and for Australia" more than their subsequent successors. One could argue that the reviewer himself (without it appears any sense of irony) is just as "furiously a partisan" as he claims Collins is. Moreover, and it is worth emphasising here, that the reviewer does not make any distinction in his critique between Collins the narrator and Collins the author. This is important when considering the reviewer's comments on Mr Collins. One can infer that the reviewer read Such is Life as autobiographical fact and not as the author's literary realism. Furphy makes this point quite clearly in a letter to A. Stephens (November 29 1903). Furphy describes the expectations of another reviewer Frances Myers (a Bulletin review commissioned by Stephens but not published because it was too negative and would likely impact on sales of Such is Life.)

"F. M.", when properly at himself, is an intelligent and vigorous writer: but here he somehow fails to mentally connect with the subject of his comment. Seems as if he had expected something different in tenor; and his disappointment prevents him judging on its merits the thing he actually got. (ML MSS 4937/3).

The Athenaeum reviewer writes of Collins' "undeviating realism in his pictures of bush life", for which in the "interests of sweet justice" he commends Collins but only "when dealing with his own people ... the rough-hewn kind of men he most admires" (qtd. from Franklin, Joseph 104). Collins' realism "crumbles" and becomes "remote from the truth" in dealing with those he does not understand. The reason is, the reviewer asserts, a lack of discipline that is evident not only in Collins but "in his country" as well. This

want of discipline means despite Collins' wide reading, his "unclassified, undigested knowledge ... robs him of all sense of perspective" (qtd. from Franklin, Joseph 105).

The Athenaeum review is perhaps the most comprehensive of all the published reviews of Such is Life at the time it was released in 1903. Its critique, coming from a prestigious English weekly literary journal, would have done nothing to enhance sales within England.¹² And as when he was criticised by Paterson Furphy could do little but voice his objections to his editor Stephens (18 Feb 1904).

And when a critic of such displacement gives me a bit of his mind, something tells me I am scoring heavily of him. ... When criticized by an ass, I am conscious of nothing but a great, silent pity, shading off into saintly benevolence. Owing I suppose, to the "inordinate egotism", the "intellectual arrogance", the "serene cocksureness", noted by self in BULLETIN advt. of the same book. (Letters 149-50)

By 1904 the sales of Such is Life, despite Collin's "serene cocksureness" and a number of positive reviews, meant that it was not likely to be a commercial success. Just how much the negative reviews impacted on sales remains uncertain. What can be said, however, is that Stephens did not commission another review for the Bulletin and he did not review Such is Life on his literary Red Page, limiting Stephens' identification with the novel.

In deciding to use vernacular language in their writing authors also face the real prospect of limited sales of their works. Capturing and maintaining readers' interest is one of the problems authors face when endeavouring to render as accurately as possible dialect and idiom in the speech of their characters. Krimmer and Lawson in their

¹² The review in the Athenaeum was not entirely negative. As Furphy explained in a letter to his mother the review was "highly complimentary of the Australian author's brilliancy and force, but strongly censuring his lack of support for the upper classes" (NLA MS2022/5).

introduction to Barbara Baynton's novel Human Toll (1907) indicate the difficulties of representing vernacular speech.

The slow start of the novel may be attributed to Baynton's attempt to recreate the vernacular of the bush Boshy is talking to his "Little Lovey" and the aborigines in a dialect that, at times, can be difficult to follow, impeding the flow of the action. Sometimes Baynton has to resort to giving a translation of the dialect in brackets, a practice which is intrusive. (xxviii)

In many respects Krimmer and Lawson are correct but this is a 1980s perspective. The English publishers in 1907 did not feel the need to edit the beginning of the novel indicating that Australian readers were sufficiently able to not be discouraged by bush vernacular.

Furthermore, when deciding what constitutes publishable literature within the literary field, authors may be subject to editorial constraint if publishers perceive a likely impact on possible sales. That is, a book's likely market success would be impeded by a writer's literary realism that places too great a strain on a potential readers' ability to comprehend the text. And therefore, editors in effect are basing their decisions on their belief that they and potential critics and reviewers have greater linguistic capital than the majority of their potential readers. An example of editorial interference, or institutional censorship, concerning readers' abilities to understand idiom can be seen in the publication of DeGaris' (Melbourne 1921) abridged edition of Rigby's Romance. Chapter six was excised in its entirety (some three pages) because, as Howarth suggests, the "phonetic spelling of Fritz's German-English" would have been too difficult for the reader (viii). Howarth then argues that "there is no real obscurity in his [Fritz's] speech: it becomes clear when read aloud" (viii). An example here will serve to underscore Howarth's quite reasonable assertion: "Minezelluf, I vill you helt trink mit long peer." ("My self, I will your health drink with a long beer" (my

translation). And in one of Furphy's most humorous passages he has Dixon, a character whose interminable Latin phrases punctuate his speech, complain:

“Can't suffer these (adj.) foreigners, no road, Rigby”, observed Dixon, calmly indicating Fritz with a backward jerk of his thumb. “Nobody should be allowed in the (adj.) country only Europeans, like me an' you. Ain't it aggravatin' to hear the gibberage these fellers comes out with? Wonder why the (adj. sheol) they never learn to yabber grammatical?” (RR 17)

By identifying himself, an Englishman, with Rigby, an American, Dixon emphasises that the only acceptable “European” racial stock with which to populate Australia are people of Anglo-Saxon descent.

While readers of the 1921 abridged edition might have been spared Fritz's German-English, the readers of the serialised version were able to read Rigby's Romance in its entirety. And Fritz with his idiomatic English is just one of the diverse speakers, in the Australian bush of the later nineteenth century, whose dialects simply reflect their “native locality”. One therefore needs to find another answer as to why the editors decided to drop the sixth chapter for the abridged edition. And in this Dixon's complaint may offer a clue. By 1921, with the end of the First World War and the defeat of Germany, Australia was building a white English-speaking nation. Enemies of England even if they were from white European stock were not welcome. The White Australia Policy (enacted in 1902) with its language-based immigration tests was designed to keep out “undesirables”. Excising Fritz's dialect from the pages of the novel effectively silences undesirable foreigners and their aggravating “gibberage”. Australia and Australians – their identity – were to be inseparable from the English language.

The excising of only one chapter from Rigby's Romance may have had little effect on the overall storyline, however the excising of a further six chapters for the abridged edition meant readers missed Rigby's socialist message. One can argue that this was the publisher's intent. By 1921 the rise of communism may have influenced the

English publisher to limit any supposition that a book was promoting or supporting the rise of world socialism. Excising of Fritz's "gibberage" and Rigby's digressions on socialism did more than place the novel within bounds that the editors felt acceptable to white English-speaking Anglo-Saxon readers. The editors' excisions produced a novel that meant the name of Tom Collins would be associated with a novel lacking in form and substance. As the English critic Edward Garnett wrote in 1927 after reading the abridged version of Rigby's Romance:

When I was reading 'Rigby's Romance' I thought I had struck a diamond — but the story peters out to nothing before it is half through: and the last third is a bitter disappointment. Why? Why didn't he follow up the story of the two women. Why does he chuck at us that intolerable fatuous Colonel's [Rigby's] digressions on everything & on nothing. (Barnes, "Garnett" 42)

Perhaps Garnett was deceived by the word "romance" in the title and expected an entirely different novel. However, without the inclusion of the excised chapters he would not have been able to appreciate the irony in Furphy's title that intimates his pseudo-romance contained within it the agitator's message for a different world. As Furphy himself said of Rigby's Romance in 1904 when he was still trying to have it published:

I am no admirer of the Novel With a Purpose. I want my novel pure but not simple; and I prefer my purpose in treatise-form. But the mawkish love-story was the making of "Looking Backward"; and so it shall be until men are made of better dirt than at present. (Letters 178-79)

That Australia's identity was to be inseparable from the ideals of a white Australia became the focus of Furphy's writing toward the end of his life. Writing to Kate Baker in 1908 he expressed the view that he would "do something for Australia yet ... A white Australia" (Letters 246). One can see just how this white Australia was to be composed when one reads a Bulletin article written by A. G. Stephens (December 1900) in which he said in part:

The mixed British breed on which we build our race is as good a breed, on the whole, as any to be found; and for all men who are fit to be merged into it the Commonwealth should have welcome.... Nothing at all—no local profit or temporary advantage should be permitted to interfere with the vital and permanent necessity of preserving Australia for white Australians.

(“For Australia” 405)

In 1910 Furphy again expressed his feelings for a white Australia. He began a letter to Kate Baker by citing a few lines from his new verse, “A Psalm of Counsel”:

Though some folks may take it ill,
As trenching on parsonic frill,
Thus saith the Lord to Jim and Bill,
In admonition stern and straight,—
Yet hold from me the brightest zones,
The fairest realm this planet owns,
Guarded on every side by Jones,
And standing yet inviolate.
So far so good. And all the rest,
Amounting to a racial test (Letters 258)

Here it is possible to recognise the easily recognisable names of Stephens’ “British breed” in Jim, Bill and Jones. Moreover, the “racial test” was based on keeping non-English speaking peoples out of Australia. The basis of the language test under the white Australia policy enacted in 1902 meant so-called undesirable Australians would be asked to complete a language test. This does not mean the prospective Australian was necessarily tested in English but rather in any language that the immigration officials thought appropriate. The test could continue in a number of languages until the immigrant eventually failed.

At the conclusion of this letter to Kate Baker, Furphy declared that the sentiment in the poem was not intended to be nice but rather

it is intended to be Bulletinesque and patriotic. It is for the long, lean, sunburnt comrades I left among the mulga—with a subtle undercurrent of homage to the Ideal that is always with me, namely, The White Australia. There is nothing else I am so thankful for as for the White Australia. (Letters 258)

Although Furphy could not induce the Bulletin to publish his remaining novels, the not so “subtle undercurrent” of racial sentiments expressed in this verse were published in

the Bulletin in February 1911. He took particular delight that his verse was positioned “among the editorial matter”, reinforcing how he was able to be published by accepting the structured constraints of the field by expressing views acceptable with the Bulletin’s ideas on race in Australia (Letters 260). However, just how committed Furphy was to a white Australia is not entirely clear. And one can argue that by failing to have his remaining novels published he resorted to verse to express sentiments on race popularised in the pages of the Bulletin so as to be acknowledged as a writer with the desire to have all his works published. As he said to Kate Baker, “I have full hope of seeing all our stories in book form yet” (Letters 260).

“Terrible Tommy”

In Such is Life the confrontation between Tom Collins and Terrible Tommy, a Scots boundary rider, reveals the relationships between people vested with power through cultural literacy and not specifically through class or social status. In this instance the confrontation involving language and identity reveals discourses of morality and individualism. Hoping for the chance of a meal and a friendly chat as he approaches the camp of the boundary rider Collins good naturedly greets Tommy Armstrong with, “Evening, sir” (SL 155).

The response from the aptly named Terrible Tommy is not quite what Collins was expecting. Terrible Tommy launches into a tirade in his lowlands Scots accent.

"Gude evenin' ... Ye maun gang fairther, ye ken; fir fient haet o' sipper ye'se hae frae me the nicht. De'il tak' ye, ye lang-leggit, lazy loun, flichterin' roun' wi' yir 'Gude evenin' sir!' an' a' sic' clishmaclaver. Awa' wi' ye! dinna come fleechin' tae me! The kintra's I-sy wi' sic' haverils, comin' sundoonin' on puir folk 'at henna mickle mair nir eneugh fir thir ain sel's. Tak' aff yir coat an' wark, ye glaikit-De'il tak' ye; wha' fir ye girmin' at?" (SL 155)

And this translates as follows:

Good evening ... You must go further, you know, for the devil a whit of supper you'll have from me tonight. Devil take you, you long-legged lazy loon,

fluttering around with your ‘good evening, sir’ and all such clatter. Away with you. Don’t come flattering to me. The country’s lousy with such wasters, coming sundowning on poor people that haven’t much more than enough for their own selves. Take off your coat and work, you stupid – Devil take you, what are you scowling at? (trans. Devlin-Glass et. al., SL 400)

The dilemma for Collins is how should he respond. The ensuing exchange can be seen in terms of what Bourdieu calls a “strategy of condescension”. As he explains:

Will the dominant embrace the language of the dominated as a token of his concern for equality? If he does, there is a good chance that this will be done through what I call a strategy of condescension: by temporarily but ostentatiously abdicating his dominant position in order to “reach down” to his interlocutor, the dominant profits from this relation of domination, which continues to exist, by denying it. (Bourdieu & Wacquant, An Invitation 143)

Collins therefore reacts from his power derived from his linguistic capital, in this instance his knowledge of the Scots dialect gained from his extensive reading and love of the poetry of the eighteenth-century Scottish poet Robert Burns.

The first few lines of Burns’ poem “To A Mouse” (1785) should give some idea of the language Collins has learnt and remembered

Wee, sleekit, cowrin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty
Wi bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
Wi' murdering pattle.

Small, sleek, cowering, timorous beast,
O, what a panic is in your breast!
You need not start away so hasty
With hurrying scamper!
I would be loath to run and chase you,
With murdering plough-staff.

And so Collins responds to Terrible Tommy’s tirade with:

"Gude save's!" ... "wha'gar ye mak' sic' a splore? Hoo daur ye tak' on ye till misca' a body sae sair's ye dae, ye bletherin' coof? Hae ye gat oot the wrang side yir bed the morn?-ir d'ye tak' me fir a rief-randy?--ir wha' the de'il fashes ye the noo? Ye ken, A was compit doon ayont the boondary, an' A thocht A wad dauner owre an' hae a wee bit crack wi' ye the nicht. A wantit tae ken wha' like mon yir new maunager micht be, an' tae speer twa-three ither things firbye; bit

sin' yir sae skrunty, ye maun tak' yir domd sipper till yir ain bethankit ava, an' A'll gang awa' bock till ma ain comp. Heh!" (SL 155-56)

At this point Collins turns to go with “unconcealed resentment and contempt”.

The first sentence translates as follows: “What causes you to make such a commotion?” (SL 400). As Devlin-Glass states, Tom Collins is aided by his memory of Burns and “here in particular ‘Holy Willie’s Prayer’, l. 74, ‘Thou kens how he bred sic a splore” (SL 400). Other terms from Burns poetry include “reif randy” (plundering beggar), “coof” (fool), and “bethankit” (“ludicrous and irreverent term for giving thanks after meat”) (SL 400-1). On hearing Collins’ aggrieved response from what he believes is a fellow countryman, Terrible Tommy calls out to hang on a minute and is most apologetic as he blames his ill temper on swarms of mosquitoes that were pestering him. By effectively parodying Terrible Tommy’s speech, Collins ingratiates himself and is invited for a bit of supper and a chat. As Collins says of his victory, the “Irresistible had scored this time. Such is life” (SL 156). The power (the “Irresistible”) that Collins displays stems from his linguistic capital with which he manipulates and controls this particular encounter to his advantage.

Nonetheless, to use one’s knowledge in this way relies on deceiving others – something which may cause moral and ethical dilemmas. Although Collins has bested Terrible Tommy, his victory comes at a price. As he later reflects:

But one of the most unpleasant experiences I can now recall to mind was the sitting down with that unsuspecting fellow-mortal to his soda-bread and cold mutton, while I smiled, and smiled, and was a Scotchman. (SL 157)

Collins concludes his reminiscence with the dilemma one faces when one deceives.

My truthfulness--perhaps the only quality in which I attain an insulting pre-eminence--seemed outraged to the limit of endurance as I looked forward to the inevitable detection, soon or late, of the impromptu deception which, in spite of me, was expanding and developing like a snake-lie, or an election squabble.
(SL 157)

However, Collins' truthfulness is further tested when he again meets Terrible Tommy later in the novel. And despite the previously mentioned moral dilemma when Collins meets up with Terrible Tommy a few months later he cannot help himself and is driven by a "morbid longing to flaunt himself" before Tommy (SL 290).

When Terrible Tommy sees Collins he quite naturally greets him as a friend and fellow countryman. Collins affects a bemused and unknowing look and denies knowing Tommy, saying that he (Collins) is a Victorian and an Irishman (SL 290). This time it is Terrible Tommy who is taken aback and simply says, "Ye'se no be the mon A thocht ye was" (You are not the man I thought you was) (SL 290). Collins gains another victory over Tommy but as he reflects on Tommy's remark the "unconscious double-meaning of his words" again highlights the moral dilemma confronting Collins. This time, however, he is not fooling readers of his narrative as he revels in the power his cultural literacy has given him.

Knowledge and appreciation of Robert Burns also contributed to Furphy being identified as a Bulletin writer. In the point-counterpoint style that typified Bulletin journalism, Furphy had his 600 word article rebuffing detractors of Burns published in August 1896. Two articles published three weeks earlier attacked Burns' poetry. An unsigned article claimed that "Burns is not a great poet per se. But he is a great Scotch poet. And as a Scotch humorist he is unique and miraculous—a distinct and quaint interposition of PROVIDENCE" (1 August 1896, 6). The second article by one "Hinglish" was even more critical: "The bard [Burns] lives because he's Scotch, like a number of other frauds that are much less reprehensible" (1 August 1896, 6). Furphy's reply under the headline "'Tom Collins' writes to the Bulletin" focuses on the impact of Burns as a man in late eighteenth-century society: "But whilst he lived, the fitful, inspiration of the fearless truth seeker was upon him. Appealing to the emotions ... he

stands in history as one of society's redeemers" (22 August 1896). One may sense in Furphy's reply his own desire to be a late nineteenth-century redeemer of his society who would seek and expound truth on the evils of modernity.

The merits of Burns were again raised in a number of articles begun by A. G. Stephens in October 1897 and continuing till early 1898. This time the debate was carried on between George Black, a future editor of the Sydney Worker, and A. G. Stephens, the current editor of the Red Page, where the articles were published. Black was aggrieved by Stephens' argument that the "true conception of him [Burns] is removed from the conception which is legendary and Scottish" (23 October 1897). The value of Burns' Centenary edition of his works, according to Stephens, was that it allowed "exactly estimating Burns' rank as a poet". One of Black's main complaints was that critics like Stephens "views Burns through the spectacles of today" (5 February 1898).

What is relevant in this debate is why Furphy was ultimately given the last word in the debate. Furphy's response was printed alongside that of Stephens on the Red Page – the first time Furphy had been accorded this privilege. Two reasons for this indicate Furphy's recognition as a new writer within the literary field. Firstly, Stephens' response argued that Black was biased and that an "Australian free from the Scotch influence, [would] more likely judge Burns impartially from the standpoint of literature than was G.B., biased by Scots tradition and training". Furphy, it appears, in Stephens' strategy was selected to play the impartial judge. As is indicated in Furphy's article, he rejected Black's view and placed value on Burns precisely for the way his life and verse had created lessons for modern society in the 1890s.

The Burns whom we appreciate and honour lies beyond the Scottish Minstrel. George Black claims for his hero 'strength, directness, vividness, cosy certainty, passion wit, pathos, and lightness of touch'. Indisputable, but these guidelines

are reinforced by another, and that the rarest and most precious ever bestowed upon, or cultivated by, man. This is the quality of Moral Sense.

This moral sense, according to Furphy, allows man to see beyond “current orthodoxy” and “perceive the primary truth”. Burns is, in Furphy’s view, a prophet in seeking this primary truth that underpins the great minds of history “from Isaiah to Epictetus, from Moses to Marx”. As in his previous article on Burns, Furphy was aligning himself with the seekers of truth. The essential point of Furphy’s article on Burns is to reinforce the idea of his worth for modern society.

A second reason why Stephens may have published Furphy’s article on the Red Page is that by early 1898 Stephens knew more of Furphy’s literary talent beyond the small contributions he had published previously. In May 1897 Stephens had read, and was impressed by, the manuscript of Such is Life. Furphy, therefore, in Stephens’ eyes was an Australian writer, writing about Australia for Australians. As Stephens was considering publishing Such is Life, then Furphy’s literary status would be enhanced by publishing him on the Red Page. Stephens was introducing Furphy to the Bulletin readership to lessen the impact of publishing a relatively unknown, first-time novelist. It is again interesting to consider that when Furphy had another article published on the Red Page, it was a few months prior to the eventual publication of Such is Life in 1903.¹³

In the confrontation between Tom Collins and Terrible Tommy, the text reveals the power relationships between individuals vested through cultural literacy and not specifically through class or social status. However, the text seems to point to a certain disquiet about the exploitation of power through cultural literacy that may itself be read back onto a discourse on class. This uneasiness between power and class will be

¹³ Furphy only had three items published in the Red Page. The third occasion was to correct some errors in his biography that appeared in the Bulletin in September 1904 after Such is Life was published.

discussed in the next section of this chapter in order to address how discourses on race and ethnicity are added to disrupt preconceived ideas involving the place of Aboriginals in Australian society.

Aboriginal Australia

In his article on Joseph Furphy and Aboriginal Australians, Geoffrey Partington is strident in his demand that Australia's "current politically correct intellectuals must make up their minds about Furphy, Henry Lawson and pretty well the whole of the Australian Labor movement during its first century and more". He concludes his article by posing two questions: "Were they [i.e. Furphy, et. al.] wicked racists whom we must repudiate, together with the Southern Cross as well as the Union Jack? Or were they overwhelmingly fair-minded men and women who wanted to share with Australia's indigenous peoples the benefits of modernity, but who found it very difficult to do so?" ("Joseph Furphy and Genocide" 40). While Partington is right in identifying the widely different views on race, his questions nevertheless represent end points of a continuum along which authors like Furphy engaged with questions of race.

Partington's questions are not just for "politically correct intellectuals" for they provide an important starting point for any person attempting to understand black-white relationships during the 1890s. Just what constituted these relationships can in part be answered by considering the questions spawned by Partington's questions. What essentially was a fair-minded person in the 1890s? What were the benefits of modernity for Aboriginal Australians? What were the difficulties faced by people like Furphy? Although Furphy did not write extensively on Aboriginal Australians, his writing does engage with white cultural ideas about social evolution, indigeneity, and identity in Australian society during the 1890s.

As Stephen Cowden has stated, Such is Life “points to the ‘racialised’ nature of white Australian self-representation in that the attempt to constitute the white Australian identity is unavoidably caught up in the relationship between European settlers and Aborigines” (69). John Barnes suggests that as a child Furphy observed “the skills and customs” of Aboriginal Australians, and “as a man he acknowledged that they were unfairly regarded” on humanity’s scale. However,

in his writing his imaginative sympathy never seems to have extended to them, and his strong sense of social injustice never seems to have embraced the position of the Australian Aborigines in their own land. (Order 17)

For Frances Devlin-Glass this dichotomy in Furphy’s writing resulted from his attempts to resolve his “Christianity and experience of individuals ... with his sense that the Aboriginal race was doomed by its conservatism” (“Envoi” 111). Aboriginal “conservatism” was central to nineteenth-century theories of social evolution informing the doomed race theory that posited the inevitability of Aboriginal people’s eventual demise.

Russell McGregor rather succinctly states the dilemma confronting white Australians during the closing decades of the nineteenth-century:

The doomed race theory was neither merely a sop for disturbed consciences nor an empirical demographic prediction. More than anything else, it was a manifestation of ultimate pessimism in Aboriginal abilities. As the Enlightenment vision of universal human progress faded, as attempts to civilise and convert failed, and as racial attitudes hardened, it came to be considered that the best that could be done for the Aborigines was to protect them from overt injustice and brutality—for the short time they had left upon this earth. If, as increasingly came to be taken for granted, the Aborigines were incapable of attaining the status of civilisation, they were equally incapable of living within a civilised community. (Imagined Destinies 18)

In articles published in the Bulletin (“Black Australia”, 1902) and Steele Rudd’s Magazine (“A Vignette of Port Philip”, 1906), Furphy, through his narrator Tom Collins, certainly reveals his pessimism concerning Aboriginal Australians’ ability to survive in modern civilisation. Despite this pessimism, however, one can analyse

Furphy's writing to show that he also found room for special individuals who adapted to white society through a process of assimilation.

This ambivalence in Furphy's writing may derive from competing ideas of how to deal with minorities, or the 'Other'. The first concept is exclusion, whereby the Other is effectively banned or shunned in the dominant society. And here perhaps the ultimate act of banishment for Aboriginal Australians during the 1890s occurred with the Federation of Australia. The new Constitution for the Commonwealth of Australia only refers to Aboriginals once in the penultimate clause in a chapter entitled "Miscellaneous". The relevant clause (127) reads, "In reckoning the numbers of the people of the Commonwealth, or of a State or other part of the Commonwealth, aboriginal natives shall not be counted".¹⁴ As Brian Matthews records, there were many Australians unrecognised at the time of federation. However, Matthews explains,

[c]hief among these—though in a manner of those times people did not see it this way—were the Aborigines. They had no vote and no place in the federal structure. Their existence and condition did not detain or distract the framers of the constitution. The Aborigines were confidently thought to be "dying out"—a problem that would go away. (Federation 130-1)¹⁵

The second concept is assimilation, described by Zygmunt Bauman as a strategy "making the different similar; smothering of cultural and linguistic distinctions; forbidding all traditions and loyalties except those meant to feed the conformity to the new and all embracing order; promoting and enforcing one and only one measure of

¹⁴ This clause was not repealed until the referendum of 1967 when Aboriginals were officially numbered and recognised as Australians. The other two clauses in the "Miscellaneous" chapter of the constitution dealt with the location of the seat of parliament and the appointment of deputies to act for the Governor General.

¹⁵ Remarkably some Aborigines did vote in the federation conventions in 1898 and 1899. As Matthews again records:

The Aboriginal vote was needless to say small. A few Aboriginals did vote because they met voters' property qualifications: there were some enrolments in New South Wales and Victoria and in South Australia about 400 Aborigines were on the roll. The Aborigines at Point Macleay, including the women, voted. (Federation 109-10)

conformity” (Moses 32). Perhaps the most significant example of assimilation discourse in Furphy’s writing occurs in Such is Life in which Furphy posits his strategy to show how Toby, the half-caste Aboriginal rouseabout on Runnymede station, is a suitable subject for acceptance into white Australia. The assimilation discourse in Furphy’s writing stems, as Devlin-Glass has argued, from Furphy’s “unquestioned ethnocentrism, a fantasy of the progressive Australian (of European origin)” (“Touches” 370).

However, while this ethnocentrism is present in Furphy’s writing he is not extreme in his views and, furthermore, he does not explicitly propose a strategy of assimilation. This strategy must be deduced from careful reading of the dialogue between characters, such as the confrontations between Toby and the white Irish storekeeper Moriarty and between Toby and the Scots boundary rider Terrible Tommy.

Furphy’s depiction of Toby has been described by Geoffrey Partington as “attractive and positive” (39). He instances Toby’s expression of racial pride as well as his identifying with “White Australia, including a loyalty to New South Wales”. Partington also mentions Toby’s battle with Moriarty (39). Partington’s reading of Toby’s character is perhaps designed to see Furphy as an author not as a “wicked racist” but one of the “fair-minded” men who wanted to share modernity’s benefits with Aboriginal Australians (40).¹⁶ However, one is entitled to question here whether the assimilation strategy in Furphy’s writing really does provide Toby with the benefits of modern society. Toby’s victories in his exchanges with white protagonists only occur because his cultural literacy enables him to have the last word. However, cultural

¹⁶ One can argue Partington’s comments emanate from his positioning within the so-called history wars of the last decade. The debate rages over the historical revisionism centring on the validity of the “black arm band” portrayal of Aboriginal history since European arrival to Australia. Partington’s article (not dated) on Henry Reynolds’ historiography appears to confirm his positioning against the “black arm band” view of history. Reynolds and other writers defend their position in a collection of articles published in 2003 (see Manne, Whitewash). For an account of the history wars see Macintyre and Clark.

literacy cannot compensate for being identifiably black in a white racist society in which to be truly assimilated means adopting what Bauman identifies as the “traditions and loyalties” of “the new and all embracing order”. An important part of this process as Toby shows is to become essentially a racist.

In Such is Life it is possible to ascertain racial discourses at work from the spoken exchanges between black and white characters. In this respect, Toby, the half-caste Aboriginal Australian, is a pivotal character around whom Furphy manages to weave the complexity surrounding black-white relations in the 1890s. The power of persuasion stems from each character’s cultural literacy as each tries to dominate the other through the spoken word. The remainder of this chapter, therefore, engages with the literary field and Furphy’s writing as it “refracts” the broader social world. The term refract as used here is adapted from Bourdieu’s concept of the literary field as a microcosm of society where writers have specific interests. Broader issues are not ignored but the literary field “[i]nstead of ‘reflecting’ outside developments, in any straightforwardly linear way ... ‘refracts’ them through its own changing structure, in the way a prism refracts light” (McDonald 10). This becomes important when discussing Aboriginality in Furphy’s writing and particularly Such is Life. In this novel Furphy does not allow Tom Collins to digress on Aboriginality as he does with religion, for example. Furphy, however, does engage with the broader social issues on Aboriginality but here it is necessary to use the concept of cultural literacy to analyse the confrontational dialogue between Toby and white protagonists. In this context the interconnected discourses of race and identity involving Aboriginal Australians are identified and explicated from Furphy’s writing.

“Black Australia”

Joseph Furphy’s childhood memories of Aboriginal Australians are significant in contextualising his cultural values within the literary field of the 1890s. While Judith Furphy taught literacy skills to her children, the influence of Samuel Furphy was also significant, especially as it relates to Joseph’s writing. Although Barnes states that Samuel Furphy had “few opportunities to pursue intellectual interests” (Order 20), he did nevertheless develop a keen interest in Aboriginal Australians. On Ryrie Station the local Aborigines “were part of the everyday life of the Furphy family” (Barnes, Order 16). One of the only memories of Joseph’s childhood recalled by the family is an account of the magic performed by “Dr Murray”, a local Aboriginal medicine man, in his attempt to cure a sickly Joseph (Pescott 2).

Joseph Furphy’s attitudes toward Aboriginal Australians are expounded in a number of untitled paragraphs and an article – “Black Australia” – for the Bulletin. His memory was brought into play on these occasions, which he duly mentioned in his writing. In one article on Aboriginal superstition he claims that he was “writing from a childish, though perfectly distinct recollection” (Bulletin 12th September 1896 27). In another article he mentions an episode on Aboriginal customs from “pinafore-and petticoat days”, which again refers to his childhood experiences (Bulletin 6 October 1900 4).

Joseph Furphy’s most detailed accounts of Aboriginal customs are described in “Black Australia” (Bulletin 30 October 1902), which begins with a close account of the effectiveness of Aboriginal weaponry, particularly the boomerang. And in case readers may seek to question his authority on such subjects he gives an account of the use of such weaponry in his reconstruction of an actual incident that occurred near Ryrie Station in 1851. His authority to relate such events factually is derived, he declares,

from the first hand accounts of his mother and father, who lived among the Upper Yarra for eleven years where he was born in 1843, and from his own “recollections of the blacks [that] are checked and authenticated by the maturer observations” of his parents. These observations included his relationship with one particular member of the local Aborigines: “our blackfellows” as he referred to them.

I remember a blackfellow—a young man, tall and athletic, genial and intelligent—who frequented our place, with his lubra. In compliment to father he had assumed the name of “Sam”. My father—then incidentally collecting specimens for a private museum in the old country—offered to treat with Sam for his shield; but the good-natured blackfellow forced the shield on him as a present.

The passage brings to mind the disturbing trend throughout the nineteenth century in which white Australians collected Aboriginal artefacts and more disturbingly removed and collected Aboriginal bones for so-called scientific experiments. Furphy was aware of the removal of Aboriginal artefacts and bones. He escapes any sort of censure by having Sam present Furphy’s father with the shield.

Moreover, while Furphy may recall this as a positive example of relationships with the good-natured blackfellow, the implications for other black white relationships are also present in this passage. In particular Furphy does not reveal the Aboriginal name of Sam. This in effect robs Sam of his Aboriginal identity. The practice of giving Aborigines a single name has consequences for half-caste Aborigines who do not have a surname which identifies their fathers. In Furphy’s writing the half-caste Aboriginal characters are given the single names of Billy and Toby. As will become clear later the absence of a surname for Toby allows readers to speculate about a white father, which only serves to complicate his identity. Even when Furphy does give his Aboriginal characters a surname, confusion still occurs as to the identity of the character. This confusion can be seen in an episode from the Buln-buln and the Brolga as Bob Bruce relates one of his adventures to Mrs Falkland-Pritchard: "Well, one night we sent Paddy

O'Rafferty across the rise to look at the horses—". At this point the lady interrupts and asks: "There were three of you in the party, Mr Bruce?" At which Bob Bruce replies: "No missus, on'y me an' Bat. Paddy was a blackfeller" (BB 81). When identifying a man as Aboriginal, his last name is elided and his white parentage hidden. Even though Paddy has a white name and one presumes is a half-caste, his identity within white society is not recognised beyond that of "blackfeller" – his white parentage is not acknowledged. In Furphy's novels the naming of a character does not necessarily truly identify the character. In a typical humorous frame of mind Tom Collins' stallion is called Cleopatra. Moreover, the essential romance of Such is Life hinges on recognising that Nosy Alf is Molly Cooper in disguise. However, when it comes to naming Aboriginal characters Furphy highlights the dilemma that arises from giving Aboriginals white names in a society that does not recognise that half castes are in many respects as much white as they are black. When in "Vignette" Furphy does give Aboriginals their Aboriginal names, it is not so much as a sign of respect but as a way of distancing the full-blood Aboriginal people and their customs, which are assumed to be doomed to extinction, from those of white society.

Through his narrator Tom Collins, two texts are particularly relevant in illustrating Furphy's pessimism towards Aboriginal Australians and their ability to survive in modern white society. In the first paragraph of "Black Australia" lies an acknowledgement of the individual capabilities of Aborigines counterbalanced with their culture that is fated to end.

Despite the undeniable brain power of the blacks, their extreme conservatism has completed its circle in a certain feckless pliancy, which is not adaptability. They welcome the steel tomahawk but they keep it no sharper than the old diorite [stone] implement. Iron bound prescription has atrophied the initiative of the race, dooming it to a future like its past, or no future at all. Therefore distraction means collapse and dissolution. Actual injury could only accelerate an end which the mere advent of a disturbing element had made inevitable.

Within their unchanging civilization lies the seed of the Aboriginals' eventual demise. Tom Collins does not regard the impact of white settlement (or invasion)—the “disturbing element”—as being the final arbiter of Aboriginal destruction, which is firmly placed by Collins on their own inability to adapt.

To emphasise this point Furphy takes up this argument again in “A Vignette of Port Phillip” (first published in Steele Rudd's Magazine in December 1906). In this story Collins imaginatively recreates the events surrounding the battle between the warriors previously described in “Black Australia”. He begins by recounting how the recent abolition of slavery in Britain and her colonies affected “popular thought in the direction of dark-skinned races”. This resulted in a “moral atmosphere” that contributed to a recognition of “common manhood” whatever a person's colour. This is illustrative of what Devlin-Glass calls Furphy's monogenism (“which posited a single origin and the fundamental similarity and equality of races”) and therefore a critique of other views (polygenism) that positioned Aboriginal Australians as racially distinct and subsequently on the lower level of humanity (“Envoi” 114). One of the more extreme examples was printed in the Melbourne Review of 1896, when a certain D. Macalister wrote of Aboriginal Australians: “As a people they bordered most nearly on the verge of animalism ... and moreover, as a people, they will soon have ceased to exist, being destined seemingly to sink in the struggle of the races”.

Despite these views, in the 1840s in the Upper Yarra, according to Tom Collins, “popular sentiment” and colonial directives contributed to the “defenceless” Aborigines being “better understood” than elsewhere (“Vignette”). Furphy was perhaps recalling Governor Gipps who brought to justice, and eventual execution, the seven white men for the Myall Creek Massacre of 1838 (M. Roe “1830-50” 118). However, according to Alan Frost, while some of the “enlightened ... administrators, such as Bourke, Gipps

and Stirling”, could legislate to protect Aboriginal Australians they could do little to counteract the non-humanitarian views of many white Australians (“Perceptions” 107).

Collins, however, is particularly strident in his own views in positioning himself on the side of the “humane observers” of Aboriginal Australians. He is proud to declare that in the Port Phillip area during the 1840s “happily, no rash act of hostility on either side precipitated a collision; and the cordial relations of the two races remained unbroken to the last (“Vignette”). One of these humane observers (known to Samuel and Judith Furphy) was James Dawson, who is described by Barnes as an “independent-minded and far-sighted man who had great sympathy and respect for the Aborigines, on whom he became something of an expert in later years” (Order 10).

Nevertheless, Collins’ defence (in what Devlin-Glass calls Furphy’s “passion” without a sense of irony) is not a straight forward portrayal of Aboriginal Australians and their “undisputed possession of a tribal heritage” before white settlement (“Envoi” 115). Devlin-Glass and her co-editors of the annotated edition of Such is Life speculate that when Collins uses the phrase “her history a blank” with regard to Australia, he appears to be subscribing to the theory of Terra Nullius “that completely disregards the long history of the country’s inhabitants”. This, they have argued, is at odds with views expressed in “Black Australia”, in which “Furphy’s evident respect” for Aboriginal Australians recognises they “had reached a degree [of civilization] beyond that of our own lineal forefathers in the mere yesterday of ethnographical record” (SL 349).

Tom Collins’ use of the phrase “history a blank” requires further investigation. As Henry Reynolds points out the traditional meaning of terra nullius was that of “a land belonging to no one”. As he further explains:

Confusion has abounded because terra nullius has two different meanings, usually conflated. It means both a country without a sovereign recognised by European authorities and a territory where nobody owns any land at all, where no tenure of any sort exists. (Law, 14-15)

This does not mean Aborigines did not inhabit the land nor does it disregard a long history of Aboriginal existence but rather means that for the European invaders Aborigines did not have sovereignty over the land.

European powers adopted the view that countries without political organisation, recognisable systems of authority or legal codes could legitimately be annexed. It was a case of supplying sovereignty where none existed. (Law 15)

What Europeans settlers disregarded in their annexation of Australia was that Aborigines had complex cultural relationships in which tribal land was a crucial part of their lives. As Devlin-Glass herself points out:

Because of the poor quality of ethnology conducted in Australia in the nineteenth century, Furphy and his contemporaries had no way of understanding the purposes of tradition and the kinds of deep knowledge of environment that were protected by gerontocratic ways of knowing. (“Envoi” 115)

This suggests that for many white Australians their knowledge of Aborigines was essentially superficial and reflected hearsay or individual personal observation. Furthermore, the written word on Aboriginal Australians came from white Australians. Just what sort of history could be recorded can be gauged from a conversation between Bob Bruce and Mrs Falkland-Pritchard in the final pages of The Buln-buln and the Brolga. Wanting to know more about Aboriginal culture from Bruce – “a high authority on their manners and customs” – the conversation ensues as to the efficacy of the boomerang as an “engine” of Aboriginal inventiveness (BB 97-98). Bob Bruce dismisses the lady’s notion that the boomerang is a “peculiar engine” with, “Oh, no, it ain’t a engine ... Blackfellers couldn’t go that lot” (BB 99). Bruce is dismissive of Aboriginal knowledge. However, in “Black Australia” Tom Collins goes to great lengths to explain the boomerang as “a scientific masterpiece; a marvellous successful adaptation”. Furthermore, the lady attempts to argue that because the boomerang predated the bow and arrow that there is “presumptive evidence of great antiquity” (BB

99). However, Bruce's answer is not directed towards answering the lady's argument but rather answers in a way that reinforces his personal knowledge of Aboriginal culture underpinned as it is by the dying race theory.

But, as I was sayin' jist now, it ain't worth while to know anything about a class of people that's had their day. Curious thing, missus, fusty news o' the whitefellers gives the black fellers a jar, all over the country; an' they don't bother much about anything after. Fact, most tribes is dyin' out o' their own accord, even went they ain't interfered with. Small loss. (BB 99)

Prefacing his last statement with the word "fact" seems to convince the lady as she describes the fact as "very interesting". Desiring to know more, the lady implores Bruce to stay another day so she can avail herself of this "rare opportunity" to gain every detail of his knowledge about Aboriginal culture (BB 100). The lady's desire is not just driven by idle curiosity but rather as an opportunity to relate this information to a wider audience. As she says in her last exchange with Bruce: "You know, Mr Bruce, I write occasionally for the Australasian, and sometimes for the Bulletin" (BB 100). One can only speculate on what kind of history Mrs Falkland-Pritchard would have written and had published, based as it would most likely have been on Bob Bruce's interesting facts. Furphy's last fictional prose was published, not by his beloved Bulletin, but by Steele Rudd's Magazine (1906) as "A Vignette of Port Phillip" that emphasises Bob Bruce's dying race theory surrounding Aboriginal culture. By 1903 Edmonds had taken over the reigns of the Bulletin and changed its motto from "Australia for the Australians" to "Australia for the white man". In Furphy's endeavours to be published (his novels were being rejected by all publishers at this time) he exploited the theme of Aboriginal demise, one of particular appeal to publishers.

Contradictions in writing on Aboriginal Australians are not confined to Furphy. According to Xavier Pons, Henry Lawson called on his childhood memories to express "affection for the blacks". Pons, however, is dismissive of Lawson's narrator in "Black

Joe” by arguing that his description of one particular blackfellow as a “gentle, good-humoured, easy going old fellow” is stereotypical of most descriptions of old black fellows in civilization. For Pons, Lawson is simply reflecting society’s stereotypical attitudes “without much effort on the writer’s part to understand their culture and their attitudes” (Out of Eden 175).

However, by only focusing on one aspect in the story Pons ignores the complexity of Lawson’s position 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 from other writers. As Christopher Lee argues, these constraints mean Lawson’s representation of Aborigines in his writing is at best ambivalent (“Status” 76). It is this ambivalence then which resists attempts to categorise Lawson as stereotypically racist as Pons contends. As Lee argues in his critique of “Black Joe”, Lawson’s “wry perspective provides access to cultural tensions in a way that is conducive to understanding even when it is not entirely free of the racist assumptions of its time” (Status 79).

Joseph Furphy is also condemned by Pons. Despite acknowledging that Furphy was a Christian, Pons nevertheless writes: “But then in his [Furphy’s] opinion, the Aborigines, no doubt failed to qualify as fully human” (197). To support his argument he refers to an example from Such is Life when he believes Furphy, in a “light-hearted and condescending” tone, exhibits the “indifference and outright prejudice” of Australian writers in his description of “King Jacky XLVIII”:

When his royal pleasure is to emulate the lilies of the field, he simply goes that way; thus literally excelling Solomon in all his glory. The Evolution of Intelligence has stripped him of every other prerogative; but there its stripping power ends, and his own begins. (Pons 195-96; SL 114)

While this can rightly be said to be an example of Collins' pessimism toward Aborigines, there is more going on here than simply racial prejudice. In the wider context of the narrative as a whole, this particular section from Such is Life can be read as a critique of the attitudes of white society. The emphasis on King Jacky's nakedness is a reminder that this passage occurs in the story where Collins is trying to avoid being caught naked. White society's strictures do not allow for Collins to "emulate the lilies of the field" and the narrative continues with his adventures to procure clothes for himself. What this effectively highlights is how nakedness for a white European robs him of his social identity within white society. Clothes in white society form part of a person's body capital in that a person's place or status in society is determined as much by what one wears as it is by what one says. Although Tom is knowledgeable and possesses linguistic capital his attempts to avoid being seen naked means he knows that society will only view him on the lowly rung of society – a position occupied by the Aborigines. Clothes are not the only signifier of position within society. As Bourdieu argues, in Distinction, "biological differences are underlined and symbolically accentuated by differences in bearing, differences in gesture, posture and behaviour which expresses a relationship to the social world". Moreover, the "sign-bearing, sign-wearing body is also a producer of signs which are physically marked by the relationship to the body" (192).

Furthermore, in giving this particular Aboriginal Australian the title of King Jacky XLVIII, Collins places Black Australia alongside other civilizations with their continuous and ages old history. In The Buln-buln and the Brolga Collins effectively highlights the contradictions inherent in trying to understand white Australia's attitudes to the different histories colliding in the new land of Australia. Speaking of himself and his friend Thompson, Collins muses on a man's old age within the 'ages of man':

And I trust that if we shall be spared to assume the venerable age so beautifully and coincidentally pictured by both the Royal Sages, Jacky XLVIII and Solomon:—“Bimeby plenty plour-bag longa cobra”¹⁷—“The almond tree shall flourish”¹⁸ we shall not be found whining over the transparent fact that our days are in yellow leaf.... (BB 36)

To regard Pons’ example as simply expressing Furphy’s racial prejudice underplays the point that Furphy was acting under the structured constraints within the field and in order to be published was writing within a style influenced by the Bulletin. As Devlin-Glass states, “Furphy was to an extent the product of the Bulletin” (“Envoi” 108). Therefore, Furphy in many respects was ‘playing the game’ by following the rules and expressions acceptable to and inherent in the pages of the Bulletin, where the final word on what was published was subject to acceptance by Archibald, Stephens, and the other editors. Therefore, one must consider Furphy’s attitudes towards Aboriginal Australians as an aspect of his desire to be positioned within the literary field as a member of the Bulletin school of writers. The magazine’s position on Aboriginal Australians was expressed in 1880, its first year of publication:

To some extent those who during the last few months have been bringing more prominently under public notice the sad case of the Australian aborigines are acting the part of JOB’S comforters, for they are directing attention to an evil which is utterly irremediable and amenable only to palliative treatment. The Australian aborigine is a doomed man ... what is happening in Queensland now once happened every day in New South Wales. It is too late to talk of preserving the aboriginal race. It is and always was Utopian to try and Christianise it. Rum and European clothes have ruined the people who half a century ago were temperate and naked. The aboriginal race is moribund. All we can now do is to give an opiate to the dying man, and when he dies bury him respectably.

(19 June 1880)

Fifteen years later in 1895 these views were still prevalent in the magazine. While not as outspoken as the editorial piece above, the following short poem from Edmund Fisher reinforces the familiar nineteenth-century theme – the last of his tribe – whereby Aboriginal Australians were fated to disappear. Although by the 1890s this theme of

¹⁷ “By and by, there will be plenty of white hair on my head” (BB note 36b 133).

¹⁸ “Ecclesiastes 12:5 in the context of a discussion of old age” (BB note 36b 133).

“last of his tribe” was a cliché, it nevertheless continued to underpin racist attitudes held by many white Australians about the inability of Aboriginal Australians to continue to exist in modern society:

“Tommy Avoca” last of the Avoca tribe of Aborigines died in Melbourne Hospital the other day of injuries sustained through falling down the steps of a grog-shop.”

I
 Never will budgeriee white-man’s gibe
 Vex Tommy Avoca more
 The last man of his ancient tribe
 Has gone to the Golden Shore
 He did not fall like a fighting chief
 From the blow of a foeman’s club
 Old Tommy Avoca came to grief
 On the steps of a Melbourne pub

II
 He passed away in a Christian bed
 But at the last, maybe,
 His thoughts went back to his comrades dead
 And the time when their land was free
 The ward grew dark with forest gloom
 And he sniffed his native scrub
 This poor old savage who met his doom
 On the steps of a Melbourne pub.

Furphy’s two texts on Aboriginal Australians (“Black Australia” and “Vignette”) express the pessimistic view that the essential savagery of Aborigines marks them off as Other and doomed to die. This view is depicted when the warriors Sam and Baradyuk die in intertribal battles. If one accepts that Furphy was influenced by his reading of the Bulletin then one can readily appreciate his commitment to espousing a point of view that emphasises the doomed-race theory about Aboriginal Australians.

Simply to regard “King Jacky” as an example of Furphy’s racial prejudice ignores the contradictions and irony surrounding the so-called royalty of Aboriginal people. On the one hand, Devlin-Glass and her co-editors state that the conferring of Aboriginal titles was an expression of white society’s recognition of Aboriginal

Australians “who distinguished themselves in the eyes of the non-Aboriginal population” with the aim of “manipulating particular individuals into positions of dominance over the wider Aboriginal community”. On the other hand, the conferring of titles has also been credited with being a “respectful reference” for particular leaders conferred by members of an Aboriginal community (SL 114:1 378-9).

Moreover, although the practice of white Australians conferring royal recognition on favoured Aboriginal Australians was common throughout the nineteenth century, Collins’ reference to “King Jacky” is further complicated if one considers an example taken from Henry Reynolds’ Black Pioneers. Reynolds describes the rewards offered to John Piper, an Aboriginal tracker who was of great assistance to Thomas Mitchell in his explorations of 1836.

The Bathurst Aborigine, known to the Europeans as John Piper, received an old firelock gun, blankets, Mitchell’s red coat, as well as a coked hat and feather which had once belonged to Governor Darling. When offered a brass breastplate inscribed with the title ‘King’, he declared there were ‘too many Kings already’, and opted instead for the title ‘Conqueror of the Interior’. (17)

Collins’ patronising humour may express a sense that this practice by the 1890s had become cliché. In Such is Life, Toby, the Aboriginal half-caste, is given the sobriquets of prince, H.R.H (His Royal Highness), and heir-apparent. Ivor Indyk sees this differently where “there is ambiguity of the aboriginal’s status, normally taken to be little above that of the Chinese” (305). However, he argues that Furphy, in Such is Life, goes “out of his way to dignify the aboriginals’ standing, with titles like ‘Prince’, ‘HRH’, and ‘Jacky XLVIII”” (305). Nevertheless, there is a certain irony here in that Anglo-European occupation of Australia presupposed the absence of sovereignty, which allowed Aboriginal Australians to be dispossessed from their land.

For Furphy to have Collins deny (in Such is Life) the existence of prior Aboriginal occupation of Australia means their demise in the nineteenth century would

focus more attention on the violent clash between black and white cultures for ownership of the land. As an admirer of the Bulletin, Furphy was influenced by this in his thinking about Aboriginal Australians. But his position in “Vignette” also suggests that he assumes white men like his father are Christians and “humane observers” rather than perpetrators of intentional violence towards Aboriginals. By stressing the unchanging civilization of the Aborigines, and their inherent inability to adapt, Furphy firmly was able to be published by positioning himself in the debate of the 1890s by writing on the inevitable demise of Aboriginal Australians having causes other than white aggression.

“on equal terms”

In Such is Life, linguistic capital enables Toby, a half-caste Aboriginal rouseabout, to position himself as the equal of any white man within Australian society. During an exchange with the Irish storekeeper Moriarty, Toby’s quick wit and command of language – spoken in idiomatic English that is readily understood – indicates the half caste’s ability to make a “successful crossing” into white society. However, there is a price to pay for Toby’s victory. Through this exchange of dialogue between Moriarty and Toby, Furphy, because of his “ethnocentrism”, as Devlin-Glass has argued, quite subtly shows that Aboriginal Australians will only be admitted into white society when they adopt white (European) cultural values (“Touches” 370). This is, in effect, assimilation discourse whereby individual Aboriginals like Toby lose their partial Aboriginal identity and sense of belonging amid Furphy’s desires for his white Australia.

As a prelude to the encounter between Moriarty and Toby, Tom Collins sets the scene by describing a humorous encounter between Toby and the Chinese cook. Toby has just emerged from the cookhouse after pilfering a lump of sugar when “a piece of

firewood whizzed through the open door, smote H.R.H. [His Royal Highness] full on Love of Approbation [head], ricocheted from his gun-metal skull, and banged against the weatherboard wall of an out-house” (SL 229). Toby’s reaction, which exhibits typical white racist attitudes, is simply to laugh and enquire of the Chinese cook if he will ever “go home”. Toby’s racist remark towards the Chinese cook is consistent with the views of many white Australians in the 1890s and Furphy shows how this is an important step for Toby to become assimilated into and accepted by white society. A crucial point to assimilation strategy is that to be accepted means in many respects adopting the racist language of the dominant group to display one’s solidarity with the group. Toby has not been floored by the blow and leaves the “baffled cook” to recover his stick and return to his hut (SL 230). The cook is not the only one who is baffled. Moriarty and Collins have also witnessed the scene and Moriarty’s response is indicative of what Stephen Cowden describes as the “extent to which Such Is Life is complicit in the profound racism of the period” (69).

On witnessing the scene between Toby and the cook Moriarty questions the “use of arguing that a blackfellow belongs to the human race” for a similar blow to the head “would have laid one of us out” (SL 230). This remark is a good example of what Cowden calls the “‘racialised’ nature of white Australian self-representation” (69). Toby in this instance is identified as non-human, as ‘Other’, and therefore not belonging to white Australia as “one of us”.

Here one needs to clarify an essential difference between ethnocentrism and racism. According to Richard Broome ethnocentrism is a “basic prejudice” that stems from the “belief in the superiority of one’s group and culture”. Racism, on the other hand, is a more extreme prejudice that goes beyond “feelings of cultural superiority” to the point

where two groups see themselves as being physically and racially (as opposed to just culturally) different and when one group claims the alleged inferiority of the other group is caused by the innate physical differences of its members. This more extreme form of prejudice occurs when one group seeks to exploit the other through invasion, economic control or slavery.

(Broome's emphasis, Aboriginal 91)

Racism, Broome further suggests, is fundamentally unscientific

because no satisfactory test has so far been devised to prove that traits and abilities in people come from their racial heritage rather than their own genetic, social and environmental background. (Aboriginal 92)

This is an important point, for if people's racial traits made them fundamentally different then trying to educate the 'Other' and assimilate them into the dominant society, even if the Other were willing to be assimilated, would not, could not, work.¹⁹

Furphy, however, believed in applying his ideas of what constituted his common humanity. As Devlin-Glass has pointed out, Furphy

conceded, in line with his monogenist principles which in many respects underwrote his Christian socialism, that individuals, especially if they proved educable, were equal in every particular to him. ("Envoi", 115)

Although Broome does not mention unsatisfactory tests to determine traits and abilities in people, throughout the nineteenth century Aboriginal skulls were collected for study.²⁰ Furphy takes up this theme in "Vignette" when Collins relates how the grave of Baradyuk is plundered by the ethnologically minded surveyor.

No one had discerned the capabilities of the intellectual and amiable Aboriginal as clearly as he, but scientific considerations were paramount in his mind. On a moonlight night he opened the grave of Baradyuk, carefully noted the mode of burial, and secured the skull for his private collection. Then he refilled the grave, and endeavoured to efface all traces of his visit (383).

The removal of the skull by the surveyor and the attempt to disguise his presence perhaps reflects Furphy's contempt for the practice of classifying Aboriginal peoples

¹⁹ Broome has stated that during the early nineteenth-century Europeans were generally ethnocentric (i.e. asserted their cultural superiority). However, the shift "from ethnocentrism to hard-line racism ... was finally completed well before 1900" by which time it came to dominate the thinking of most Australians (92). For the development of institutionalised racism see Francis (1996).

²⁰ For an account of this practice in Australia see Turnbull (1998).

according to so-called scientific studies. However, Furphy apparently was not against the practice of collecting Aboriginal artefacts. In “Black Australia” Furphy makes it clear that his father, although engaging in the practice of collecting specimens for a museum in Ireland, offered to pay “Sam” for his shield but “the good-natured blackfellow forced the shield on him as a present” (403). Nevertheless, one can argue that both practices essentially disregard Aboriginal Australians’ cultural heritage. Removal of bones and cultural artefacts take from that society the very things which help constitute its collective identity.

Cowden’s argument quite correctly represents the familiar racist discourse inherent not only in Such is Life but also in the Bulletin during the 1890s. However, in the ensuing dialogue between Toby and Moriarty, Furphy counter-poses this simple black-as-Other discourse with the strategy of assimilation that in its ultimate denial of Aboriginal identity is just as insidious as overt racism. A crucial point of assimilation is that to be accepted and to lose one’s own identity means in many respects adopting the racist language of the dominant group to display one’s solidarity with the group.

Moriarty attempts to assert his authority over Toby by telling him to go and fetch Tom Collins’ horses from the paddock. Toby’s quick-witted response reflects his cultural literacy.

Impidence ain't worth a d--n, if it ain't properly carried out, “replied the inferior creation. “Think you git a note a week jist for eatin’ your (adj.) tucker an’ orderin’ people about? I done my day's work. Fork over that plug o’ tobacker you’re owin’ me about the lenth o’ that snake. Otherways, shut up. We ain’t on equal terms while that stick o’ tobacker's between us. (SL 230-1)

Toby’s reply is couched in terms that point out how Aboriginal workers could be exploited. It might seem strange at first that an argument could break out over a “plug o’ tobacker”. However, Toby’s reference to “work” and being owed the tobacco is a reminder that for Aboriginal workers tobacco could constitute their wages. As Reynolds

argues: “As far as Europeans were concerned, the great advantage of Aboriginal labour was that it was cheap and could ... be obtained in return for tobacco, food scraps or old clothes” (Black Pioneers 206). However, by allowing Toby to speak for himself, Furphy quite subtly shows how the “inferior creation” in this instance is the equal of the white man. This quite effectively shows how an individual’s linguistic capital can disrupt notions of power derived solely from one’s status in society.

Toby’s impudence is met with Moriarty’s threats that he will “straighten” him out. This time when Toby replies he displays a parodic wit that shows the extent of his vocabulary.

“No catchee, no havee, ole son!” laughed the prince. “The divil resave ye, Paddy! Macushla, mavourneen, tare-an'-ouns! whirroo! Bloody ind to the Pope!” (SL 231)

Toby’s use of parody along with his articulately spoken English means he is a special Aboriginal, someone Furphy posits as acceptable in his white Australian society. In effect Toby can be positioned as a member of a class of literate and articulate Aboriginals. This is made clearer, as Devlin-Glass (et. al.) quite rightly points out, that “of all the non Anglo-Celtic Australian characters, the only ones who speak idiomatic Australian English are Toby, and Billy”, the half-caste Aboriginal characters. Moreover, “Toby is also the only character apart from Tom [Collins] who parodies other people’s dialects or accents” (SL 432). It is important to realise that Toby’s dialectical skills should not be interpreted as simply repeating parrot-fashion words and phrases he has heard while growing up on Runnymede station. Toby’s language skills constitute his linguistic capital that enables him to exercise real social power. Moreover, this linguistic capital is transferable to other social situations in the wider community and allows Toby to further resist attempts by white Australians to assign him to a lowly social status.

Moriarty responds to what he regards as Toby's impudence with a threat that indicates the way in which troublesome Aboriginals were often treated in nineteenth-century Australia.

“Toby,” said Moriarty, with a calmness intended to seem ominous; “if I had a gun in my hand, I'd shoot you like a wild-dog. But I suppose I'd get into trouble for it,” he continued scornfully. (SL 231)

To which Toby quickly responds: “Jist the same 's for layin' out a whitefeller” (SL 231). Not only are Toby's language skills the equal of Moriarty's but Toby also emphasises that he is equal before the law. Toby is perhaps recalling a much produced expression of racial equality: Governor Arthur's (1830) commissioned pictorial representation of the “Proclamation to the Aborigines”, which shows that, as Toby knows, the murder of an Aborigine by a white man would result in the hanging of the white man. Reynolds has called this a radical document, because not only does the document portray equality before the law but also because the document suggests that intermarriage could take place between black and white. However, intermarriage “would have been highly offensive to colonists later in the [nineteenth] century” (Dispossession, 184).

However, the irony here is that although Toby states that both Aboriginal and white Australians are subject to the same law this was not the case. The trial and subsequent execution of the white Australians convicted of murdering Aborigines at Myall Creek in 1837 is the notable exception for Aboriginal justice before white Australian law. The reality, as Furphy would have been well aware, was that Aboriginal Australians throughout the nineteenth century were not simply fading away but in many instances were the victims of violence in which equality before the law was ignored. The worst excesses of a thirty year reign of terror against the Aborigines in Queensland

had only begun to be curtailed at the time Furphy was writing Such is Life in the mid 1890s.

Unable to match wits with Toby because of the potent force of his linguistic capital, Moriarty tries to put Toby in his proper place by again resorting to his (Moriarty's) perceived social status or power to control the situation.

“Permit me to suggest,” said Moriarty, after a pause, “that if you contemplated your own origin and antecedents, it would assist you to approximate your relative position on this station. Don't you think a trifle of subordination would be appropriate... to a blasted varmin like you? Permit me to remind you that Mrs. Montgomery, senior, gave a blanket for you when you were little.”(SL 231)

Moriarty's attempt to overpower Toby fails again:

“I know she did,” replied the prince, with just a suspicion of vain-glory. “Nobody would be fool enough to give a blanket for you when you was little. Soolim!” (SL 231).

The remarks by Moriarty on Toby's “origin and antecedents” and the exchange of a blanket for the child Toby raise questions surrounding his real identity. Seen from a twenty-first century perspective Mrs Montgomery's “exchange” may be viewed as evidence contributing to what is now recognised as the stolen generations of Aboriginal children, especially half-caste children. Furthermore, the last decade has witnessed considerable Aboriginal agitation for recognition and redress of past wrongs. Here Tom Collins records what was a common practice in the Australian bush during the nineteenth century, indicating that the removal of Aboriginal children has a long history in Australia.

Julian Croft has speculated that Collins' reference to Toby as “heir-apparent” means he might be the bastard son of Montgomery, a squatter and the managing partner of Runnymede station (Life 321). Collins' initial description begins: “Now he [Toby] approached us, taking two letters and a newspaper from the tail-pocket of what had once been an expensive dress-coat of Montgomery's” (SL 226). Toby, Collins appears to

suggest, is wearing his father's cast offs. Furthermore, the exchange of a blanket may well confirm that Toby was raised by Mrs Montgomery. If this is true, and once again this can only be speculated upon, Toby's command of English and his ability to read – he knows who the letters are addressed to and he is able to read the race results in the newspaper (SL 226) – means he is one of the “educable” Aboriginals and therefore a prime candidate that Furphy posits is suitable to be assimilated into white society. This also helps to explain why Toby through his quick wit is able to best Moriarty.

However, assimilation is not about confrontation but about acceptance of the dominant society's cultural values. And this can be seen from the final exchange between Toby and his protagonist. As Collins gets up to go and fetch his horses (remember Moriarty had originally told Toby to do this), Toby becomes compliant:

“Howld your howlt, chaps,” interposed the good-natured half-caste. “I'll run up your horses for you. I was on'y takin' a rise out a o' Mr. Mori-(adj.)-arty, Esquire; jist to learn him not to be quite so suddent.” And in another minute, he was striding down the paddock, with his bridle and stockwhip. (SL 231)

Toby has made his point: he is equal and one of the “chaps”. Furphy too has made his point: assimilation is about acceptance. As Devlin-Glass has stated, Furphy “orientalises Aborigines ... admitting them to full humanity only when like Toby ... they show themselves willing to put on the appurtenances or adopt the practices of European ‘civilization’” (emphasis added, “Touches” 370). Toby certainly acquiesces to the dominant Anglo-European values. However, does Toby really have a choice? If he was taken from his Aboriginal mother and raised and educated as a European, his identity as a young man is inextricably linked to white Anglo-European cultural values. To be accepted, to be one of the “chaps”, is one of the fundamental desires of humanity. For Toby this, at least in part, occurs in white society.

Being Aboriginal and trying to belong to a white society that is fundamentally racist is no easy path to pursue as another confrontation between Toby and another

white protagonist, Terrible Tommy, reveals. In this confrontation Toby's linguistic capital is such that Terrible Tommy resorts to racial stereotyping in his endeavour to best Toby. As a group of men are sitting around in a shack chatting away, Toby, on hearing Tommy's speech, remarks, "I say, Scotty... Egglefeggan's the place where they eat brose--ain't it?" (SL 292). Brose is Scottish oatmeal porridge. This question from Toby is good natured and once again articulately spoken in recognisable idiomatic Australian English. Perhaps sensing that Toby's language skills are equal to or better than his own, like Moriarty before him, Tommy attempts to dismiss Toby and assign him what he (i.e. Tommy) believes is Toby's proper place. Tommy launches into his tirade with, "A'll haud nae deeskission wi' the produc' o' hauf-a-dizzen generations o' slavery," ... A dinna attreebute ony blame tae yir ain sel', laddie; bit ye canna owrecom the kirse o' Canaan." (I'll have no discussion with the product of half-a dozen generations of slavery ... I do not attribute blame to you personally; but you cannot overcome the curse of Canaan) (SL 292).

As Devlin-Glass *et. al.* points out, Tommy's curse of Canaan is a reference from the book of Genesis in the Old Testament. Noah's curse on his son Ham (who saw his father naked) was servitude: "a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren."

Traditionally, Ham is regarded as dark-skinned, and the ancestor of the 'Hamitic race': his sons founded Canaan, Ethiopia, Egypt, Lybia [sic] and several African tribes. This version of history was long used to justify slavery. (SL 460)

In rejecting Tommy's epithet of slavery Toby goes further by proclaiming that he is the rightful possessor of the land on which they sit. "Cripes! do you take me for a (adj.) mulatter? ... Why, properly speaking, I own this here (adj.) country, as fur as the eye can reach" (SL 292). This statement by Toby is what Partington describes as expressing racial pride. In doing so Toby knows that he has been dispossessed of the land which forms part of his cultural identity. However, Toby's statement may also indicate that he

has been doubly dispossessed. If, as the novel tentatively suggests, he is the half-caste son of the station owner Montgomery, then not being recognised as such means Toby will not share or inherit the landed property belonging to his father. What this exchange serves to demonstrate is that Toby not only speaks good English but, just as importantly, that he understands Tommy's Scots English. Tommy responds with another racial slur but this time updates his argument using nineteenth-century arguments on race: "Od, ye puir, glaikit, misleart remlet o' a perishin' race...." (Oh you poor, stupid, mistaught remnant of a perishing race (SL 460).

However, as readers are well aware by now, Toby's education is such that he is able to have the last word: "Oh, speak English, you (adj.) bawbee-hunter!" (SL 292). By using this term Toby is parodying the speech of Tommy. Moreover, Toby throws a racist stereotype back at Tommy by calling him a penny-pinching Scotsman, thus reinforcing himself as part of the dominant group and Tommy now as Other. The epithet from Toby puts Tommy in his place and no more is heard of him. Moreover, to affirm that Toby is now assimilated into white society no more is heard of Toby either. His linguistic capital – his command of the English language – proves he is a worthy individual. This reinforces Furphy's assimilation strategy where any half-caste educable Aboriginal is the equal of any white man.

Although it is possible to read assimilation strategy at work in Such is Life, Furphy in his other writing does not engage with Aboriginal Australians as part of 1890s Australian society. While the themes of race, identity and social evolution were debated in the 1890s Furphy himself in his final text on Aboriginal Australians in "Vignette" looks back to the time of his youth to espouse the theme that Aboriginal Australians were a doomed race. Under the structured constraints of the field in which the doomed race theories were still much in vogue during the earlier twentieth century,

Furphy found it easier to be published by expressing racist, polygenist views rather than explicating the benefits of modern society for Aboriginal Australians.

In this chapter the concept of cultural literacy has been used to analyse the struggles over language and identity in Furphy's writing. For Furphy his struggle to be accepted as a legitimate author meant confronting critics determined to assign him and his novel a minor place within English literary culture of little interest beyond Australia. What is at stake here, along with an author's identity, is the struggle over just what constituted Australian literature in the 1890s. In this struggle linguistic capital is a powerful force in confrontations between persons and between institutions as each attempts to dominate and assign perceived roles to each other. While social class is a strong determinant in assigning people their place in society, just as important is a person's linguistic capital which allows one to resist society's attempts to dominate. As was shown with Toby, his linguistic skills enabled him to resist dominant white social attitudes that attempted to place him on the lowest rung of society. Moreover, Tom Collins' victory over Terrible Tommy shows how linguistic capital is a field specific literacy that allows for strategic decisions to be made according to the circumstances one finds oneself facing at the time.

Conclusion

This thesis has re-examined the Australian literary field of the 1890s by focussing on the life and writing of the Australian author Joseph Furphy. This has been done by using a frame of reference based on the concepts of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu's method is one that requires large quantities of information and subsequent comprehensive – 'thick' – descriptions of the field under study. These methodological challenges have resulted in the explication provided in this thesis as both limited in scope and therefore detailed description. In particular, the Australian literary field defined here is not as comprehensive as one would expect if one were to deal with Australian and other English speaking writers within the broader context of the dominant British publishing industry of the 1890s. Also limited in scope undertaken here is a detailed explication of the production and reception of the author Joseph Furphy by other writers and institutions throughout the twentieth century.

Despite these limitations in applying Bourdieu's method, the position adopted here is to accept that while narrower descriptions are provided in this thesis his sociological method is still beneficial to literary critics (Moi 1). The value of the interrelated dynamics of Bourdieu's "thinking tools" of field, habitus, capital and also class has helped to explain not only Joseph Furphy's struggle to get his Such is Life published but also his continuing endeavours to further his literary life. In particular, the thesis has shown how difficult it was for Furphy to establish a literary career during the 1890s given his social background, education and interests. The struggle was shown to be attributable to the very functioning of the literary field that constantly questioned

what writers and what genres were deemed worthy. For Furphy the extended process to secure publication of Such is Life showed how his long discursive novel was an oddity in the Australian literary field of the 1890s when the dynamics of the contest was between short stories and the new shorter novel form. Nevertheless, and despite Furphy's limited literary output during his lifetime, his writing did engage with discourses evident in Australian society at the time he was writing. In this thesis the discourses of education, religion, language and identity have been analysed in Furphy's writing to reveal how his writing was driven by a desire to promote an authentic literature for Australia.

In chapter one Pierre Bourdieu's concept of a literary field provided a useful frame of reference to analyse the process involving the authorship and publication of the works of Joseph Furphy. By setting the temporal limits and social universe, the power struggles between authors, editors and publishing institutions over what constituted cultural capital within the field has revealed that British publishing houses had a dominant role over what was published and marketed in Australia during the 1890s. Most significantly, the moguls of Paternoster Row in London shifted publication from the long three-volume novel form to the shorter new novel form. This chapter has also shown how authors who could not afford to publish their own works needed institutional support gained by selecting the right publisher for the genre in which they wrote. Although the Bulletin's proprietor Archibald claimed that every man could write at least one book, throughout the 1890s the short story formed the basis of the Bulletin's publishing ideals. Book publishing for Archibald and Stephens was a sideline but a sideline that needed to be commercially successful: the perennial pressure of business. This is evident when one considers that most of the books published by the Bulletin between 1888 and 1908 were collections of stories or verse that had previously been

published in the pages of the Bulletin. Therefore, Such is Life stands apart in Bulletin publishing history. That Furphy focussed all his energy into securing publication of Such is Life meant he was relatively unknown when it was eventually published in 1903. By using the concept of the literary field as a site of struggles over the authorship and publication of literary works one can understand the extended process that led to the eventual publication of Such is Life. However, this proved to be the highpoint in Furphy's pursuit of a literary life. He continued to be constrained by his relative poverty and isolation – more so after he moved to Western Australia in 1904. The poor sales of Such is Life, when combined with the absence of personal support from Stephens and institutional support from the Bulletin, meant Furphy never achieved book publication of his other two novels Rigby's Romance and the Buln-buln and the Brolga.

Chapter two has used Bourdieu's concept of habitus as a framework to reveal how Furphy's intellectual awakening in the 1890s was a product of the values and forms of knowledge inculcated in him from an early age. The chapter has revealed the need to consider Furphy's education from his earliest years, when he learned to read and write at his mother's knee, through to his intellectual development empowered by his autodidact thirst for knowledge – his “ignorance shifting” as he called it – in his later years. From this one can appreciate how Furphy, equally at home in bush or library, came to infuse his writing with what A. G. Stephens called his ponderous style “labouring for the dignity of literature”. Although John Barnes places greater emphasis on Furphy's later intellectual awakening to explain Such is Life, this has been shown to be too limiting an explanation and that Furphy's early verse, especially “Child Booth's Pilgrimage”, contains within it the attitudes and values, of the youth happy to ignore literary rules and conventions, that are transposed into the form and structure of Such is Life. The inability to conform to Archibald's rules for Bulletin short story or sketch

publication meant Furphy eventually set about writing Such is Life. And although Furphy shortened his original manuscript so as to satisfy Archibald and Stephens, the form and structure remained the same. This chapter has also shown how from Furphy's "ignorance shifting" there emerges in his letters and his literature an anxiety over the best uses of his accumulated knowledge. His purpose in writing Such is Life can be seen as his attempt to provide a lasting reminder of a well read and cultured writer deserving of his place within the Australian literary field. Although Furphy was well-read he needed and cultivated a circle of friends who encouraged him to write. Because Furphy lived in Shepparton, this circle of friends can be seen as a substitute for a literary circle like A. G. Stephens' regular symposiums in Sydney. His desire to be part of a genuine literary circle, however, was manifested in his desire for the Australian Society of Irresponsibles (ASOI) proposed and initiated by Stephens around 1900. Although the society only lasted a couple of years the aims were appealing to Furphy for it would have allowed him to have the names and addresses to communicate with other Australian writers but also, more importantly, it would have allowed the fostering of an authentic Australian literature in opposition to Anglo-Australian literature with its emphasis on satisfying an English market. Despite his isolation, however, Furphy was no literary recluse. From his love of yarning one can appreciate that the style of Such is Life can be seen as a conversation with a new circle of friends, the readers of Australia.

Chapter three revealed how the literary field was a contested site where differing ideas were expounded by writers in their attempts to educate Australians about a better future. In this endeavour Furphy hoped to have his particular Australian perspective, as explicated in Rigby's Romance, rank alongside other popular novels with a purpose like the American Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward and the Englishman William Morris' News From Nowhere. And like these utopian socialist novels Furphy realised

his best chance of reaching a public was to wrap his message in the guise of a romance genre that was popular throughout the 1890s. Furphy was no doctrinaire socialist, however. From his autodidact education he reworked and re-imagined the texts that he read to synthesise his own ideas imbued with Stoic philosophy and the fundamental Christianity of Christ to be embodied in his ideal of state socialism. This was needed because, as Furphy saw it, individualism and materialism were destroying Australian society. Australian society in the 1890s was a time of economic hardship and Furphy saw society's enemies were also to be found in the dogma and tradition of institutional Churches that seemed to care more about the afterlife than the here-and-now suffering of many individuals in society. However, unlike other utopian socialists who had an influence on Furphy, such as William Lane and Charles Strong who put into practice their ideas to change society, Furphy remained a utopian idealist. He was no agitator but a visionary who wanted to educate Australians toward a better life. To the end of his days in wanting to spread his message for the upbuilding of Australian society he remained ever hopeful of finding a publisher for his message, for his last word on the ethics of state socialism as expounded by Jefferson Rigby in Rigby's Romance.

In chapter four Bourdieu's thinking tools of field, capital, habitus and class were developed in the concept of cultural literacy that was subsequently used to analyse the struggles over language and identity in Furphy's writing. For Furphy his struggle to be accepted as a legitimate author meant confronting critics determined to assign him and his novel a minor place within English literary culture of little interest beyond Australia. What was at stake in this struggle was just what constituted Australian literature in the 1890s. In this struggle linguistic capital was a powerful force in confrontations between persons and between institutions as each attempted to dominate and assign perceived roles to others. Although Furphy received many favourable Australian reviews of Such

is Life, the review by an influential English critic focussing on Furphy's Bulletin style language meant he could not interest an English publisher in his novel. In reading Furphy's texts an analysis using the concept of cultural literacy also allowed one to see confrontations between characters not simply determined by class or status. Just as important is a person's linguistic capital which allows one to resist society's attempts to dominate. As was shown with the Aboriginal half-caste Toby, his linguistic skills enabled him to resist dominant white social attitudes that attempted to place him on the lowest rung of society. Moreover, Tom Collins' victory over Terrible Tommy shows how linguistic capital is a field specific literacy that allows for strategic decisions to be made according to the circumstances one finds oneself facing at the time. For Furphy the 1890s was the time when he fought to be accepted and identified as an author within the Australian literary field. He used his linguistic capital as a powerful force to position himself and his novel not only within the Bulletin school of writers but also within the Australian literary field.

Although Furphy ends Such is Life by declaring that his tale signifies "nothing", one must nevertheless agree with Devlin-Glass *et. al.* when they state that "any reader who has persevered with the text ... will not need to be told that to reach finality in Furphy studies is often merely a sign of incomplete understanding". By using a frame of reference based on Bourdieu's sociological 'thinking tools' of capital, habitus, field and class, this thesis has attempted to reveal a greater, though by no means final, understanding of Joseph Furphy in the context of the Australian literary field of the 1890s as he struggled to produce his magnum opus for Australia.

Abbreviations

- ADB Australian Dictionary of Biography. Online ed. Available: <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/>.
- AND Ramson, W. S., ed. The Australian National Dictionary: A Dictionary of Australianisms on Historical Principles. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988.
- BB Furphy, Joseph. The Buln-Buln and the Brolga. 1948. Introd. and notes Frances Devlin-Glass. Rushcutters Bay, NSW: Halstead, 2001.
- Letters Barnes, John, and Lois Hoffman, eds. Bushman and Bookworm: Letters of Joseph Furphy. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995.
- MBC Franklin, Miles. My Brilliant Career: My Career Goes Bung. 1901, 1946. Introd. Elizabeth Webby. Sydney: Angus and Robertson-HarperCollins, 1990.
- ML Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney.
- NLA National Library of Australia, Canberra.
- OED Oxford English Dictionary. Online ed. Available: <http://www.oed.com/>.
- RR Furphy, Joseph. Rigby's Romance: A "Made in Australia" Novel. Fwd. R. G. Howarth. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1946.
- SL Furphy, Joseph. The Annotated "Such Is Life": Being Certain Extracts from the Diary of Tom Collins. Introd. and notes Frances Devlin Glass et. al. Rev. ed. Rushcutters Bay, NSW: Halstead, 1999.
- SLV La Trobe Library, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

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