

Finding Furphy Country: *Such is Life* and Literary Tourism

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Joseph Furphy, considered to be ‘the father of the Australian novel’, is best known for *Such is Life*, a little-read and often baffling novel about life in rural Australia. In 1981 Manning Clark claimed that Furphy is ‘the author of a classic which few were to read and no one was ever to establish clearly what it was all about’. Julian Croft observes that *Such is Life* is a ‘cultural monument’ which is ‘more often referred to than read for pleasure’ since it ‘tests the skill, patience and endurance of those who attempt it’ (TC 275).

The demanding nature of the novel, with its unusually complex narrative structure, intertextual references and playful use of language, can be off-putting to many readers but it has attracted a small number of dedicated followers, who have been largely responsible for the efforts to memorialise Furphy and his contribution to Australian literary culture. This paper will consider various sites within the nascent Furphy heritage industry, arguing that they offer tourists opportunities to engage imaginatively with aspects of Australia’s frontier past.

Literary geographies

Literary geography dates back to the beginning of the twentieth century, as exemplified by William Sharp’s *Literary Geography* (1904). One of Sharp’s achievements was to locate the novels of Walter Scott onto a map of Scotland. As Barbara Piatti *et al* argue, early experiments in literary geography often attempt to visualise the distribution of literary settings, but maps perform a secondary function to the written text.

Territorial and topographical aspects of literature have awakened new possibilities for researchers in recent times. Also described as a ‘spatial turn’ within the humanities, this renewed focus on landscape has generated a range of literary projects including Malcolm Bradbury’s (1996) *The Atlas of Literature* in which detailed maps and street plans are used to highlight the spaces that writers and writings inhabited, created and transformed. Franco Moretti’s *Atlas of the European Novel 1800-1900* (1998) uses maps to show the spread of interwoven literary geographies. Moretti’s work has been groundbreaking in its extensive use

of maps as tools to interpret patterns of literary production and dissemination. Inspired by Moretti, the *Literary Atlas of Europe* project is currently attempting to visibly render complex overlays of real and fictional geographies.

Literary tourism, which involves the interconnected practices of visiting and marking sites associated with writers and their work, has been evolving in Anglophone countries since the nineteenth century. Various systems of memorialisation have been developed, ranging from the official and topographical such as the setting up of memorials and plaques, to more intimate rituals such as following in the footsteps of writers or their characters (Watson 2-3). While literary tourists may seek out the settings of their favourite fiction, some writers choose settings which have a 'real world' counterpart and some are not reproduced realistically at all. As Piatti et al observe, settings can be completely invented; a cross-fading of two spaces; an existing region with fictitious elements; a likely place with an invented name or an existing region remodelled, like Furphy's Riverina in *Such is Life* (Piatti 180).

The business of literary tourism in Australia is under-developed compared to the thriving heritage industries of Britain and America but there is increasing interest in tracking places that are connected with local authors and their work. The sites associated with Joseph Furphy, including the Tom Collins and Mattie Furphy houses in Perth and the Furphy memorial in Shepparton, are still in the early stages of their evolution as tourist locations, and there is little research to indicate what these places represent to visitors. This article relies on my own impressions along with first person accounts from a handful of scholarly tourists.

Shepparton, the birthplace of *Such is Life*

To go to the precise location where *Such is Life* was written is to engage in a kind of literary tourism, since this practice effectively links the text to place by supplementing reading with travel (Watson 5). One of the central locations for Furphy tourism is the Welsford Street memorial in Shepparton, Victoria. The memorial stands on the site of the 'sanctum' Joseph Furphy had built for himself at the rear of his cottage. Miles Franklin provides an evocative description of the cottage in her account of Furphy's life:

Furphy's cottage in Shepparton faced Welsford St. It backed on to the Goulburn River, which here runs into an eroded channel yards wide and deep. Holding the lower banks are noble river gums. To one side is the bridge, directly across the stream is the untouched bush. Up-stream the river comes round a sharp bend and has a spit of low bank to make an ideal base for swimming, squealing, gambolling

boys in summer. In wet seasons the roaring floods would be grand. The sanctum that Furphy built behind the cottage was right on the edge of the chasm. (59)

Franklin emphasises the picturesque environment surrounding the writer's house, with the 'untouched bush', the river as a site of children's play, and the steep 'chasm' immediately behind the sanctum. The description allows the reader to imagine Furphy's writing room in a 'natural' setting; a far cry from its current, concrete-bound location.



The site of Furphy's house in Welsford Street, Shepparton

Furphy's 'skillion' had just enough room for a stretcher bed, table and a chair, but Furphy retired there every evening from six to ten to work on his 'magnum opus'. This is a romantic image that appeals to ideas about the solitary writer. Critics have discussed the romantic impulse involved with visiting destinations orientated around certain 'creative' figures. John Urry distinguishes between the 'collective gaze' of mass tourism and the 'romantic gaze' which is more closely associated with the middle-class traveller. The 'romantic' gaze is concerned with the elitist—and solitary—appreciation which involves considerable cultural capital especially if detailed knowledge of specific literary texts is required (Urry 80).

In Furphy's case there is certainly an element of truth to this romantic notion of the writer as outsider, seeking solitude and revelation outside the mainstream. Because of his work and family commitments, Furphy was only able to make a single trip to his publisher at the *Bulletin* office in Sydney. During this visit he met literary luminaries such as Norman Lindsay, Victor Daley, Edward Dyson and Steele Rudd yet there was disappointingly little correspondence to follow. He felt misunderstood by those immediately around him, seeking solace in letter-writing with sympathetic friends such as William Cathels, an auto-didact like himself. Barnes and Hoffmann comment, 'Within his circle of friends at Shepparton Furphy was often called "Shakespeare", a reference to his love and detailed knowledge of the plays;... Furphy was recognised by his fellow workers as "of us, but not one of us"' (*Letters* 8).

Furphy never depicted Shepparton itself, the place where he lived and worked for 21 years, and the two decades he spent there are not directly reflected in *Such is Life*. Nevertheless, the Furphy family unveiled a memorial in Welsford Street on 12 March 2005. Andrew Furphy, Joseph's great-grandnephew, says he commissioned the memorial and the play, *The Order of Things*, by local director Matt Scholten on the life of Furphy, because for a long time he had been feeling 'pretty guilty' about the neglected birthplace of *Such is Life* (Sullivan 2005).

The original cottage, including the lean-to where Furphy worked, was demolished in 1940 by Tom Fawcett. Some of the bricks were used in a subsequent house that was occupied by Fawcetts until 1955 before being torn down in the 1960s. According to Judith Powell, Fawcett's daughter, Furphy was known as the previous owner but there was little interest in preserving the house at the time. During the 1940s however, inquiries were made by the local Literary Society about the site of Furphy's residence and in 1947 it organised a special ceremony, attended by Miles Franklin, to place a plaque on the wilga tree originally planted by Furphy (Powell).

At the front of the Welsford Street site, there now stands a statue in bronze by Castlemaine sculptor Phil Mune, depicting Furphy squatting under the old wilga tree, stirring a billy can with a stick. Behind the statue is a menhir—an upright monumental stone—engraved by Ian Marr of Orange, NSW, that tells the story of how *Such is Life* came to be written. During the 2012 centenary celebrations, a plaque was added to the memorial tablet, echoing the 1947 ceremony.



Andrew Furphy in front of the menhir, before the unveiling of the plaque

The location of the memorial may be surprising for tourists taking the memorial walk around the town as it is squeezed into a relatively narrow section between building frontages but it serves the function of making Furphy's significance to Shepparton a matter of public knowledge. The Joseph Furphy Commemorative Collection at the library, opened as part of the Centenary celebrations, is yet another useful local resource for devotees of his work.

Writerly instruments

Central to the connectivity experienced by visitors to writer's homes, Robinson and Andersen argue, are objects; artefacts of daily reality. These objects tend to be conferred with hyper-significance and reverence (Robinson 17) with pens, typewriters and desks particularly favoured. Furphy wrote every word of the original version of *Such is Life* in long hand using a cork-handled pen. When he came to the enormous task of editing the novel for publication, a task which involved the removal of nearly 400 pages, he employed a Franklin typewriter; Furphy's original Franklin typewriter is now housed at the 'Tom Collins House' in Swanbourne, WA. As the machine which produced *Such is Life*, the typewriter has certain 'aura' for reader-tourists (See photos in Bird and Osborne, this issue). It also has novelty value as a superseded writing instrument which is barely recognisable in its nineteenth-century incarnation.

From Swanbourne to Karakatta

The Furphy houses in Swanbourne offer opportunities for engagement with spaces that Furphy himself constructed, however they are located a long way from the site of the writing of *Such is Life*, his most famous work.

Robinson and Andersen observe that writers' houses as focal destinations 'provide tangible connections between the created and the creator, allowing people to engage in a variety of emotional experiences and activities. For literary pilgrims...here lies the potential for intimacy, authenticity'(15). Although Furphy's Shepparton cottage and sanctum does not exist anymore, the Furphy houses in Perth remain, allowing pilgrims a glimpse of early twentieth-century domestic life, if not the actual site of his literary production. As Trisha Kotai-Ewers has argued, the Furphy houses in WA are integral to Furphy's legacy. However their location at such a distance from the location of the production of his classic text, *Such is Life*, means that they are not on a well-trodden tourist circuit as yet. (See Bird, this issue for details.) The naming of Furphy's Perth house as 'Tom Collins House' could be considered problematic in terms of the memorialisation of Furphy as an Australian author. The pseudonym 'Tom Collins' may have allowed Furphy greater freedom to express himself, but it also served to shift the focus from Furphy, the author, to a fictitious, unreliable narrator. His adoption of Tom Collins as his pseudonym, and the naming of his house by this pseudonym, has made it more difficult to officially celebrate him as a person of literary significance, and

his house as associated with the man rather than his narrator. If writer's houses are tangible signatures of a literary person's presence, their graves are markers of their 'absent-presence'; writers' graves, along with their birthplaces, are crucial elements in the construction of literary trails. In the future, Furphy's grave along with the Mattie Furphy and Tom Collins houses could conceivably form focal points along a heritage trail devoted to the memory of Furphy's final years in Perth.

Scripting tourist routes

Tourists might be either intrigued by Furphy's notoriously difficult novel, desiring to locate sites that are mentioned within it, such as the Goolumbulla and Runnymede stations where much of the action happens, or entirely discouraged by the complex interaction between fictional and 'real' landscapes. For tourists wishing to follow in the footsteps of Furphy, the journey is liable to be as circuitous as the text of *Such Is Life* itself. Given the picaresque qualities of the book, perhaps the most 'authentic' way to engage with the text and its author is by travelling the routes mentioned in the novel. One way of communing with 'Furphy country' is to follow old travelling stock routes that head in the same direction as the present day Cobb Highway from Hay across the One Tree Plain to Booligal, where the stock route crossed the Lachlan river and then on to Mossgiel. From Mossgiel the stock route goes due north for the town of Cobar, connecting with the present road which skirts the Neckarboo Range (Croft 77-78). To date, most Furphy tourists have chosen a few of these locations rather than religiously following the stock routes which are challenging in terms of distance, even for the modern traveller using automotive transport.

Susan K. Martin argues that *Such is Life*'s plot of following tracks and trails forces the reader to self-consciously enact the act of reading. To the extent that the novel is produced and accepted as a national fiction, Martin observes, one outcome of such an act of successful narrative tracking would be to locate at the end the self as a national subject. However, Tom Collins is a singularly poor tracker at significant moments, and offers no point of identification for a unified, stable national subjectivity (87). *Such is Life* offers readers the opportunity to 'choose their own adventure' along myriad trails which are often sketchily marked. Furphy's text frustrates readers with its problematisation of the novel form, making the tracing of 'real' routes taken by the narrator (and possibly Furphy himself) very difficult indeed. Literary tourists must decide which of the places mentioned in the novel are most

intriguing to them and then build their own itinerary around these sites—if they can be located.

Tom Collins and the picaresque

Such Is Life is a generically eclectic novel that draws on the picaresque, literature of dissent and the romance mode, although it also works to subvert these classifications. For Dennis Douglas, Tom Collins might be described as a ‘rogue’ of the picaresque mode and a ‘fool’ of Shakespearean comedy, combined in the same character. These qualities of the narrator allow Furphy to play with the artificially ordered conventions of genre, attempting to ‘mirror’ life with its imperfections intact (Douglas 24). Bush courtesy, as described by Collins, relies heavily on deception and subterfuge. Theft and deception are basic elements of the picaresque tradition, which feature trickster protagonists practicing deception upon the people they meet during their travels.

At the time he is ‘writing’ *Such is Life*, Collins is unemployed, yet when readers first encounter him in the narrative he is an employee of the New South Wales civil service, working as a Deputy-Assistant-Sub-Inspector. He spends his time travelling around the district ‘touting a certain form K for various persons to fill out’ which begins to sound Kafkaesque, as Rodney Hall comments (113).

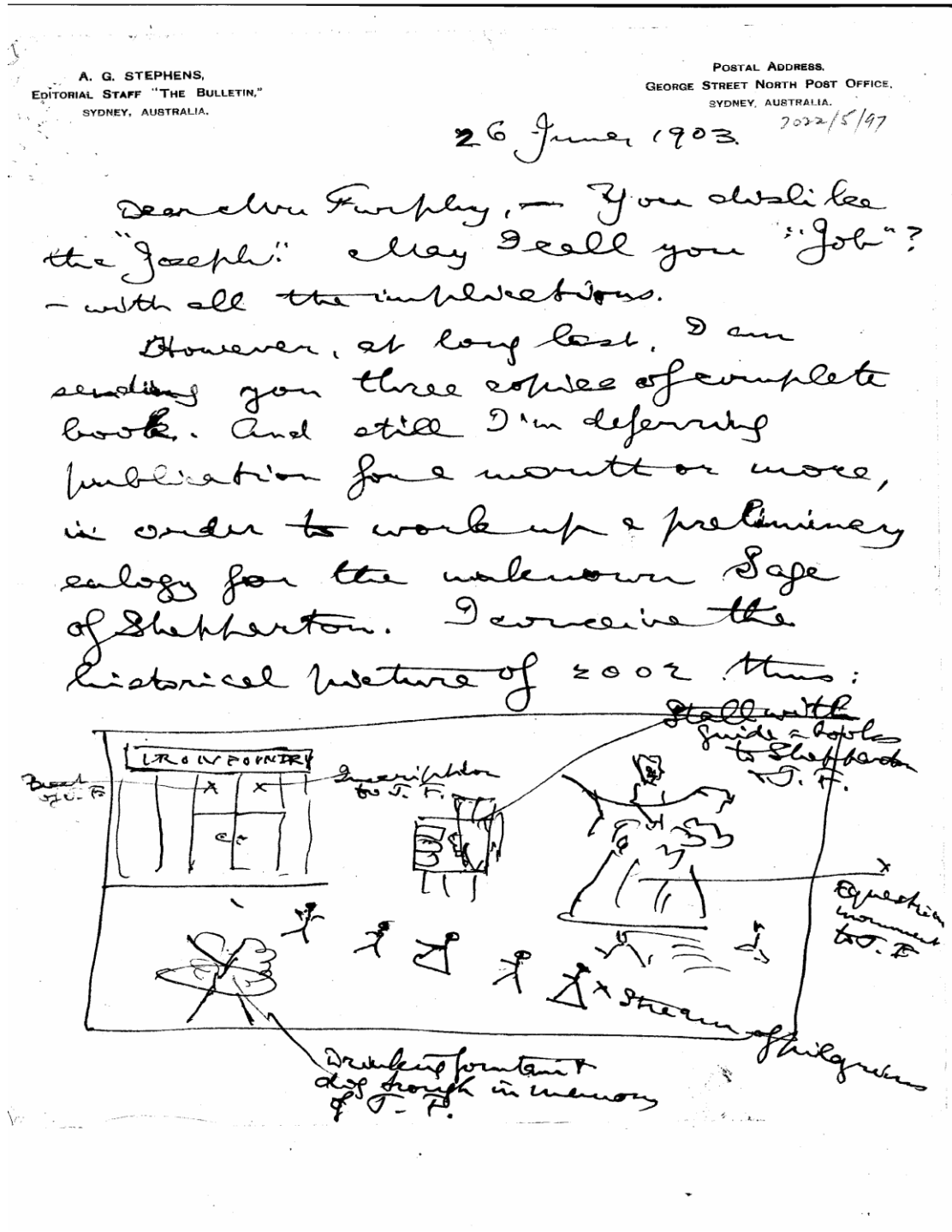
Interestingly, the term ‘literary tourist’ is used twice by Tom Collins, but not in the contemporary sense. In Chapter VI, Tom Collins characterises the ‘literary tourist’ as being of higher status than the one he currently occupies as a public servant visiting Runnymede station: ‘If my social evolution had continued—if I had expanded into a literary tourist, of sound Conservative principles—I would have seen the inside of the boss’s house before I had done’ (SL 206). His reception at Runnymede has improved since his first visit seven years earlier while tracking a steer, when he was treated with disgust and relegated to camping out in a paddock, but he is still not at the exalted level of the ‘literary tourist’, who might be imagined as a sophisticated—and conservative—gentleman of letters.

Another reference to the literary tourist occurs in Chapter III when Tom Collins meets up with Dick L— Mrs. B—’s brother, who was ‘a mine of rare information and queer experiences’ after his itinerant life on ‘the extended wallaby’(97). An ex-lawyer who is always (mistakenly) in trouble with the police ‘he enjoyed (or otherwise) opportunities of seeing things that the literary tourist never sees’(97). Here Furphy seems to be valuing the experience

of the swagman on the lam over the monied gentleman seeing the sights for his own edification. His deployment of the term differs from the more straightforward contemporary meaning that denotes a tourist who goes to sites of cultural interest. Instead, it seems that Collins is referring to the literary tourist as a travelling man who reads, such as Furphy was himself, albeit as a workingman. Barnes and Hoffmann note that Furphy was a ‘bushman who carried his pocket Shakespeare for reading at night by the light of the campfire, or talked about books with a casual acquaintance for most of the night on the plains of the Riverina’ (*Letters* xiv).

The afterlife of *Such is Life*

A. G. Stephens predicted that dedicated readers would be drawn to visit Furphy sites in a letter of June 26, 1903 accompanied by a drawing of a stall and books by Furphy, drinking trough and stream of pilgrims to where Furphy’s heart is buried (Franklin 90-93). Even before the publication of *Such is Life*, Stephens anticipates a cult of Furphy, involving a pilgrimage to sacred sites. Furphy’s ‘buried heart’ takes on a saintly aura, like a relic worshipped by Christian pilgrims. In this letter Stephens recognises Furphy’s significance to Australian culture, while acknowledging that the book may well be a financial liability: ‘Your whole affair is a curious instance of that dead and gone thing conscience. The book’s so good that it has got itself printed against foreknowledge and predestination absolute that it’ll have a darned slow sale’ (90).



Letter with cartoon from A.G. Stephens to Furphy, 26 June 1903

In 1944 Miles Franklin claimed that Stephens's prediction of pilgrims 'is being fulfilled by an increasing number of visitors to the site where *Such Is Life* was written' (59). There were also annual pilgrimages to Furphy's birthplace in Yarra Glen from 1933, organised by the Joseph

Furphy memorial committee (*All About Books* 148). These rituals of remembrance are important precursors to the contemporary additions to the Furphy tourism industry, such as the Welsford Street memorial and the Swanbourne houses.

However, the Riverina is the most representative territory in terms of Furphy's fiction, and it seems appropriate for reader-tourists to re-trace his steps, or approximations of them. As Andrew Furphy has suggested, from his experience of undertaking tours of the area, it is difficult to get the route exactly right but the major locations have been confirmed and the rest can be left to the imagination (Andrew Furphy 2012). Roger Osborne has provided a major resource for reader-tourists, by documenting the relevant sites, using Google Maps technology and adding detailed information that is largely drawn from previous scholarship (Osborne). Peter Pierce's *Oxford Literary Guide to Australia* (1987) is an important precursor to this project, given its comprehensive collection of literary references across the entire country but it does not contain any maps, being text-based. As Croft had previously done (*TC*), Osborne undertook a close reading of *Such is Life* focusing on spatial aspects then designed a map, thereby generating new insights. This mapping project is groundbreaking in terms of Australian literary tourism, enabling greater numbers of visitors to access locations associated with the novel and potentially inspiring others to create interactive maps of local literary sites.

Another guide to Furphy tourism is provided by Susan Lever's article 'In Furphy's Footsteps' in the *Canberra Times* which describes a pilgrimage in March 2012 by Furphy admirers from the Association for the Study of Australian Literature. The tourists' attempt to visit the settings of *Such is Life* was disrupted by flooding, which thwarted their intention to stay at Willandra Station, by rendering the roads impassable. Nevertheless these tourists did get a sense of what it must have been like in Furphy's time (using their powers of observation as well as their imaginations):

Furphy speculated about the future of 'Our Virgin Continent' and mocked ideas about the Coming Australian. There's a certain poignancy in looking backwards and assessing how right, and sometimes wrong, he was about the future. (Lever 2012)

The travelling party evidently enjoyed their experience of 'Furphy country', complete with the same sort of freakish weather conditions that Furphy almost certainly endured while driving his bullock team over 120 years earlier. For these scholar-tourists, intimate knowledge of *Such is Life* offered a frame through which to see the Riverina landscape and to reflect on Furphy's predictions about the future of Australia.

Real and imagined geographies

As David Herbert argues ‘[g]reat works of imaginative literature are often set in the real world of the writer’s experience: there is an interaction of real and imagined worlds which is of central importance’ (33). This mixture of fact and fiction, of the real and the imagined, finds its expression in Furphy’s depiction of the Riverina area. In the United Kingdom where the literary tourism industry is substantially more developed, areas are named for the writers who brought them fame. A good example of this is Hardy’s ‘Wessex’ which Hardy described as a ‘part real, part dream country’ (Watson 178). He rooted his fictions in a verifiable topography and made this topography fictive by extensively re-naming it; in the case of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1885) overlaying the physical reality of Dorchester with the parallel imagined reality of Casterbridge. Hardy created his own geography for his fictions which was a mixture of the real and the imagined, launching Wessex as a prime destination in tourist itineraries from the 1890s onwards (Watson 174-200).

As with Hardy’s Wessex, scholars have been engaged with trying to determine the relationship between Furphy’s places and ‘real’ locations in the Riverina. John Barnes notes that the boundaries of the Riverina have shifted since the nineteenth century—today the name Riverina is usually applied to the country between the Lachlan and the Murray, extending east to Condobolin in the north and Albury in the south. In Furphy’s time it was a much more substantial region, including all the country between the Darling and the Murray (*Portable* xxvi).

In a 1978 issue of *Notes and Furphies*, Michael Sharkey reports that investigation into Furphy’s name-places in *Such As Life*, *Rigby’s Romance* and *The Buln-buln and the Brolga*, to uncover possible correspondences, turned up unexpected findings. Comparison of Department of Lands survey maps for 1884 did not show any clear correspondences with Goolumbulla, Runnymede and other stations recalled in *Such is Life* (9). Croft has argued that the setting of *Such is Life* is actually quite compact and easily visualised once the reader has a map to consult. He claims that the action occurs in the territory bounded by the Lachlan River at Booligal in the South, Ivanhoe in the West, Cobar/Nyngan in the North, and Hillston to the east. He notes that Chapter III is an anomaly as it is set in the Echuca/Barmah area on the Murray River, 350-400 kms due south of the main area (79).

Nevertheless, Croft recognises that there are some difficulties in making precise identifications with the physically real world of the Riverina. ‘Often the descriptions and directions given by Tom...have little bearing on what is really there on the maps’ (79). He claims that the confusion and contradiction may have been part of Furphy’s intention to disguise real people and places, or the result of carelessness when making the 1901 revisions. A third possibility is that Furphy wanted us to be aware of the elaborate joke of *Such is Life*, ‘that for any writing, such is not life’ (79).

Furphy describes the novel in a letter to Cathels as ‘one long involved lie in seven chapters’, which serves to distance the author from any autobiographical elements in the text (*Letters* 36). The haziness of the landscape described by Tom Collins, and the inability of the ‘ignorant’ reader to pinpoint exact places might reflect some of the ‘deeper’ themes within the book, to do with the permeable boundaries between fact and fiction and the unknowable nature of human relations.

Literary tourism and cultural nationalism

Rodney Hall describes *Such is Life* as a ‘great ruin of a novel’ (110), following the massive cuts recommended by the editor to reduce its bulk. The complexity of Furphy’s novel has contributed to its failure to connect with a wide readership and lessened its chances of being commemorated through mass tourism. Instead the practice of visiting Furphy sites remains the province of ‘romantic’ readers and writers. By contrast, Furphy’s contemporary Henry Lawson enjoys much greater public recognition in the form of commemorations such as statues, festivals and a museum.

Commentators have noted the immense disparity between the national reputations of Furphy and Lawson. John Barnes claims that the contrast with Furphy’s contemporary could ‘hardly be more complete’ (*Portable* xiv). In *City Bushman: Henry Lawson and the Australian Imagination*, Christopher Lee argues that various versions of Lawson exist simultaneously, with several groups using him as a vehicle to express their own ideals. This became especially apparent at the time of his funeral when politicians and newspapers reified him as a ‘true Australian’. Lee observes that Lawson ‘became a repository of national value because he was seen to express an authentic local Australian experience’ (232).

The towns of Grenfell, Mudgee, Eurunderee, and Gulgong, located in the area of New South Wales where Lawson grew up, all make claims for connection with Lawson’s legend, with

Eurunderee claiming to be ‘The Real Henry Lawson Country’ (Lee 2005, 52). When we compare the number of sites devoted to Lawson’s memory, it seems evident that the Furphy heritage industry is merely in its infancy. The annual Lawson festivals in Grenfell and Gulgong, along with numerous monuments to his memory scattered across the country, testify to the greater resonance of Lawson in the popular imagination. Whereas Lawson attained a public reputation quickly, Furphy experienced great delays with the reception and publication of *Such is Life* and his fame was largely posthumous. When *Such is Life* was published, there was no ready audience for it as there was for *While the Billy Boils* or for A.B. Paterson’s *The Man From Snowy River* or Steele Rudd’s *On Our Selection*; instead it had a small circulation among literary people. Lawson is more easily recuperated as an icon of ‘Australian-ness’ because his writing is relatively accessible. This is also reflected in the number of memorials and events to remember Lawson—twelve memorials, two literary festivals and a centre dedicated to him.

Conclusion

Given that Furphy makes explicit connections between tracking and writing in *Such is Life*, the novel lends itself to the scripting of myriad touristic practices. Even if his ‘masterpiece’ is not being actively read, it seems fitting that Furphy should continue to be remembered through various forms of literary pilgrimage. The sites associated with Furphy’s literary legacy may appeal to reader-tourists’ sense of nostalgia for an Australia that is long gone. *Such is Life* represents a historical and genealogical anchor to preindustrial, rural Australia. Robinson and Andersen suggest that ‘literary tourism increasingly plays to an audience that wishes to travel in time as well as space’ (26-27)—the Furphy tourist sites, in their different ways, appeal to the tourist in search of ‘pastness’. In particular, the figure of Furphy may be symbolically appropriated by tourists to stand for old-fashioned virtues such as hard work, endurance and mateship. Curiously, even at the time of its publication *Such is Life* was valued by critics ‘for its record of a dying age and as a literary achievement of an ordinary worker’ (Darby 212). It is a text written by a man who was captivated by a now-distant time in his own personal history.

It’s intriguing to consider what Furphy would make of his afterlife as an Australian literary icon, particularly since the road to publication of his writing was strewn with obstacles. In many instances, it is easier to celebrate literary figures when they are dead rather than during their lifetime. An author may be more easily ‘contained’ within dedicated spaces such as their

'birthplace' or 'gravesite'; problematic aspects of the life and work can be elided in favour of elements that are more palatable for a general audience. The recuperation of Lawson's damaged reputation is a case in point. According to Hall, 'Lawson was the true star in the firmament, accorded a state funeral even though he had fallen from grace with his alcoholism and turncoat toadying to England' (110). The evident flaws in his character were conveniently overlooked in order to transform him into a national hero.

Furphy would certainly need to be 'made over' in order to appeal to a wider public. This would necessarily involve a focus on the proletarian elements of his storytelling and the elision of the more avant garde qualities of *Such is Life*. With his hard life on the bullock trails in the Riverina, Furphy might be seen as a representative figure who symbolises the determination and sheer toughness of nineteenth-century Australians.

Literary tourism is both supply-led (what places are available for preservation) and demand-led (what actually interests the literary tourist). Generally speaking, a writer's popularity propels tourism, whether they are highbrow or lowbrow, whether they can attract substantial numbers of visitors, if their life-story is compelling enough. Reader demand overrides critical acclaim in many cases. *Such is Life* is considered a classic but few people read it, therefore the numbers of tourists attracted to Furphy sites are predicted to be modest until interest in the book is reawakened through other means. Croft refers to the 'dedicated band of Furphyites around Australia (and perhaps beyond)' who would be a readymade audience for Furphy tourist attractions (1). This small, but devoted readership may not be substantial enough to generate 'mass-market' tourism around Furphy, yet their patronage of Furphy sites may enhance his cultural recognition within Australia.

As Barnes argues, *Such is Life* is, in many ways, a work that was written out of time. Its 'difficult' reputation need not get in the way of touristic adventures, however. Potentially *Such is Life* tours could take place involving participants who haven't even opened the novel. The act of travelling to Furphy sites could serve to generate more readers, rather than the tourists being created by a taste for the book, which is the expected order of things.

Literature is certainly an important intensifier of the tourist experience, but literary tourism can be undertaken without a participant having read the text closely; one merely needs a passing knowledge of an author's biography to find certain sites engaging. Literary tourism is a medium that allows people to live out certain fantasies revising reality and modifying the

present in the guise of the past (Squire 116). Potentially Furphy trails, especially the routes through the Riverina, might act as enablers of ‘authentic’ outback experience. Although familiarity with *Such is Life* might increase the chances of being psychically transported by the journey, touristic pursuits may be undertaken without direct reference to this infinitely perplexing text.

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