

## “Temper democratic; bias offensively Australian”—Published in Chicago: The American Edition of *Such is Life*<sup>1</sup>

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American editions of Australian novels have been appearing since the late 1800s, but we know little about the cultural and economic processes that brought them to this significant group of readers.<sup>2</sup> A long list of Australian novels can be quickly produced by guided searches on the AustLit database (austlit.edu.au), showing dates of publication in America, publishers and other relevant information. For a small number of writers on this list, correspondence and business records can be consulted in manuscript collections held in Australian and American libraries. But it is rare to find a complete record of the commissioning, publication, sales and reception of a single novel in these frequently partial collections. Excellent archival retention and good fortune have preserved most of the records that relate to the publication of Joseph Furphy's *Such is Life* by the University of Chicago Press in September 1948. Such a collection of records is greatly significant, not only because of what it tells us about the publication of an Australian novel in an American edition, but, also, because it details one of the first instances of the sale to the American market of a culturally-sanctioned “classic” of Australian literature.

The large American market for books was never far from the minds of Australian authors, but entry into that market was largely influenced firstly by the British marketplace and secondly by international copyright and trade agreements. A number of Australian writers reached best-seller status in the United States of America in the middle decades of the twentieth century, but most would only achieve a modest success.<sup>3</sup> Buoyed by book-club selection, Henry Handel Richardson's *Ultima Thule* (1929), Eleanor Dark's *The Timeless Land* (1941), Xavier Herbert's *Capricornia* (1944) and Martin Boyd's *Lucinda Brayford* (1948) were best-sellers in the United States of America, selling in the tens of thousands and in some case hundreds of thousands. But, for the majority of those Australian novels that were published in the United States of America, a modest sale of three to five thousand was all that could be expected and all that

<sup>1</sup> This essay was completed as a contribution to the ARC-funded project “America Publishes Australia: Australian Books and American Publishers, 1890–2005.” I thank Professor David Carter for the opportunity to contribute to this project.

<sup>2</sup> Laurie Hergenhan, *No Casual Traveller: Hartley Grattan and Australia–US Connections* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1995), 47.

<sup>3</sup> Roger Osborne, “Australian Literature in a World of Books: A Transnational History of Kylie Tennant's *The Battlers*,” *Resourceful Reading: The New Empiricism, eResearch and Australian Literary Culture*, ed. Katherine Bode and Robert Dixon (Sydney: Sydney UP, 2010), 106–119.

most publishers planned for. To be assured of an Australian writer's potential, most American publishers sourced their novels from British publishers or literary agents, establishing a trajectory that saw most American editions of Australian novels accepted and tested in the British market before subsequent acceptance across the Atlantic. In *The Truth about Publishing*, British publisher Stanley Unwin maintained that less than five percent of books printed in Great Britain also had a separate American edition,<sup>4</sup> suggesting that an American edition of an Australian novel was a success in itself even before any sales were counted. This situation was compounded by two facts: for a foreign author to receive copyright protection in the United States of America between 1891 and 1955, a book had to be wholly manufactured within that country's borders; and the "Traditional Markets Agreement" (1949) effectively divided the world into American and British-colonial regions, making incursions into the other market very difficult.<sup>5</sup> Publishers were unlikely to go to the expense of setting up an edition if a book's prospects were slim and so a great deal of support from publishers, literary agents, friends and other advocates was required before an Australian novel might be considered by an American publisher. The prospects of a forty-year-old novel that had sold a limited number of copies in the Australian market were very slim.

For the previous forty years, a small group of critics, supporters and enthusiasts had been struggling to position *Such is Life* at the centre of Australia's literary consciousness. First published by the Bulletin Publishing Company in 1903 under the direction and judicious editing of A. G. Stephens, the novel was a commercial failure, selling less than half of the two thousand copies of the first edition. But critics valued its representation of bush life and characters and compared Furphy's style and themes with the work of writers such as Samuel Johnson, Laurence Sterne, Henry Fielding, Herman Melville and William Shakespeare. After Furphy's death in 1912, his close friend Kate Baker took on the job of literary executor and spent the rest of her life as an indefatigable promoter of Furphy's literary legacy. This included her organisation of a reissue of the novel in 1917 with an introduction by the Australian short story writer and critic Vance Palmer, beginning a second phase of Furphy criticism that valued the novel "primarily for its political message, but also for its record of a dying age and as a literary achievement of an ordinary worker."<sup>6</sup> But, despite such positive reception, by the 1930s many in Australia's literary culture had never heard of the novel or its author,

<sup>4</sup> Stanley Unwin, *The Truth About Publishing* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1960), 72.

<sup>5</sup> Mary Nell Bryant, "English Language Publication and the British Traditional Markets Agreement," *Library Quarterly* 49, no. 4, (1979), 371–98; J. Hayden Boyd and William S. Lofquist, "New Interests in Old Issues: Antiprotection and the End of the Manufacturing Clause of the U.S. Copyright Law," *Publishing Research Quarterly* 7, no. 4 (Winter 1991/92), 21–39.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Darby, "The Penguin and the Man-O'-War Hawk: Joseph Furphy's Critical Reputation, 1903–1947," *Australian Literary Studies*, 13, no. 2 (1987), 210–23.

prompting renewed calls for a reprinting.<sup>7</sup> Vance Palmer's 1937 abridgement of *Such is Life* for the London publisher Jonathan Cape failed to fill this gap despite Palmer's reputation and was universally condemned by Australian critics. The year 1937 also saw the American journalist and critic C. Hartley Grattan enter the debate with an article on *Such is Life*, commissioned three years earlier by Kate Baker as an introduction to a planned unabridged edition and published in the *Australian Quarterly*.<sup>8</sup> This article was the foundation for Grattan's introduction to the American edition of *Such is Life*.

In the 1940s many Australian reviewers and critics celebrated the literary legacy of Joseph Furphy. The centenary of Furphy's birth was marked by *Meanjin* in 1943 with a special issue and Angus and Robertson published a new edition of *Such is Life* in 1944.<sup>9</sup> A special issue of *Southerly* devoted to Furphy was published in 1944, and the first book-length study of Furphy's life and work appeared: Miles Franklin's *Joseph Furphy: The Legend of the Man and His Book*.<sup>10</sup> University-based literary critics such as A. K. Thompson, A. D. Hope and A. G. Mitchell initiated close readings of the novel's structure, to the dismay of nationalists such as Frank Dalby Davison who valued the novel primarily for its democratic and socialist themes. Douglas Stewart expressed his dislike for the novel in the "Red Page" of the *Bulletin* and Kylie Tennant used a column in *Meanjin* to attack Furphy's "Enormous sentences [which] unrolled themselves like strips of fly-paper."<sup>11</sup> It is impossible to determine whether these debates had an effect on general readers, but the attention in magazines and newspapers raised awareness of the novel and had a significant effect on sales in Australia: 2940 copies were sold in 1944 and a further 4900 the following year before interest waned and sales returned to pre-celebration lows.<sup>12</sup> In addition to the anniversary celebrations of Furphy, the arousal of interest in the author and his books occurred in the midst of a period where a number of foundational, book-length studies on Australian literature were being published, written or planned.<sup>13</sup> The re-emergence of Joseph Furphy and *Such is Life* in the 1940s was

<sup>7</sup> Julian Croft, *The Life and Opinions of Tom Collins: A Study of the Works of Joseph Furphy* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1991), 24.

<sup>8</sup> C. Hartley Grattan, "Tom Collins's *Such is Life*," *Australian Quarterly*, 10, no. 2 (1937), 67–76.

<sup>9</sup> *Meanjin Papers*, 2, no. 3 (Spring 1943).

<sup>10</sup> Miles Franklin and Kate Baker, *Joseph Furphy: The Legend of a Man and His Book* (Sydney Angus and Robertson, 1944); *Southerly* 6, no. 3 (1944).

<sup>11</sup> Douglas Stewart, "How to Read Tom Collins," *Bulletin*, (26 July 1944), 2; Kylie Tennant, "Letter to Tom Collins: The Case for Critics," *Meanjin Papers*, 1, no. 10 (1942), 13–14.

<sup>12</sup> Croft, *Life and Opinions*, 26.

<sup>13</sup> Peter Pierce, "The Critical Reception, 1891–1945," in Martyn Lyons and John Arnold, (eds.), *A History of the Book in Australia: A National Culture in a Colonised Market* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2001), 363–64.

much more than a celebratory publishing event. It helped to animate and define Australia's literary culture and subsequently attracted international attention.

It is widely accepted that C. Hartley Grattan was instrumental in securing the American publication of *Such is Life*, but serendipity also played a part in arousing the interest of the University of Chicago Press. After his first visit to Australia in the 1920s, C. Hartley Grattan regularly promoted Australian literature in the United States of America, writing articles for newspapers and magazines such as the *New York Times* and the *Saturday Review of Literature*. He also corresponded with publishers and literary agents to encourage them to consider Australian writers and writing for their lists.<sup>14</sup> But a figure unknown to Australian literary history was probably responsible for first attracting the interest of John Scoon, editor at the University of Chicago Press. Howard Daniel was a Sydney University graduate who left a successful career in law to participate in the Spanish Civil War and to help refugees escape from Nazi Germany. He subsequently moved to the United States of America, where he worked in Washington for the Australian Purchasing Commission before beginning a long career with the United Nations Economic Commission.<sup>15</sup> He is best-known in Australia as an art collector, but his writing on economics brought him into contact with Scoon. Australian fiction was in the news throughout 1943 with Xavier Herbert's *Capricornia* on the best-seller lists in Chicago, New York and Philadelphia. Perhaps inspired by the Furphy celebrations in Australia and the success of Herbert's big novel, Daniel suggested *Such is Life* as a good Australian title for the University of Chicago Press to consider.<sup>16</sup>

Scoon began considering *Such is Life* for publication in the middle of 1944. On 22 July, C. Hartley Grattan sent a long reply to a request from Scoon for advice on the project, urging the editor not to consider Palmer's abridged text and suggesting that he might expect a small sale of 3,000 copies. Warning that *Such Is Life* "is not an easy book to read" and classifying the book as "neither novel nor autobiography nor essay nor what have you," Grattan advised Scoon that "if the book is read and digested more will be learned about the outlook of the Australian common man than from any other single source." Grattan also advised that readers would be assisted by a substantial introduction to "place" the book for American readers and to supply the necessary personal and general background information." Beyond its obvious historical interest, Grattan told Scoon that *Such is Life* expresses "a set of values, which are alive in Australia" in

<sup>14</sup> For a comprehensive account of Grattan's promotion of Australian literature in the 1940s, see Laurie Hergenhan, *No Casual Traveller, Hartley Grattan and Australia* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1995), 180–94.

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.alburycity.nsw.gov.au/resources/documents/Behind\\_the\\_Mask\\_-\\_Daniel\\_Gift.pdf](http://www.alburycity.nsw.gov.au/resources/documents/Behind_the_Mask_-_Daniel_Gift.pdf). Accessed 7 October 2009.

<sup>16</sup> John Scoon, letter to C. Hartley Grattan 20 July 1944, Grattan Papers, Harry Ransom Research Center, University of Texas, Austin.

1944 and “bear constant reassertion for the good of the community.” Ultimately, if the University of Chicago Press accepted the book, Grattan assured Scoon that “the cult of slick writing [would] not be advanced,” but a relatively small group of discerning readers would receive unrivalled intellectual benefit.<sup>17</sup> Scoon recruited E. K. Brown, a University of Chicago English Professor, to provide another assessment later in the year, but almost two years passed before the Press proceeded any further.

Still in doubt, Scoon approached Wallace Stegner for an opinion of the book in December 1945.<sup>18</sup> Author of *The Big Rock Candy Mountain* (1943), a best-selling, semi-autobiographical account of a family’s travels over the American and Canadian west, Stegner offered a perspective that might have provided a stronger judgement on the suitability of *Such is Life* for an American audience. Unfortunately, no response from Stegner or Brown survives, but Scoon’s contact with Stegner suggests that he was looking for confirmation that the Australian book had themes and settings that American readers would find familiar.

Scoon sought further opinion from the literary historian, David Daiches,<sup>19</sup> suggesting that the Press remained uncertain about the commercial viability of the edition and required further assurance from someone further removed from the Australian scene than Grattan. Scoon planned to produce a “trilogy” of books, incorporating *Such is Life*, *Rigby’s Romance* and a specially commissioned biography. For this plan Daiches provided a very positive report, recommending publication because of the similarity of the frontier traditions that had been “so far unexpressed in fiction” by either Australian or American writers.<sup>20</sup> Looking to Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy* for a comparison, Daiches accepted the book’s lack of plot, but suggested that the author “leans on his personality rather too deliberately” which is acceptable in the older example, he reasoned, “but in a book which is essentially the saga of a new country the author should put the atmosphere of that country and its society before that which derives from his own idiosyncracies [*sic*].” Nevertheless, Daiches conceded that it was this personality that “gives life” to the book and suggested that “a trilogy would be a remarkable chapter in Australian life and letters.” Extracts from Daiches’ testimony would eventually be printed on the book’s dust-jacket and, with Daiches having expressed his belief that *Such Is Life* “might well have an excellent sale,” the Press approved publication on 10 May 1946. With the addition of C. Hartley Grattan’s afterword, “About Tom Collins,” *Such is Life* was packaged for a North American readership.<sup>21</sup> Scoon had

<sup>17</sup> C. Hartley Grattan, Letter to John Scoon 22 July 1944, University of Chicago Library, University of Chicago Press Records, Box 117, Folders 1–2. Unless otherwise stated, all evidence about the production of the American edition of *Such is Life* comes from these folders.

<sup>18</sup> John Scoon, letter to Wallace Stegner 21 December 1945.

<sup>19</sup> John Scoon, letter to David Daiches 9 January 1946.

<sup>20</sup> David Daiches, Reader’s Report, 19 March 1946.

<sup>21</sup> C. Hartley Grattan, “Afterword,” in *Such is Life: Being Certain Extracts from the Diary of Tom*

suggested to Daiches that Vance Palmer and Grattan might be possible authors for the biography of Furphy.<sup>22</sup> The literary historian admitted that he had only heard of the latter, but believed Grattan would "do a first rate job."

From Grattan, Scoon received the advice that the possibility of a trilogy would rest on the success or failure of *Such is Life*. Grattan nominated himself as a suitable biographer, but suggested that a biographical introduction would be more suitable than a separate volume because of the lack of primary evidence. In nominating himself, he also warned that it would be "a grave error" to select Palmer because "he hasn't shown much of a gift for writing in a really perceptive way about people in the Australian literary world," citing a "distinct frost" in Palmer's biography of Furnley Maurice.<sup>23</sup> These slights on Palmer's reputation would remain concealed, but they emphasise the distancing of the American edition from Australia's literary culture. Grattan's audience was predominantly American and any biographical note would be written with American readers in mind. Beginning with the statement that *Such Is Life* is "by general acknowledgement an Australian classic, one may as well say *the* Australian classic," Grattan provides the American reader with substantial textual, biographical, historical, cultural and literary information to help them "place" the novel in Australian and American print culture. Indicating the plotless complexity of the diary entries that Furphy used as a narrative device, Grattan warns readers to conscientiously gather facts planted by the author because a "rapid, careless reader, failing to do so, misses half the literary sustenance in the book." (376) But a careful reader bears witness to a "primary document ... of Australian social attitudes" that "still animate the Australian masses to some degree." (380) The digressions of narrator Tom Collins and the conversations between his companion bullock drivers illustrate the conflict in nineteenth-century Australian society between wealthy property owners and these "men of no property" who struggle to feed and water their bullock teams in a dry season. An "undercurrent of fear that the country will be conquered by the plutocracy" pervades the book, but Grattan urges readers not to see *Such Is Life* as a "crude proletarian novel." Presaging a number of American reviews, Grattan compares Furphy's novel to Herman Melville's fiction which also "carried a freight of philosophy hardly less important than the story," assuring readers that they will experience a classic of Australian literature that reached beyond Antipodean shores.

Grattan also takes the opportunity provided by the introduction to offer readers a primer on Australian history and the literary culture of the 1890s from which Furphy and his novel emerged. He pairs the publication of *Such Is Life* in 1903 with the publication of Bernard O'Dowd's poems as "seminal

*Collins* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 375–94.

<sup>22</sup> John Scoon, letter to David Daiches, 22 March 1946. Daiche's reply came three days later.

<sup>23</sup> C. Hartley Grattan, letter to John Scoon, 2 April 1946.



events” of this period, both of which gave expression to a “strain of utopianism” that came out of an Australian manifestation of socialism and the rise of Labor politics. Grattan is quick to point out that socialist themes do not “overwhelm the literary purpose” with didacticism, listing a series of writers that contributed to the literary renaissance. Henry Lawson, A. G. Stephens, Christopher Brennan, A. B. Paterson, “Steele Rudd,” and Miles Franklin are all mentioned here, along with the pivotal role of the *Bulletin* as a medium for “nationalist,” “leftist” and “republican” sentiment. Furphy’s letter to the *Bulletin* in which he introduces his novel as one with “temper, democratic; bias, offensively Australian” is quoted in full, followed by Grattan’s brief history of Furphy’s life as farmer, bullock driver, foundry worker and auto-didact. According to Grattan, the publication of *Such is Life* “was the climax of Furphy’s life” and he emphasises the literary achievement of the ordinary worker, “a plain-looking man, long and lean of face and body, slow-walking as became a bushman.” (390) He also praises the efforts of Furphy’s friend Kate Baker to keep the novel before the public with new editions and promotion throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Through these efforts “*Such is Life* continued to fascinate the discriminating and more and more obviously to demonstrate that it had the qualities that make for classic permanence.” (394) Except for an occasional work with a glossary, few Australian novels were published in the United States of America with such extensive contextual information. With the imprint of a university press that did not specialise in fiction and this expert commentary, *Such is Life* was positioned at the fringes of the general trade, but still within reach of the general reading public. Effective promotion was essential to ensure the commercial viability of the Australian text.

Review copies were sent out to a wide variety of professional readers on 6 August 1948 with a paragraph that provided a hint about how the press expected the book would be read. Hilda Flaitz from the Press’s advertising department told recipients that she expected *Such Is Life* would “have a good sized audience”:

Readers interested in historical Westerns, in 19<sup>th</sup> century literature, in foreign countries and customs, in sociology, in political science (socialism is the core of the book), and readers who simply like an entertaining story, should enjoy this frontier classic.<sup>24</sup>

Ms Flaitz prompted other recipients further. To Mr Kenneth B. Murdock of Harvard University, the author of *Literature and Theology in Colonial New England* (1949), she wrote, “I thought you might wish to compare this Australian book with the tongue-in-cheek, semi-autobiographical work of such writers as Mark Twain and Artemus Ward.”<sup>25</sup> If recipients did not receive such a personal

<sup>24</sup> Hilda Flaitz, letter to E. K. Brown, 5 August 1948.

<sup>25</sup> Hilda Flaitz, letter to Kenneth B. Murdock, 6 August 1948.

note, they were prompted by dust-jacket blurbs from Henry Seidel Canby and excerpts from David Daiches' reader's report. Canby's opinion suggested that *Such Is Life* was "one of the ... major books in English dealing with pioneering and the Frontier. We have nothing quite like it in American literature."<sup>26</sup> Daiches' extract augmented Canby's opinion: "*Such is Life* is something the U. S. ought to have produced in the nineteenth century and didn't—something that no country except Australia seems to have produced during that period in its development—a real frontier (or immediately post-frontier) novel."<sup>27</sup> Indeed, the jacket cover promised a wide range of adventures with frontier and domestic scenes, dominated by a bullock team and the cover-note, "An Engaging Tale About The People Who Lived On The Rugged Australian Ranges and Deserts." Over the flap, this sentence is repeated, followed by a sentence that promises readers a familiar experience: "They were frontier people, much like those colorful, adventurous, and heroic figures who travelled the plains of our own country at the opening of the West." The first newspaper advertisements repeated this address to the familiar and an extract from a *New York Herald* review exclaimed, "If you relish 'Life on the Mississippi,' *Such Is Life* is your book."<sup>28</sup> The press's main advertisement promoted *Such is Life* below Ralph Chaplin's *Wobbly*, "the rough-and-tumble story of an American radical" and beside Leslie Thompson's *The Politics of Equality: New Zealand's Adventures in Democracy*. University of Chicago Press was not known for its fiction list and so *Such is Life* was primarily delivered to the book market as a semi-fictional account of socialism in Australia.

Over two hundred complimentary copies had been sent out by 12 August 1948 and the first reviews began to appear during the first weeks of September. Margaret Hubbard's *New York Herald* review was, as mentioned above, immediately used for advertisements. Subsequent reviewers drew other comparisons to describe the strange book to potential readers: in the *Chicago Illustrated Sun and Times*, Felke Felkema predicted that *Such is Life* would challenge *Capricornia* as the representative text of Australian literature and compared it with Melville's *Moby Dick* and Charles Doughty's *Arabia Deserta*.<sup>29</sup> Like Hubbard, the reviewer for *America* suggested a kinship with *Life on the Mississippi*, because of a "mark of authenticity" but also added Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* because of the book's "powerful lines on voluntary and involuntary poverty." Other reviews noted the difficulty of Furphy's style, and McCready Huston told readers of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* that *Such is Life* is a good example of the "amateur novel

<sup>26</sup> Canby's blurb was taken from an essay that was written during a business tour of Australia: *A New Land Speaking: An Essay on the Importance of a National Literature* (Melbourne: Melbourne UP, 1946).

<sup>27</sup> David Daiches, Reader's Report, 19 March 1946. See back cover for the front of the dust jacket.

<sup>28</sup> *New York Times*, 31 October 1948, BR15.

<sup>29</sup> All reviews noted in this essay are found in the University of Chicago Press records and were delivered by the Romeike press clipping company.



of the frontier” but it “is strictly an Australian classic, without the universality of language and statement that would be necessary for its full comprehension outside that country.” Furphy’s book was reviewed with Joan Colebrook’s North Queensland novel *The Northerner* in the *Dallas Morning News*, the reviewer preferring the former because “Tom Collins could be human without taking his characters all the way to the bedroom.” The reviewer for the *Canadian Forum* took the opportunity to promote that country’s own colonial novelists, but suggested that Tom Collins was Australia’s version of Paul Bunyan. The only review to show strong empathy for egalitarian themes in *Such is Life* was the one printed in New York’s *Daily Worker*. That reviewer admitted that American readers might find the book a bit obscure, “But this sprawling, pioneersman’s work is so imbued with a hatred for privilege, a fervor for egalitarian socialism ... and a great gift for sardonic observation that making its acquaintance is very much worth while.” Almost seventy-five copies were sent out specifically for review, but Romeike’s meagre collection suggests that *Such is Life* was not widely reviewed. The book was noted in such important periodicals as the *New York Times Book Review* and the *New Yorker*, but the latter provided the cold conclusion: “Mr David Daiches feels that the author has driven to within inches of something epic. Demur here.”

These few, generally positive, reviews failed to generate the sales predicted by Grattan and Daiches and so this classic of Australian literature reached very few American readers. The edition was offset from Angus and Robertson’s 1944 edition and four thousand copies were ordered by the University of Chicago Press for delivery by 1 August 1948. Two hundred and twenty-one complimentary copies were distributed on 12 August 1948 and the novel was published in the USA and Canada on 20 September 1948. Only 442 copies were sold in 1948–49, thirty-seven copies in 1949–50 and just one in 1950–51. In 1951 a special sale of *Such is Life* was organised at the discount price of \$1.50, but few were sold until an unnamed customer proposed to bulk-buy 3,300 copies at a price of fifteen cents each. The American edition of *Such is Life* earned just \$1,472.11 amounting to a loss of almost \$2,000 when the University of Chicago Press closed the account in May 1952.<sup>30</sup> In 1966 the press’s Maurice English declared that “We really did very badly by SUCH IS LIFE for whatever reason” and rejected renewed calls from Grattan for a reprinting of the novel.<sup>31</sup> Royalties on sales of the American edition were to be shared by Angus and Robertson and Jonathan Cape, owners of Australian and Empire rights, respectively.<sup>32</sup> Concerns about poor sales were flagged before publication and both publishers were asked to forego royalties on

<sup>30</sup> Ethel Pieske, letter to Jonathan Cape, 28 May 1952.

<sup>31</sup> Maurice English, letter to C. Hartley Grattan, 24 August 1966. Grattan Papers, Harry Ransom Research Center.

<sup>32</sup> Rollin D. Hemens, letter to Howard Moore, 2 November 1946.

the first four thousand copies.<sup>33</sup> Kate Baker, Furphy’s literary executor, believed that such a “small loss would be made up by succeeding sales”<sup>34</sup> and still had high hopes in early 1949, writing to J. K. Moir in relation to Samuel Furphy’s bequest to the University of Western Australia:

Should a sudden influx of unexpected income as the possibility of film rights arising from the American edition of *Such is Life* come in, the University has planned two alternatives

- (a) the investment of the money to provide for a permanent lectureship in Australian Literature
- (b) the use of the money in hand to erect a University Theatre.<sup>35</sup>

Unfortunately, the West Australian plans would not be realised. The University of Chicago Press aimed for a small, discerning readership with an interest in Australia, socialist politics or the frontier novel, but it failed to hit the mark. Several thousand copies of the American edition of *Such is Life* take up shelf-space in libraries and bookshops across the United States of America, each signalling a convergence of Australian and American print culture during the 1940s. From the initial labour of Joseph Furphy in the 1890s and through the ongoing support of his work during the first half of the twentieth century, *Such is Life* appeared in Australian, British and American print culture in a variety of forms. The 1948 American edition grew from the initial enthusiasm of one person and accumulated a network of relationships as it was processed for publication by a major American university press for a projected group of American readers. Even though the text is offset from Angus and Robertson’s Australian edition, the similarities end there. Printed and bound by the University of Chicago Press, this “offensively Australian” novel became an American book, and, in the process, influenced the creation of a network of related by-products in the correspondence, advertisements and reviews that announced its arrival in American print culture. Not only an artefact of Australian book history, *Such is Life* is also an artefact of American book history, exemplifying the trans-national nature of book history in the twentieth century.

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<sup>33</sup> W. T. Couch, letter to Jonathan Cape Limited, 24 September 1947; Kate Baker, letter to C. Hartley Grattan, 20 October 1947.

<sup>34</sup> Kate Baker, letter to C. Hartley Grattan 20 October 1947.

<sup>35</sup> Kate Baker, letter to J. K. Moir, 3 February 1949, Grattan Papers, Harry Ransom Research Center.