

Victoria University

From Hope to Disillusion? A Literary and Cultural
History of the Whitlam Period, 1966–1975

by

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STUDENT DECLARATION

I, Nathan Hollier, declare that the Ph.D. thesis entitled *From Hope to Disillusion? A Literary and Cultural History of the Whitlam Period, 1966–1975* is no more than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

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DEDICATION

To my mother Pam and my brothers Nigel, Peter and Daniel, with apologies for having my head stuck in a book for the last fifteen years.

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ABSTRACT

It is argued in this thesis that Australian history between 1966 and 1975 can usefully be termed ‘the Whitlam period’ because the 1972–1975 ALP government of E.G. Whitlam represented the culmination of a wider set of movements for progressive social change, activated primarily by post-1965 opposition to Australia’s involvement in the Vietnam War. It is suggested that the defeat of this government marked the end of the postwar ‘Keynesian’ public policy consensus and the rise to dominance of a neo-classical liberal public policy framework, based on a comparatively negative or ‘disillusioned’ view of both human nature and the capacity of society to organise itself in a rational and equitable way. And it is argued that the ongoing political importance of the Whitlam period – as the political and historical Other of contemporary Australian society – means that interpretations of this period are especially contested. Accordingly, taking its cue from Raymond Williams’s still relevant theoretical argument that culture is an active element of social development, this thesis examines the cultural causes of the defeat of Whitlam and the rise to dominance of neo-classical liberal public policy. It is argued that the primary cultural cause of these social developments is a broad-based Americanisation of Australian culture. The central evidence for this contention is found in the lives and works of Patrick White, Frank Hardy and Les Murray, authors held to best represent the major – Anglocentric, nationalist and American – cultural influences of the Whitlam period.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- ABC (Australian Broadcasting Commission)
- ABCB (Australian Broadcasting Control Board)
- ABS (Australasian Book Society)
- ACTU (Australian Council of Trades Unions)
- AIDC (Australian Industries Development Corporation)
- ALP (Australian Labor Party)
- AMIEU (Amalgamated Meat Industry Employees' Union)
- CIA (Central Intelligence Agency, US)
- CLF (Commonwealth Literary Fund)
- CRA (Conzinc Riotinto Australia)
- EEC (European Economic Community)
- IPA (Institute of Public Affairs)
- OBE (Order of the British Empire)
- OPEC (Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries)
- PLR (Public Lending Right)
- QC (Queen's Council)
- TASA (The Australian Sociological Association)
- UN (United Nations)
- IMF (International Monetary Fund)
- IWW (Industrial Workers of the World)

Introduction

From Hope to Disillusion? A Literary and Cultural History of the Whitlam Period, 1966–1975

This thesis is a literary and cultural history. The main focus is on Australian writers and their work, as part of an attempt to explain what was happening within Australian society, particularly at the cultural level, during the period from 1966 to 1975. This decade is referred to in the thesis as ‘the Whitlam period’ because Edward Gough Whitlam is the central figure associated with the economic, political and cultural hopes that are almost universally held to define this time. Even historians and social commentators who do not share the hopes of this era nevertheless accept that this was a period of widespread hope. There is no agreement, however, as to whether or not the hopes of this decade were desirable or sustainable. This is in spite or perhaps because of the fact that the Whitlam period remains very important. In its quantum difference – economic, political and cultural – from the present nature and structure of Australian society, the Whitlam period continues to define us. In this thesis I attempt to shed new light on or to open up new means of understanding the reasons for this historic shift in the nature of Australian society. In the process of doing so, of course, it is hoped that the thesis might have some positive impact on the continuing ideological deadlock over interpretations of the Whitlam period and its relationship to contemporary Australia. The central question addressed is: ‘What are the cultural origins of this fundamental shift within, or transformation of, Australian society?’ Put another way: ‘What are the cultural causes of the fall of Whitlam and Whitlamism and the rise of contemporary, neo-classical liberal or economic rationalist Australian society?’¹ My thesis, essentially, is that an Americanisation of Australian culture during the 1966–1975 period is the major cultural factor in this historic movement within Australian society from hope to disillusion and that this Americanisation helps to explain the dominance of neo-classical liberalism in the post-Whitlam age.

The History

If the period of Australian history between 1966 and 1975 is generally described as a time of hope, the period preceding it is almost inevitably depicted as a time of stasis, while that succeeding it – that of modern, contemporary Australia – becomes to a

greater or lesser degree an era in which hope, optimism, confidence and innocence are lost. There are various reasons for the shape of this historical narrative, but the main reason is that on 2 December 1972 the federal Australian Labor Party (ALP) under the leadership of Gough Whitlam was elected to power with a clear mandate to introduce a range of policies that were both substantially new (or perceived as such), in the Australian context, and based on an optimistic assessment of human nature, Australian and world social and economic conditions, and the capacity of government to effect significant and perhaps even radical democratic change.² Importantly also, this government rose to power on the back of a genuinely popular movement, or set of movements, for progressive social change. The Whitlam-led ALP clearly gained momentum from the mid-1960s through its successful incorporation, or representation, within its policy platform, of the needs, interests and desires of an increasing number of individuals and groups alienated by the culture, philosophy, politics and policies of the federal Liberal and Country parties, which had been in Coalition government since 1949.³

The Menzies era came to an end with the retirement of Prime Minister Robert Menzies in 1966. In one of his final acts as Prime Minister, however, Menzies committed Australian troops to the American war in Vietnam. This policy, more than any other, mobilised opposition to the governments of his immediate successors Harold Holt, John Gorton and William McMahon and thereby led ultimately to the ushering in of a new government from the opposite side of politics and with an alternative vision.⁴ As Geoffrey Bolton explains in his authoritative history of this national, decade-long search for “new directions”:

With mounting relish Whitlam and his colleagues in the federal Labor Party pitched their appeal to the many groups who had felt excluded from decision-making during the long hegemony of the Liberal-Country Party coalition and who had been taught by the Vietnam experience that protest might in time be converted into new policies for Australia.⁵

This could not have been expected in 1966, however, when at the federal elections of that year Labor was “routed”.⁶ According to Laurie Oakes and David Solomon, “no-one” wrote the ALP off, despite “such a disastrous result ... largely because waiting in the wings was a man who was widely seen as the great white hope of the party”.⁷ Whitlam, who had been deputy leader of the ALP since 1960, did not become leader until 1967, but it was in 1966 that his support for the policy of state aid

for Catholic schools led to the breakdown of his co-operative working relationship with Labor leader Arthur Calwell.⁸

The Labor federal election campaign of 1972 was centred on the slogan ‘It’s Time’,⁹ which was resonant of the massively successful ‘Age of Aquarius’ musical ‘Hair’,¹⁰ as well as of Bob Dylan’s ‘The Times They are A Changin’’,¹¹ theme-songs of the younger, ‘sixties generation’. During the campaign the ALP also made use of then new market research, advertising and ducking techniques.¹² Anticipation of the new government was heightened by the fact that the conservative Coalition had been in power for twenty-three years, the longest period of rule by one side of politics in Australian history. Over the course of this period the Coalition and its leaders had in some obvious cultural ways grown quite outdated.¹³ William McMahon, Whitlam’s 1972 election opponent, was a particularly uninspiring figure, pathetically rather than attractively avuncular.¹⁴

Many of the policies designed to redress injustice, inequity and inefficiency that Whitlam put forward prior to his election, and which he and his ministers then energetically implemented, seemed to be logical expressions of the economic and political realities of the age. From the end of the Second World War, the global economy had experienced an unprecedented period of strong and stable growth.¹⁵ And a broadly Keynesian consensus on the framework of public policy, achieved at the Bretton Woods conference of 1944, had led generally to an increasing economic equality within and between nations. As affluence, efficiency and material equity were thought to be inevitable, the natural by-products of good, strongly resourced government, so also was the achievement of social justice.¹⁶ The Whitlam-led ALP also expressed a commitment to economic nationalism, ‘buying back the farm’; to political nationalism, via its determinedly independent stance on foreign affairs; and, with its introduction of an Australian Honours system and its strong commitment to the arts, to cultural nationalism.¹⁷ As such, the Party embraced and reinforced a new or revived popular nationalist spirit.¹⁸

On coming to power on 2 December 1972 Whitlam acted quickly to begin the introduction of his Party’s policy platform. Informed by the Chief Electoral Officer that the final result in a number of closely contested seats would probably not be known until 15 December, reasoning that “had the whole machinery of government been allowed to lie virtually idle during the critical first fortnight, a whole range of decisions and action would have been delayed not merely for those two weeks but

effectively for nearer two months”¹⁹ and believing that it was important to demonstrate the government’s new identity and activity, Whitlam made the decision to form a ‘duumvirate’ ministry with his Deputy Lance Barnard. Whitlam allocated himself thirteen portfolios and Barnard fourteen. With the Governor-General Paul Hasluck the ‘duumvirate’ was in fact an Executive Council.²⁰ Between 5 and 18 December Whitlam and Barnard introduced elements of every major area of policy.²¹ Plans were announced for recognition of China and the granting of independence to Papua New Guinea.²² Military conscription was ended, all draft resisters were released from prison and the final Australian troops in Vietnam were brought home. Major grants were made to international birth control programs, the supply of rice aid to Indonesia and to Southern Africa, via the United Nations (UN), was increased, and international conventions on nuclear arms, racial discrimination and labour were ratified. Talks on the development of Albury-Wodonga as a regional growth centre were initiated with the Premiers of Victoria and New South Wales. It was announced that Australian-owned firms would be given preference over foreign companies in government tenders, where all other aspects of the application were equal; and some foreign take-over bids of Australian firms were frozen. The New South Wales government was ordered to close down the Rhodesian Information Centre in Sydney, in reality a defacto embassy, and wheat exports to that country were ceased. Racially selected sporting teams would now be excluded from Australia. The equal pay case – having special importance for women and Aborigines – would be re-opened before the Arbitration Commission. The granting of new leases on Aboriginal reserves in the Northern Territory was stopped. Aborigines were also promised their own schools and the first moves were taken towards the granting of Aboriginal land rights. The contraceptive pill was put on the National Health Scheme list and the sales tax removed from it. The Sydney Airport jet curfew would now be strictly enforced. *Portnoy’s Complaint*, an high-profile film which had previously been banned, could now be screened in Australia. The government also set in place plans for the substantial increase of the tertiary education sector and announced major new grants for the arts.

Facing an obstructionist Senate Whitlam went back to the polls on 18 May 1974. His government was returned, though with a reduced majority in the House of Representatives and still without a majority in the Senate.²³ Nevertheless, despite the ongoing constraints of the Senate, worsening global economic conditions and an

increasingly hostile media, in this first term the Whitlam government did introduce further important and in certain cases long-lasting initiatives. All forms of official discrimination against non-British migrants was removed. The policy of racial assimilation was replaced by multiculturalism, and ethnic minorities were provided with services to ensure the provision of their particular needs. Women achieved the full adult minimum wage. A new Department of Aboriginal Affairs took culturally specific advice from Aboriginal advisers. University fees were abolished. A system of library royalty payments was instituted for artists and authors: Public Lending Right (PLR). Urban infrastructure funding was substantially increased.²⁴

In August 1973 the government introduced a Prices Justification Tribunal before which companies would be obliged to explain proposed price increases. Later that year the government initiated a referendum seeking greater authority over the setting of prices and wages. This was opposed by the Opposition, most of the state governments and by the Trade Unions, who argued that this power could be abused by conservative governments.²⁵ In December the referendum was defeated. The Whitlam government had already shown its intention to increase economic planning, or the government's control over the economy, most directly through its appointment of H.C. 'Nugget' Coombs to Whitlam's staff as an economic adviser, but also through its directing the airline TAA to lower its prices.²⁶ If the government had been able to obtain this power to regulate prices and incomes it would probably have been able to deal more effectively with the problems of economic stagnation, inflation and stagflation that would beset the global economy in the second half of 1974. A more interventionist approach to economic policy would subsequently have been a much more politically realistic option for Australian federal governments.²⁷

Concomitantly, if the election and many of the policy initiatives of the Whitlam government were based on a desire to actively shape society, on a pervasive sense of hope, the perception that a time of hope and innocence had come to an end with the demise of the Whitlam government was heightened by the dramatic nature of that demise. Whitlam was dismissed from office by the Governor-General Sir John Kerr on 11 November 1975; or more precisely, Whitlam had his commission as the leader of the Queen's Ministers of State in Australia withdrawn by her Australian representative.²⁸ Kerr's unilateral action was completely against established democratic precedent and nakedly advanced the interests of one side of Australian politics: namely that of the conservative parties.²⁹ He was supported in his decision

by Australia's Chief Justice, Sir Garfield Barwick, who on Kerr's request gave to Kerr, prior to the Dismissal, legal advice asserting the legitimacy of the Governor-General's proposed course of action. Barwick had been a Liberal member of parliament and was a life-long conservative.³⁰ The corporate media, significant segments of which had supported the ALP in 1972, were virtually unanimous in a strident attack on the Party in 1975.³¹ Significantly, Rupert Murdoch had after 1972 shifted his allegiance from Labor to the conservatives and in 1975 personally enforced a blanket News Corporation media assault on the Whitlam government.³² The postwar conditions of strong and stable economic growth came to a crashing halt in the early 1970s, with the decision of the United States to abandon the Bretton Woods system of fixed currency exchange rates, the dramatic increases in the cost of oil brought about by the formation of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) cartel, and the widespread appearance of inflation and then stagflation. An increasingly dogmatic federal Treasury, now wedded to free-market philosophy, actively undermined the broad economic direction and specific economic strategy of the Whitlam government.³³ The corporate media and other conservative forces vehemently and uncompromisingly portrayed the difficult economic conditions of the time as the direct result of Whitlam government incompetence and or "socialism".³⁴ Intriguing and credible – though inconclusive – evidence suggested the direct or indirect involvement in the Dismissal of the CIA.³⁵ At the general elections of 13 December, called by Malcolm Fraser's caretaker government, the Coalition was returned with the largest parliamentary majority since federation. And though he did not implement his policy platform with the gusto demanded by John Howard and other government 'dries', Fraser's policy platform in the lead-up to the election of 1975 was, in contrast to that of Whitlam and the postwar governments of McMahon, Gorton, Holt, Menzies and Chifley, and like that of every federal Australian government which has succeeded it, based on a neo-classical liberal philosophy and public policy framework.³⁶ As Brian Head summarises:

The sense of optimism about social reform at home, and liberation movements in the Third World, was sustained until the early period (1972–73) of the Whitlam Labor government. However since 1974–75 it has been clear that the intellectual tide has turned. The initiative in social and political discussion passed to the conservative liberals and an enormous amount of effort has been devoted to debating the reconstruction of liberalism in the light of New Right priorities,

revamping journals, re-organising employers' associations and disseminating business ideologies and critiques of the welfare state.³⁷

This newly dominant philosophy and policy is based on a pessimistic view of both human nature and the capacity of government to rationally implement the democratic aspirations of society.³⁸

The Historiography

The events of this decade lend themselves to a dramatic, even tragic, historical narrative, and such a narrative was set out first and most passionately by Australian history's great tragedian: Manning Clark. In Clark's history, the Australian 'common' people are essentially childlike: grasping for material rewards and sensual gratification, prone to acts of irrational emotion and anger, easily swayed by the powerful and the manipulative, and needing, ultimately, a teacher capable of showing them a better way of being: a life roughly consistent with the values of transcendent selflessness expressed in the teachings of Christ in the New Testament. For Clark, Whitlam was that leader, a prophet thrown up by history or God to lead the Australian people out of the postwar consumerist cultural wilderness. But just as the story of Christ, prior to the Resurrection, was a tragedy, in that Christ's virtue ensured his damnation on the 'fallen' earth, so too it seems that for Clark the Whitlam government could never last. Writing of the long years of conservative rule prior to Whitlam's election, Clark recalls:

Happily in the second half of 1972 it looked as though we were at last going to get a reprieve. I remember in particular one great day of elation on a Sunday late in November of 1972. The place was Queanbeyan. The hall was packed with a crowd of men and women of all ages, all occupations, all creeds, yes and all colours. That night tears came not only to my eyes and to many people around me when we stood and clapped, and stamped, and cheered when Gough Whitlam told us that when he became Prime Minister of Australia, then the last vestiges of colonialism would disappear and our years of shame in Vietnam, and in our behaviour to the Aborigines, and in our defence of the old, corrupt order of society would come to an end. It seemed then that the years of unleavened bread were over. At long last we had a teacher who had a chance to lead us out of the darkness into the light, always provided THEY did not cut him down, that THEY spared him a little before he went from hence and was no more seen.³⁹

Who the 'THEY' are in this account is not clear, but it is noteworthy that this was written in mid 1973, more than two years before the Dismissal.

If Clark at some level anticipated Whitlam's fate this made him no more sanguine about it. Less than a month after the Dismissal, in Murdoch's *Australian* newspaper, Clark gave a potted history of the Whitlam government and a brief assessment of its place in Australian history and culture.⁴⁰ The classic narrative of tragedy is by this time even more apparent. Looking back on it, Clark writes that the period of the Whitlam government "was like a summer's day which begins with the promise of the glories and splendours of noon and ends with a frightening storm. First, there were the days of glory and the days of achievement. In that first hectic year so much was achieved that one is at a loss to know where to begin."⁴¹ "In those three halcyon, golden years", he continues, "in contrast to the pro-British, archaic, anachronistic philistinism of their predecessors, Whitlam gave the men and women with creative gifts a place of honour and respect in Australian society".⁴² But "by the middle of 1974", Clark writes, "something had gone wrong": "the clouds of a summer's storm, with all the thunder and lurid lightning of a modern media-designed scenario, were gathering on the horizon."⁴³ For Clark the modernist, the appearance of mass consumerist culture, symbolised by the reference to 'modern media', presages the end. The direct role of the media in Whitlam's 'fall' is also alluded to. As the clouds gather, "the forces of reaction, all those men with the vision and the values one had believed to have been swept not before their time into the dust-bin of human history, sensed that Whitlam, and those of like mind in his government, had become like beautiful birds who were trapped under the nets of the fowlers of this world. They moved in for the kill".⁴⁴ "With great skill, indeed with a brazenness which was often breath-taking", these reactionary bird killers "blackened and besmirched the reputation of the man who had had the courage and the vision to lift Australia out of the doldrums of dependence, first on the United Kingdom and later on the USA".⁴⁵ "The man who had been the architect of one of the great reforming governments of this country", Clark continues, "had the mortification of being reduced to impotence by the media and the use of constitutional tricks by his opponents".⁴⁶ Further: "He had the even greater indignity of being branded as the leader of the worst government since federation by those very men who had perpetrated and gloried in the moral infamy in Vietnam. There was worse to come. The people on 13 December seemed to

endorse the verdict of his opponents, to give the seal of popular approval to all their abuse and their portrait of him as a despot".⁴⁷

In Clark's estimation, then, Whitlam was brought down by the conservative class and their political leaders, by the media, the 'people', and perhaps by Whitlam's own moral purity. Interestingly, Clark's response to the fate of Whitlam is not to turn the other cheek but to raise the possibility that those who have committed this wrongdoing will one day be punished by political radicals according to the Old Testament principle of 'an eye for an eye':

History will probably be kinder than the people. Indeed, it may well be that 13 December 1975 will go down in history as that day which converted radicals from belief in the ballot box to industrial action, from parliamentary to direct action. It may be the day which proved once and for all just how hopelessly wedded we, as Australians, are to the petty-bourgeois values, to that very sickness which the progressive part of the world is shedding and destroying ... It may be that the Whitlam years prove we can only march forward by destroying our old corrupt society root and branch. If that is so then those who live to see that day will remember 11 November and 13 December as the days when the wind was sown which led to the whirlwind. It is just one of the ironies of human affairs that men who see themselves as saviours of a society are often its grave-diggers.⁴⁸

Midway through 1976 the narrative of tragedy, complete with biblical overtones, is set out again. With reference to Fraser's landslide victory in the federal elections of 13 December, Clark, quoting Xavier Herbert, asks: "Are we a nation of bastards?".⁴⁹ "During the ensuing painful days", Clark confesses, "I read, part in anger, part in agreement, editorials in the serious English, French, and German papers which told their readers that 'the ocker', or the 'Ugly Australian' was still in charge 'down under', that the 'ocker' had destroyed the man who, like Prometheus, had been trying to teach Australians that they could steal fire from heaven, that they were capable of better things".⁵⁰ Again, the people share the blame for Whitlam's 'fall' with the conservatives and the mass media: "The Australian electors", Clark explains:

bombarded for months by stories of the incompetence, the bungling, the corruption, the jobbery, etc., etc. of the Whitlam government, had put back into government in our country a group of men who had the moral values of a troop of boy scouts and the economic and social values which were rapidly disappearing off the face of the earth except in countries such as South Africa, New Zealand, Rhodesia, and possibly Spain.⁵¹

And it is again suggested that, as “the history of mankind [sic] is written by the victors”, and “it seems now quite certain that 1975 was an aberration, a temporary halt in the people’s march to victory”, it is likely that “the Governor-General and his beneficiaries can expect little mercy from the historians of the people”.⁵²

Clark recounts Whitlam’s and Australia’s tragedy again in the second edition of his *A Short History of Australia*.⁵³ Whitlam is “like one of those prophets of old who had been nurtured in a harsh, dry land”.⁵⁴ He “had the charisma and the gifts with which to become a great reformer”.⁵⁵ “With the zeal of a missionary”, writes Clark, “the wit of the very sophisticated, and the gift of being able to present his aims in memorable language, (Whitlam) began his campaign to teach Australians – including all Aboriginal Australians – that they could achieve a measure of equality of opportunity in education, health care, and in careers”.⁵⁶ Whitlam also sought to teach Australians “that they could pursue an independent foreign policy and reach standards in the world of arts and letters which would once and for all rid them of the vestiges of their one-time colonial status, with its attendant sense of inferiority and the tendency to grovel and cringe in the presence of men and women from older civilisations”.⁵⁷ Whitlam, Clark says, “proposed to end the disgrace of a rich and skilled country such as Australia producing so much inequality, so much poverty, and so much that was shoddy and sub-standard”.⁵⁸ Clark refers to the Whitlam government’s “high-minded aims”.⁵⁹ “The press, commercial radio and television”, we learn, “ably assisted by the skilled dispensers of abuse, character assassination, and motive-questioning amongst the conservative politicians, portrayed a government of visionaries, idealists, and reformers as at best inept administrators and at worst men who were not free from the odour of corruption”.⁶⁰ And again the people are shown to have played their ignoble part: “At the election of 13 December, 1975 ... Once again the Australian electorate had demonstrated the truth that their history had fashioned them as sound conservatives: in a choice between the status quo and a mild change, they had opted very clearly for a conservative way of life”.⁶¹ In this account, though, the Labor leadership have also become complicit in their own downfall, by stooping to fight the election campaign of December 1975 on the managerialist terms of the Coalition rather than in terms of its original, 1972 vision. “So a moment of hope and promise in the brief history of European civilisation in the ancient, uncouth continent”, Clark concludes, “seemed in danger of disappearing, as the conservatives

and Labor engaged in an exchange of abuse about which of the two was the more competent in making capitalist society work”.⁶²

If this moment of hope had disappeared, Clark was working very hard to ensure that the memory of it would not. The period of the Whitlam government is in Clark’s account the proper culmination of Australian history, a lost opportunity for national self-realisation, if not utopia: “The Whitlam government possibly offered the final chance for Australia to show the world that it was capable of building a society free from the evils or errors in both capitalist and communist societies”.⁶³ Whitlam is for Clark variously a prophet, a missionary and a Christ-figure; his enemies resemble the pharisees and sadducees who cut Christ and his vision down. Implicitly, the future offered by this government is still worth hoping for, or at least dreaming of.

According to John Warhurst, “Clark stood in the crowd outside Parliament House on 11 November 1975 and protested Whitlam’s dismissal. He returned again the following day and from then until his death continued to speak out publicly against the Dismissal”.⁶⁴ More than any other event, Warhurst suggests, the Dismissal gave Clark “something political to say”.⁶⁵ “Between late 1975 and 1988”, states Mark McKenna, “Clark never tired of reminding the Australian public that they should never again countenance returning the conservatives to power”.⁶⁶ It is also “from about this time”, according to Warhurst, that “Clark developed a general reputation as a person worth listening to”, and gained a mass audience.⁶⁷ For Carl Bridge, Clark “told of how ... Prometheans like Wentworth, Curtin and Whitlam stole the fire from heaven and tried to make a distinctive Australian contribution to the human conversation”.⁶⁸ Clark, Bridge notes, is “Australia’s best known and probably most widely read historian”,⁶⁹ though Stuart Macintyre and Peter Craven remark that Clark’s position within the academy is less secure.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the basic narrative of the Whitlam decade – as marking a national journey from hope to disillusion – set out first and most powerfully by Clark, has subsequently been repeated by historians of all philosophical and political persuasions.

An especially energetic and influential exponent of the narrative was Donald Horne. Writing between the 11 November 1975 dismissal of the Whitlam government and the federal elections of 13 December that year, Horne “wondered what it might mean if the poll figures [showing a strong swing away from the Whitlam-led ALP] accurately represented a significant mood”.⁷¹ “Perhaps”, he concluded, “because of this marginal shift, the Australian people were about to betray what might have been

their destiny: positively affirming themselves a nation self-confident in its democratic forms”.⁷² He also wrote in the aftermath of the 13 December election, perhaps presciently, that “the campaign to destroy the Whitlam government went on for so long, involved so many powerful institutions, and had such an infamous victory that many people who believed in reform believed it possible that their time would not come again. There was too much power on the other side. They could never win”.⁷³ Later, the elegaic note is struck again: “If Australians had given the Whitlam government a better run, Australia might have developed something of a name for itself in the world as a humane and progressive nation with a distinctive originality”.⁷⁴ Horne’s 1980 social history of Australia between 1966 and 1972 was, entitled, significantly, *Time of Hope*.

This central narrative and set of tropes reappear within and throughout the various histories of the Whitlam government. “In the first flush of victory after twenty-three years in Opposition”, writes Michael Sexton, for example, “it was not difficult for the members of the new government to assume that they would be able to govern as a succession of (Liberal-Country Party) governments had done”.⁷⁵ But “some time during that first year they realised that it was not going to be like that – the old order had changed. Exhilaration turned to bewilderment, assurance to disillusionment, as the feeling of living on borrowed time and the ever-present sense of uncertainty and unpredictability ate into the resolve of the government”.⁷⁶ Sexton contends that as late as the end of 1974 Opposition leader Billy Snedden’s position “was almost untenable and ... the Opposition was effectively without a leader. It was a situation any government would have relished”.⁷⁷ If “not everyone in the Labor ranks shared this optimism”, he continues, “not even the most pessimistic would have predicted the year that was to follow – a year of disruption and disaffection that was to reduce the government to a position where it was rendered totally vulnerable in any electoral contest”.⁷⁸

In a final chapter written with future politically progressive reformers in mind, Sexton summarises:

If the events of November 1975 serve no other purpose, they dramatise the fact that some of the most powerful sections of Australian society are not prepared to tolerate a reform government in any circumstances. This ought to make it impossible, for at least a generation, for the supporters of reform to be again lulled into a sense of false security as they were in the early days of the Whitlam government.⁷⁹

Progressive hope is lost and conservative disillusion reigns. Similarly, in his centenary history of the ALP, Ross McMullin concludes his discussion of the Whitlam period by reflecting:

The people who turned out in droves during the 1975 campaign had not only been outraged by the removal of the Whitlam government; they had been inspired and liberated by its approach and achievements. These admirers would always regard the Whitlam government with an affectionate nostalgia tinged with sadness because of the hopes and dreams that were only partly fulfilled. For the rest of their lives their pulses would quicken whenever they saw or heard replays of the exhilarating St Kilda Town Hall meeting in 1972, Whitlam on the Parliament House steps on Remembrance Day 1975, and, especially, Whitlam at Blacktown beginning ‘Men and women of Australia . . .’⁸⁰

In an emblematic personal essay, Owen Hughes writes that “what occurred in particular policy areas in the Whitlam government is less important than that change *could* occur. Under previous governments, it seemed that things were the way they were ... and that was the way it was. Whitlam gave hope”.⁸¹ Looking back on the Whitlam decade, Hughes recalls:

It was a time in which there was a chance for Australia, a chance which has not yet come to fruition. My generation had lived its entire life under Liberal governments of varying quality, who by 1972 were very tired and also seemed to want a break. It voted for the first time for a government which seemed to offer a chance for Australia; it was a time of optimism. That it seemed to fall quickly; that economic realities crowded in when they had not been considered in the early days, does not detract from the feeling that this was a special time.⁸²

He continues: “One thing the Whitlam government did was to again make politics matter; that by organising, something could be done [sic] ... It also showed that change did not need to be incremental, that major change could occur and quickly”.⁸³ “Perhaps the charisma of Hawke and the flash of Keating may persist”, says Hughes, “but it is probable that Whitlam will be remembered longer. Other governments may have been more successful, but have not been so interesting, which is what history ultimately requires”.⁸⁴ Waxing increasingly lyrical, Hughes reflects: “Perhaps it was simpler in the Whitlam years, perhaps politics should be about economic statistics and not about optimism or excitement. But it nice [sic] to know that it once was. That was a time”.⁸⁵

For critics of Whitlam and Whitlamite social philosophy, such as Stephen Foley and Marshall Wilson, the electorate of the 1960s and 70s was attracted to the

“ideals of disarmament” because unlike earlier generations it was “unexposed to the ravages of war”.⁸⁶ For Foley and Wilson, Whitlam’s popularity and the nature of his coming to power hinted at a personality cult. The electorate was “captivated” by Whitlam, described as “a tall, striking, gifted personage” possessing a “scholarly eloquence”,⁸⁷ Arthur Calwell’s “dynamic heir”.⁸⁸ Whitlam has “disciples”⁸⁹ and is backed by “the ALP’s new breed of articulate, university-educated professionals, swept to power on a wave of anti-Vietnam sentiment”.⁹⁰ Rather than being an expression of the potentially positive power of democracy, as it was for Clark, Whitlam’s rise to government is here a sign of the dangerous gullibility and malleability of ‘the mob’, and so a cautionary tale about the dangers of democracy. Similarly, according to Patrick Tennison, “in the 1972 era” Whitlam was a “giant”.⁹¹ His personality “was the one, major, over-riding personal factor in Labor’s election victories of 1972 and 1974”.⁹² Labor’s victory in 1972 was a result of “the personality cultism Labor offered, with Whitlam the banner carrier”.⁹³ But if the electorate was irrational in 1972 and 1974, paradoxically its rejection of Whitlam in 1975 was simply a rational response to the government’s failure: “Like a few million other Australians, I had become increasingly dismayed and disaffected by so many aspects of Labor’s performance once in power”.⁹⁴ Open government, Tennison suggests, was just “one of the many ideals that Labor, in power, was unable to fulfil”.⁹⁵ Even Whitlam’s most unrelenting critic, Alan Reid, writes that in the lead-up to the 1972 federal elections Whitlam was able to make a “significant contribution” to the outcome by appearing “lucid, logical, dynamic and informed”.⁹⁶ Although the Whitlam odyssey was for these authors a foolish one, it was still a journey from hope to disillusion.

In general histories of this period of Australia the basic narrative reappears. “Gough Whitlam was Prime Minister for only three years”, James Walter reminds us, “one of the shortest terms of any Prime Minister in the postwar period. Yet he continues to excite attention and divide feelings, to loom large in our history”.⁹⁷ Whitlam’s election, Walter records, “prompted unusual euphoria in the electorate. Even the conservative press lapsed into breathless mini-biographies, dubbing him ‘Australian of the Year’”.⁹⁸ In his *A Concise History of Australia*, Stuart Macintyre suggests that “the completion in 1973 of the Sydney Opera House and the acquisition by the new National Gallery of ‘Blue Poles’, the large, dribbling creation of Jackson Pollock, caught the mood of expansive engagement”.⁹⁹ But the “golden age” was

over, Macintyre writes, when in 1975 the Whitlam government “tackled inflation with a contractionary budget and unemployment passed 250,000”.¹⁰⁰ And in his 2001 inaugural *Overland* magazine public lecture, Macintyre reiterates: “It was Whitlam’s cruel misfortune to embark” on his “expansive” and “ambitious” program “just as the material conditions to support it came to an end”.¹⁰¹ For Bolton the fate of the Whitlam government “raised the possibility that Australia would be found essentially a conservative nation in whose history the Whitlam interval would seem a shining aberration”.¹⁰² John Molony, in *The Penguin Bicentennial History of Australia*, entitles his chapter on the decade between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s ‘Years of Hope’.¹⁰³ “For a time”, he writes, Australians “had every reason to believe that genuine change was taking place. No government since federation had so carefully worked out its policies and then began so readily to implement them”.¹⁰⁴ “An air of urgency and excitement prevailed”,¹⁰⁵ he records, and states later: “Despite its last few months, the three, short years of Whitlam had been ones of hope and excitement”.¹⁰⁶ But the government was brought down by “conservative circles”,¹⁰⁷ “segments of the business community”,¹⁰⁸ “propaganda”,¹⁰⁹ “powerful sections of the media”¹¹⁰ and of course the Governor-General. “To the degree that there had been political innocence in Australia prior to 11 November 1975”, states Molony, it “was at an end”.¹¹¹ F.G. Clarke’s chapter on ‘1966–1983’ in his *Australia: A Concise Political and Social History*, records how “the election of the first Labor government in federal parliament for twenty-three years caused considerable excitement among the public at large and heightened expectations throughout the community”.¹¹² “The electorate”, he summarises, “had voted in favour of change”.¹¹³ And although “the electoral arithmetic appears to be overwhelmingly in Fraser’s favour”, he writes with reference to the 13 December elections, “we should not permit the final result to overshadow the extraordinary bitterness the events of 11 November 1975 injected into the political scene in Australia. It is difficult to recapture the divisiveness and the ugliness of the 1975 election campaign”.¹¹⁴

The general narrative emerges also within more specialised and thematic histories. In their recent collection of essays on themes and debates in Australia’s history, Martyn Lyons and Penny Russell emphasise the fact that the Whitlam government brought home the last Australian troops from Vietnam. This government, in their estimation, “represented hope for social change and for more positive relations with Asia”.¹¹⁵ Discussing the period of the Whitlam government within

Creating a Nation, a history of Australia foregrounding the experience and perspective of women, Marilyn Lake writes: “The pace of change in the 1970s was exhilarating for some, threatening to others”.¹¹⁶ Writing on ‘A Struggle for Equality’ in the 1988 *People’s History of Australia*, edited by Verity Burgmann and Jenny Lee, Laksiri Jayasuriya and Jenni Cook write that “by 1972 ... the scene was set for Whitlam’s reforming Labor government to embark on new, bold policy initiatives”.¹¹⁷ “By the time of the Whitlam government”, writes John Rickard in his *Australia: A Cultural History*, “there was a greater acceptance of the arts as an expression of an indigenous culture. When, after decades of controversy and escalating expense, the Sydney Opera House was opened in 1973, it immediately became, for all its practical faults as a building, a symbol of the new cultural optimism”.¹¹⁸ But, Rickard says, there was “always a dichotomy between the expectations of Labor’s supporters and the fears of its enemies”.¹¹⁹ “As the climate of crisis increased between 1972 and 1975”, he continues, “the nervous and impressionable were drawn into the Anti-labor [sic] fold, persuaded that the Whitlam government was more trouble than it was worth”. For Rickard, “1975 spelled the end of the optimism associated with the experimentation of the counter-culture and the reformist program of the Whitlam government”.¹²⁰ “Optimism ... ebbed away” with “the gathering recession of the 1970s”, he states, and the Dismissal itself was “a dramatic culmination of three turbulent years, and an event which has already entered Australian folk-lore”.¹²¹

Since the accounts of Manning Clark, Whitlam is the figure universally held to best embody this hopeful spirit of his times. The character of the Whitlam government was certainly in part a reflection of the character of its leader. For many, aver Lyons and Russell, Whitlam was “an inspiring and imposing figure”.¹²² According to Rickard, during the election campaign of 1972 Whitlam “convincingly played the part of a man of destiny”.¹²³ States Horne: “The nature of his dismissal may have ... turned Whitlam himself, for many Australians, into a mythic hero, affirming forever the unsatisfied ideals of 1972”.¹²⁴ “I see him”, Horne writes, “as marking that period in history in which we are witnessing the end of what I called ‘the lucky country’”.¹²⁵ This, says Horne, is what Whitlam stands for.¹²⁶ Bolton describes Whitlam as a “lion” and compares his initial two-week policy-making burst to the biblical six days of creation: “On the fourteenth day Gough rested”.¹²⁷ For Macintyre, in the 1998 *Oxford Companion to Australian History*: “Whitlam remains a compelling figure, consistent in his values and yet increasingly radical in his politics; the last great politician to

follow his convictions, he rose and fell as the possibilities for a confident and expansive national government ended”.¹²⁸ And in his *Concise History* Macintyre reiterates his assessment: “Whitlam remains a highly controversial figure. For some he is a hero, cut down in his prime; for others he was a dangerous incompetent. The last national leader to follow his convictions regardless of consequence, he rose and fell as the possibilities for a confident and expansive national government ended”.¹²⁹ Whitlam’s former principal private secretary (1967–1975) Race Mathews recalls fondly: “Australians are accustomed to having their votes sought through their purses and pockets. It is Whitlam alone in the memories of most of us who has addressed himself uncompromisingly to our consciences and intellects”.¹³⁰ Suggesting that “an unresolved question of historiography is whether the times make the historical figure, or the historical figure makes the times”, Owen Hughes offers the view that: “In Australia from 1972 to 1975 we had a conjunction of both: it is impossible to imagine either the times without Whitlam or Whitlam without the times. Optimism may now be hard to find in Australian politics, neither is there the passion, positive or negative, that people once had for Whitlam”.¹³¹ In Molony’s estimation, “It was to Whitlam’s credit that a new hope and a new vision were given to Australians”.¹³²

Across these various histories the primary hopes of Whitlam, his Party, supporters and the majority of the Australian nation, are for increased social equality; a new, heightened level of national self-confidence and independence; and a new mode of rational, principled and democratic government. For Horne, the hope was for “a humane and progressive nation with a distinctive originality”.¹³³ Echoing Horne, Molony writes that Whitlam “knew that his purpose was to create a more just, humane and civilised society in which the distribution of wealth was to be more evenly balanced”.¹³⁴ Whitlam’s “ambitious program” aimed to bring about “an enlightened meritocracy”, suggests Macintyre.¹³⁵

However, as has already been noted, while there is a broad agreement on the existence of a national journey from hope to disillusion over the course of the Whitlam decade, there is no agreement as to the causes of this historic shift. There is no agreement as to whether or not the hopes of this time were reasonable, desirable and sustainable. As is demonstrated in chapter one, attitudes toward the naturalness or otherwise of the nature and structure of Australia today tend to strongly influence perceptions of the Whitlam period. Those intellectuals who have no sympathy for the hopes of the Whitlam government and the Whitlam decade within the current context

tend to argue that that government brought about its own downfall and that the neo-classical liberal public policy framework and social structure, which came to replace the policy framework and social structure of the Whitlam period, were the result of a necessary or rational response to social reality. Alternatively, intellectuals attracted to the broadly optimistic and democratic ideals of the Whitlam government generally portray that government as having been unnecessarily brought down by incompetent, small-minded or evil opponents (and sometimes with the help of the government's members and friends). To put it simply, understandings of the Whitlam period are shaped by competing contemporary political interests, values and desires: by ideology.

It is not difficult to see why. In its quantum difference from our own time – characterised by relative social inequality, insecurity and fearfulness, the formulation of foreign policy in accordance with the wishes of a ‘powerful friend’ (namely the USA), and the dominance of ‘spin’ over reasoned and principled government – the Whitlam period continues to define us. As Hocking and Lewis write, the Whitlam decade, “more than any other, defined modern Australia”.¹³⁶ This is an important period of Australian history less because of what remains to be unearthed about it – though as with any period this is considerable – than because of the fact that, in spite of there being broad agreement on the basic features of this historical narrative and no shortage of accounts of the time already published, it continues to be regularly and passionately argued about. Hegemonic control over understandings of the present form of Australian society necessarily requires control over understandings of its origins, its historical Other. It is no surprise then that despite its comparatively brief period of rule, more has been written about the Whitlam government than about any other Australian government.¹³⁷ Concomitantly, more has been written about Whitlam than any other Australian political leader.¹³⁸ The dramatic nature of the historiography, the elements of tragedy most tellingly emphasised by Clark, ultimately reveal the continuing appeal of this government.¹³⁹ The story of the Whitlam government is an important Australian myth, in the politically neutral sense of that word. As such it cannot be simply ignored or swept away through a concerted revisionism. As Ron Eyeran suggests, the primary social function of intellectuals is to reinterpret such established myths, or narratives.¹⁴⁰ A study of the origins and function of the competing ideologies involved in the interpretation of this decade is

therefore more likely to move understanding of this time forward than yet another general history of it.

The Theory

Ideology, as David McLellan notes in his comprehensive and authoritative work on the subject, is “the most elusive concept in the whole of social science”.¹⁴¹ McLellan explains that the term “is the product of the social, political and intellectual upheavals that accompanied the Industrial Revolution: the spread of democratic ideals, the politics of mass movements, the idea that, since we have made the world, we can also remake it”.¹⁴² Ideologies, he writes, “were the products of an increasingly pluralist society and were associated with rival groups whose sectional interests they served”.¹⁴³

As Jürgen Habermas makes clear in his germinal study of the public sphere, the very notion of individuals coming together to make decisions about the future direction of society, on the basis of their reason, would not have made sense prior to the political and economic rise of the bourgeois or mercantile class, a process which challenged the traditional, absolute authority of the monarch:

The bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public; they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatised but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor. The medium of this political confrontation was peculiar and without historical precedent: people’s public use of their reason.¹⁴⁴

For Habermas, this process has its origins in a system of commercial exchange which, following the transformation of Antwerp into a permanent trade fair in 1531, developed “according to rules which certainly were manipulated by political power”, but which also produced “a far-reaching network of horizontal economic dependencies ... that in principle could no longer be accommodated by the vertical relationships of dependence characterising the organisation of domination in an estate system based upon a self-contained household economy”.¹⁴⁵ “Although directly a product of the French Enlightenment”, McLellan adds, “the notion (of ideology) obviously has its roots in the general philosophical questions about meaning and direction with

which the breakdown of the medieval world view confronted Western European intellectuals”.¹⁴⁶

The first recorded use of ‘ideology’ dates to 1796 and the French Enlightenment intellectual Antoine Destutt de Tracy.¹⁴⁷ For him, the term was positive and progressive, referring to the notion that our ideas are based on physical sensations, rather than being innate. Destutt de Tracy argued that a rational investigation of the origin of ideas, free from religious and metaphysical prejudice, would provide the foundation for a just and happy society. However, Napoleon Bonaparte introduced a negative use of the word shortly after. For Napoleon, the ideologue is guided by ideas only, cloudy metaphysics, taking undue notice of reality. McLellan notes: “This oscillation between a positive and a negative connotation will be characteristic of the whole history of the concept of ideology”.¹⁴⁸

As McLellan sets out, “ideology has a German as well as a French origin”.¹⁴⁹ The various uses of this term since its inception derive from and operate within one of these two lines of development. For the Romantic artist and philosopher, the subject is always and distinctively an active shaper of reality.¹⁵⁰ Samuel Taylor Coleridge for example criticises Isaac Newton as a “mere materialist”: “*Mind* in his system is always passive – a lazy Looker-on at an external World”.¹⁵¹ The Romantic movement was particularly strong in Germany, and contemporaneous German Idealist philosophers from Immanuel Kant to Georg Hegel tried to give these Romantic ideas a systematic intellectual basis.¹⁵² Unlike Destutt de Tracy and the French thinkers of the Enlightenment, for whom the natural and social worlds were pellucid to the rational mind, Hegel argued that the ideas of a particular age were relative to the historical conditions of that moment and could not claim universal validity.¹⁵³

The French rationalist view of ideology was enjoined within the Anglophone world by a strong emphasis on empiricism. This view or tradition passes through Durkheim and structuralism, emphasising the consensual nature of society and embracing a contemplative model of truth. Truth here is a reflection of reality, which close observation and rational consideration should enable all people with sufficient intellect and a capacity to apply the methods of natural science, to recognise. In contrast, the second, Germanic

view or tradition rejects the emphasis on observation in favour of an attempt to *make* truth. Society is seen as ever-changing and riven by conflict, rather than as the product, or potential product, of a rational consensus. Adherents to this line of inquiry are suspicious of any ‘objective’ way of deciding upon truth and tend to reject the notion that the methods of natural science are appropriate for the study of society. These ideas are developed by Hegel and Marx and are carried forward through Karl Mannheim to Habermas.¹⁵⁴

Marx put the concept of ideology in the forefront of political discourse, partly through his attempt to unite the French and German developments.¹⁵⁵ Marx combined the attempt to objectively measure the physical needs of human beings with the recognition that needs and desires are historically, socially and culturally produced, mediated by human perception. Sophisticated and successful applications of the concept of ideology, such as those of Lucien Goldmann, continue this approach, recognising that all truth is in a sense ideological while refusing to accept that all truth is equally ideological; refusing to fall into philosophical relativism.¹⁵⁶ As McLellan argues, “if the science / ideology dichotomy [of Enlightenment and empiricist positivism] will not do, nor will its opposite – the pale view of the omnipresence of ideology which has the additional, dangerous implication of reducing all social and political arguments to the status of mere propaganda”.¹⁵⁷ And McLellan’s further advice is instructive:

Successful accounts of ideology must combine two attributes. The first, emphasised by Mannheim, is a hermeneutic subtlety which sees both that it is necessary to understand ideology before criticising it and also adopts a self-reflexive attitude towards its own premises. The second, stressed in most strands of the Marxist tradition, is to preserve the concept’s critical potential by linking it with analyses of control and domination, thereby extricating it from the labyrinth of relativism associated with the hermeneutic circle.¹⁵⁸

Ideology, McLellan concludes, is “an aspect of every system of signs and symbols in so far as they are implicated in an asymmetrical distribution of power and resources. And of which system is this not the case?”.¹⁵⁹ Ideology may permeate all society, but this need not necessarily be the case: it is the product of human action rather than of some scientific law of nature.

If ideology is an expression of unequal relations of power within society it can be counteracted by acting directly to make society more equal; and counteracted indirectly – within the intellectual sphere – by pointing out the impact of unequal power relations on the consciousness of a person or a group. As it is sustained by the experience of power – either as a possession or a force of oppression – ideology can be weakened by analysis which demonstrates the ways and the extent to which the operations of the conscious and rational mind are subconsciously linked to either a desire for power or for acceptance by the powerful.

But power relations are by definition relational. No power is absolute. And ideology and power are not formed in a social vacuum, just as reality itself – the meeting place of social conditions and human consciousness – is never only an expression of political power. Human reality and consciousness are the product of political, economic *and cultural* relations.¹⁶⁰ Culture plays an active role in the creation of individual and social consciousness and reality and, although culture is always politicised, it cannot be reduced to politics.

How can this be explained? It is helpful to consider one of Marx's founding observations. Marx suggested that all human society is founded on two fundamental struggles: the struggle of people against nature, to obtain the necessities of physical survival, and, developing from this, the struggle of people against each other, as a means by which some might gain an easier and perhaps ostensibly more rewarding life.¹⁶¹ Politics and ideology can be seen as the product of the second, exclusively human struggle; and culture can be seen as the product of this struggle against nature.

It is pointless, as R.W. Connell has noted, to try to suggest that one of either patriarchal or class relations is more original than the other.¹⁶² Similarly, it seems probable that all human societies organise themselves politically in the process of organising themselves economically and culturally. But the idea of culture, in any of its most commonly operating strands,¹⁶³ is founded on the belief or perception that human beings are partly formed out of co-operative and communal, and loving or emotion-driven, human interaction – such as the interaction between parents and children – that is a *necessary* response to the need for social reproduction. Of course these cultural relations are always political (and even, at times, abusive), but they are never *only* political.¹⁶⁴ The concept of culture refers to a set of conscious and unconscious beliefs and practices that, unlike politics, power and ideology, derive or are believed to derive from a group's *unmediated* relationship with nature (just as the

term ‘culture’ originally develops in English in primary semantic opposition to ‘nature’).¹⁶⁵ Human beings in particular groups and societies share common bonds, a common identity, that is not simply political, an expression of power, and so not merely temporal, or at least, not wholly transient. Even within the French Enlightenment tradition, in which culture is equated with ‘civilisation’ and with the individual’s distance from ‘primitive’, ‘natural’ society, the notion of the ‘civilised’ and the cultural ‘ideal’ are based on the belief that these are expressions of *natural* law.¹⁶⁶

As discussed in chapter two, most histories of the Whitlam government and of the decade of hope chiefly associated with Whitlam, have explained the social changes of this time overwhelmingly in terms of political and economic factors. The more critical of these histories have seen these social changes as expressions of political and economic power. The continuing presence of ideology within contemporary discussions of this period can on the basis of these historical narratives be seen as the result of individuals either being unable to see, or paying insufficient attention to, the impact of political power and material interests on consciousness.

Alternatively, the political and economic changes of the Whitlam decade have in (primarily but not exclusively postmodernist) places been seen as an expression of a broader national and international cultural development, a new spirit or *Zeitgeist*. Here the general role of culture is asserted – historical movement is seen as flowing on from an all-encompassing cultural transformation – while the particular role of culture, and its specific relations to the political and economic, is ignored. On the basis of these accounts, competing ideologies can be understood as parts of the overarching spirit of a particular epoch, rather than expressions of power relations.

Raymond Williams’s critical 1961 depiction of the general handling of culture within historical exposition remains broadly accurate and, in relation to the history of the Whitlam period, apposite. “A good deal of history”, he writes in *The Long Revolution*, “has in fact been written on the assumption that the bases of the society, its political, economic, and ‘social’ arrangements, form the central core of facts, after which the art and theory can be adduced, for marginal illustration or ‘correlation’”.¹⁶⁷ Alternatively, he notes, in the histories of literature, art, science, and philosophy: “There has been a neat reversal of this procedure ... [so that] these are described as developing by their own laws, and then something called the ‘background’ (what in general history was the central core) is sketched in”.¹⁶⁸ “Obviously”, he points out, “it

is necessary, in exposition, to select certain activities for emphasis, and it is entirely reasonable to trace particular lines of development in temporary isolation. But the history of a culture, slowly built up from such particular work, can only be written when the active relations are restored, and the activities seen in a genuine parity".¹⁶⁹ Culture, Williams suggests, is an active and what might be called 'generative' part of the larger process of social organisation.¹⁷⁰

Stressing the extent to which cultural activity plays an active part in social organisation, Williams argues that it must be analysed in relation to society as a whole: "The art is there, as an activity, with the production, the trading, the politics, the raising of families. To study the relations adequately we must study them actively, seeing all the activities as particular and contemporary forms of human energy".¹⁷¹ "It is then not a question of relating the art to the society", he writes, "but of studying all the activities and their interrelations, without any concession of priority to any one of them we may choose to abstract".¹⁷² "Cultural history must be more than the sum of the particular histories", he goes on to say, "for it is with the relations between them, the particular forms of the whole organisation, that it is especially concerned".¹⁷³ And "to put on to Time, the abstraction", Williams notes, "the responsibility for our own active choices[,] is to suppress a central part of our experience. The more actively all cultural work can be related, either to the whole organisation within which it was expressed, or to the contemporary organisation within which it is used, the more clearly shall we see its true values".¹⁷⁴ He states in summary:

I would then define the theory of culture as the study of relationships between elements in a whole way of life. The analysis of culture is the attempt to discover the nature of the organisation which is the complex of these relationships. Analysis of particular works or institutions is, in this context, analysis of their essential kind of organisation, the relationships which works or institutions embody as parts of the organisation as a whole.¹⁷⁵

The particular objects of culture, then, should be studied in relation to and for what they reveal of the culture and society as a whole. "This", suggests Andrew Milner, is Williams's "central point", and he adds in 2005 that this still seems "almost exactly right".¹⁷⁶

While taking a contextualist approach, Williams resists reducing culture to its context: "It was certainly an error to suppose that values or art-works could be adequately studied without reference to the particular society within which they were

expressed, but it is equally an error to suppose that the social explanation is determining, or that the values and works are mere by-products".¹⁷⁷ "It seems likely", rather, "that without this (cultural) activity the whole of the human organisation at [a given] place and time could not have been realised".¹⁷⁸ And more bluntly: "We cannot say that we know a particular form or period of society, and that we will see how its art and theory relate to it, for until we know these, we cannot really claim to know the society".¹⁷⁹ For Williams culture is never a passive reflection of politics, economics or technology.

As Milner explicates, Williams's "target", in criticising those who would study cultural objects without regard to the social relationships and historical conditions informing their production, was Leavisite literary criticism.¹⁸⁰ But, Milner goes on to say, this criticism could as easily be applied today to critics like Harold Bloom, who like Leavis indulge in a form of humanist cultural essentialism.¹⁸¹ In relation to the history of the Whitlam period, Williams's criticism could be used to critique the work of scholars such as Lindsay Barrett and Meaghan Morris, who see political and economic developments as expressions of a purely cultural historical shift, a shift in the Hegelian *Zeitgeist*. As argued in chapter two, Barrett and Morris, like Bloom and Leavis, ignore the impact of material relations of power on cultural production. Williams's target in criticising those who would depict culture as wholly determined by 'society' was orthodox Marxism, though Milner notes also that this criticism could equally be applied today to the anti-humanist postmodernism of intellectuals like Tony Bennett.¹⁸² In relation to the history of the Whitlam period, this criticism applies to much of the standard historiography on this period, in that the specific, generative role of culture is not considered. As Williams suggests, culture impacts on society in particular ways which need to be identified if the bases of social and historical development, and hence the origins of ideology, are to be grasped.

A New Cultural History

However, having set out the theoretical basis of his approach, it remained for Williams to demonstrate how this explication of the particular generative role of culture within a specific social context, could be achieved. If culture is at the same time variously the ideal of civilisation (a notion deriving most directly from French Enlightenment thought), a whole way of life (a notion deriving primarily from

Romantic and German Idealist thought) and the arts and learning, then in one sense almost everything is cultural (just as almost everything is in a sense political and economic). So which aspect or dimension of culture should be focused upon? For humanists from Matthew Arnold on, the answer had been works of art, which were held to be transcendent expressions of the culture (and at times the race). For narrowly materialist rationalists and postmodernist anti-humanists the answer has been basically to ignore the role of the artist, except where that role is seen as the reflection or reproduction of economic and political power. For Williams, however, as for intellectuals influenced by him, such as Terry Eagleton and Andrew Milner, it remains especially valuable, in seeking to understand the particular, active role of culture in social and historical development, to focus on works of art; not because these works in any way transcend the culture of which they are a part, but precisely because they are expressions of that culture. As Milner explains: “To say that value is produced by the valuing community, rather than by the inherent properties of the valued text, is not necessarily to detract from the ‘value’ either of literature or of culture more generally. Why should art need to be transcendental in order to be either interesting or ‘valued’?”.¹⁸³ Similarly, John McLaren sees the study of Literature as falling between the disciplines of history and philosophy and so sees creative writers in comparable terms to Williams, Eagleton and Milner, as something like aesthetic historians.¹⁸⁴ For these thinkers works of art are especially important and valuable objects of study because they are the objects of culture that are valued by the particular society as expressions of the essence of their culture, objects which effectively affirm or challenge received fundamental meanings and which generate the most deep and communal forms of imagined pleasure and pain. These feelings need to be identified within a particular time and place, however partially or imperfectly that is possible, if the active role of culture in society is to be glimpsed, because these communal feelings constitute the closest thing to a cultural essence.

Williams argues that it is in the arts of a period that what he calls the “structure of feeling” of a society, “this felt sense of the quality of life at a particular place and time: a sense of the ways in which the particular [economic, political and cultural] activities combined into a way of thinking and living”,¹⁸⁵ might be glimpsed; though only glimpsed. “In one sense”, he says, “this structure of feeling is the culture of a period: it is the particular living result of all the elements in the general organisation”.¹⁸⁶ The key word in his definition is ‘quality’, for he is trying to suggest

the importance of the 'nature' or 'aesthetic' of life in shaping the actions of a particular group of people at a particular place and time, and of course this quality, nature or aesthetic could only be either directly felt and experienced or actively – imaginatively – recovered. It could never be self-evident or empirically demonstrated. The 'structure of feeling' is a qualitative concept.

As Williams explains, this structure of feeling is "the most difficult thing to get hold of, in studying any past period".¹⁸⁷ "It is only in our own time and place", he says, "that we can expect to know, in any substantial way, the general organisation" of society.¹⁸⁸ For this reason, Williams is not completely satisfied with his own descriptive term, recognising that "almost any formal description would be too crude to express this nevertheless quite distinct sense of a particular and native style".¹⁸⁹ But in spite of this he suggests that the concept "is potentially of very great importance", because the experience and feeling to which it refers is important. It is within the structure of feeling of a society that the dynamic contribution of culture to the social organisation as a whole can be seen, however imperfectly. And, states Williams, "I think the fact is that we are most conscious of such contact [between aesthetics, or actual felt experience, and society as a whole,] in the arts of a period".¹⁹⁰

"I think we can best understand this", Williams continues, "if we think of any similar analysis of a way of life that we ourselves share. For we find here a particular sense of life, a particular community of experience hardly needing expression, through which the characteristics of our way of life that an external analyst could describe are in some way passed, giving them a particular and characteristic colour".¹⁹¹ "We are usually most aware of this", he points out, "when we notice the contrasts between generations, who never talk quite 'the same language'".¹⁹² And he continues, usefully:

It is in this respect that the arts of a period, taking these to include characteristic approaches and tones in argument, are of major importance. For here, if anywhere, this characteristic is likely to be expressed; often not consciously, but by the fact that here, in the only examples we have of recorded communication that outlives its bearers, the actual living sense, the deep community that makes the communication possible, is naturally drawn upon.¹⁹³

"I do not mean", he clarifies, "that the structure of feeling, any more than the social character, is possessed in the same way by the many individuals in the community.

But I think it is a very deep and very wide possession, in all actual communities, precisely because it is on it that communication depends”.¹⁹⁴

Throughout his scholarly work, Williams is concerned with what he calls ‘the long revolution’: the complicated and pervasive process of radical social change which began in Europe, and more particularly Britain,¹⁹⁵ in the late eighteenth century: “It is a genuine revolution, transforming men [sic] and institutions; continually extended and deepened by the actions of millions, continually and variously opposed by explicit reaction and by the pressure of habitual forms and ideas”.¹⁹⁶ Within this, he notes that “the democratic revolution commands our political attention” and that “the industrial revolution, backed by immense scientific development, commands our economic attention”.¹⁹⁷ In his assessment, “the complex interaction between the democratic and industrial revolutions is at the centre of our most difficult social thinking”.¹⁹⁸ But he also notes: “It is particularly evident that we cannot understand the process of change in which we are involved if we limit ourselves to thinking of the democratic, industrial, and cultural revolutions as separate processes”.¹⁹⁹ And he goes on to say:

This deeper cultural revolution is a large part of our most significant living experience, and is being interpreted and indeed fought out, in very complex ways, in the world of art and ideas. It is when we try to correlate change of this kind with the changes covered by the disciplines of politics, economics, and communications that we discover some of the most difficult but also some of the most human questions.²⁰⁰

The expression of culture or of a structure of feeling, in art, is always political, but never wholly reducible to politics or power, never only political. A work of art, regardless of its politics, may yield a positive or negative emotional response by affirming or questioning the communal, cultured and ultimately material basis of a person’s identity. This is not to say that a work of art which yields a positive emotional response is ‘good’ in political terms: consider Leni Riefenstahl’s affecting propagandist film *Triumph of the Will* (1934), for example.

Williams seeks to understand then the particular ways that groups of people physically and conceptually ‘use’ the texts and objects of their world, as part of the larger project of social organisation, and to understand how the structure of feeling – expressed and partially evident within works of art – actively shapes that social organisation. It can be seen that, in attempting to understand the nature of the

relationship between culture and society, Williams, like Marx, ultimately sought to find a balance between the insights of the philosophical traditions of British empiricism, the French Enlightenment, and German Idealism, even if a complete reconciliation of these insights was and remains not possible.

Following on from Williams's example, this thesis constitutes an attempt to understand the active role of culture in the process of change within Australian society during the period from 1966 to 1975. There is a need to demonstrate the specific role of culture within this historic shift in the nature of Australian society and its public policy framework, to demonstrate how people's assessment of their political and material interests, needs and desires are impacted upon by their emotions, unconscious and aesthetic sensibility, and to demonstrate how these things are in turn influenced by fundamental cultural teachings about right and wrong, good and bad, the sacred and profane – totem and taboo, in Freud's terms – deeply communal teachings about what thoughts and actions should bring pleasure or pain, and which forms of pleasure and pain are legitimate.

My thesis is that the major cultural reason for the post-1975 dominance of neo-classical liberal public policy within Australian society is a process of cultural Americanisation which has made Australians more open to what is essentially an American public policy and philosophical framework. I focus, that is to say, on the cultural pre-history of the politics and economics of neo-classical liberalism in Australia. An historical narrative is advanced in which British and British-Australian cultural traditions are challenged and replaced by American cultural traditions and a characteristically American structure of feeling, during the period under review, providing a cultural basis for the rise to dominance of neo-classical liberal public policy and philosophy. This argument is put through an account, advanced in chapter two, of the US political, economic and cultural origins of neo-classical liberalism, and subsequently through a reading of the lives and works of three writers whom it is argued best or most clearly embody the major cultural traditions within Australian society during the Whitlam period. The fate of these writers and their works, it will be argued, demonstrates the fate of the cultural traditions they represent.

In chapter three it is argued that Patrick White writes out of a puritan, liberal, British-Australian cultural tradition that was culturally compatible with the politics of the Whitlam-led ALP. White supported Whitlam strongly and his works of the Whitlam period contributed at the cultural level to the public support Whitlam

enjoyed. Frank Hardy, it is argued in chapter four, is shaped by a secular, radical Australian nationalist cultural tradition that culturally sat uneasily alongside but contained considerable common ground with the politics of the Whitlam-led ALP. Hardy was a critical but strong supporter of Whitlam and his government and his major literary works of the Whitlam period provided effective though qualified cultural support for Whitlam. The final chapter sets out how Les Murray emerges from and advances a radical, puritan, liberal cultural tradition which in the Australian context was historically quite unique but which is closely compatible with the dominant cultural traditions of the US. In coming to embody the dominant strand of Australian nationalism Murray demonstrates the shift in Australian culture towards US models. Murray claimed to be a supporter of Whitlam and was attracted to Whitlam's cultural nationalism and support for the arts, but was a strong critic of the values underpinning Whitlam's policies. His works of the Whitlam period function at the cultural level to undermine public support for Whitlam.

From Hope to Disillusion? constitutes a new approach to the study of the Whitlam period, an approach which reasserts the value of materialist philosophy within Australian literary and cultural studies and the value of cultural studies within general history. The main intellectual inspiration comes from Marx, via Raymond Williams, Andrew Milner, R.W. Connell and my *Overland* magazine colleagues and interlocutors John McLaren, Ian Syson and Sean Scalmer.

¹ Throughout the thesis, 'neo-classical liberalism' is preferred to 'economic rationalism', 'neo-liberalism' or 'market liberalism' because it is argued that this contemporary philosophy has its foundations in, and represents a reinvigoration rather than a superseding of, classical liberal philosophy.

² The argument for the practical and symbolic importance of the 1972 ALP election victory within Australian history is certainly not new. This argument will be redeveloped and reconsidered in the body of this introduction. On the optimism of the Whitlam government and its 1972 platform see especially Gough Whitlam, *The Whitlam Government 1972–1975*, Penguin, Ringwood, 1985, pp.1–24; Graham Freudenberg, *A Certain Grandeur: Gough Whitlam in Politics*, Sun Books, Melbourne, 1977; and Graham Freudenberg, 'The Program', in the Australian Fabian Society, eds, *The Whitlam Phenomenon*, McPhee-Gribble and Penguin, Fitzroy and Ringwood, 1986, pp.130–144. In this article Freudenberg writes succinctly: "Certainly the whole spirit of the program reflects the buoyancy and optimism of the 1960s, an optimism which is, indeed, the essence of Whitlamism itself", p.136. For a comprehensive statement of the program of the new reformism see John McLaren, ed., *Towards a New Australia*, Cheshire, Melbourne, 1972.

³ As R.W. Connell and T.H. Irving formulate: "When a period of conflict in the ruling class undermined the Liberals, a coalition of the old unions, the new intelligentsia, and the outer-suburban working class was just strong enough to put Whitlam in office. It was not strong enough to keep him there for long". Connell and Irving, *Class Structure in Australian History: Documents, Narrative and Argument*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1980, p.305. "Whitlam's coalition", according to Paul Kelly, was made up of "women, migrants, environmentalists, Aborigines, public servants, artists and nationalists". Kelly, *The End of Certainty: Power Politics and Business in Australia*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1994, p.x.

⁴ With characteristic panache, Freudenberg states: “Menzie’s never understood the forces he had let loose by locking Australia into Vietnam. In particular, he did not understand its impact on the uncommitted Australian middle class ... Over the next decade, four prime ministers, Holt, Gorton, McMahon and Whitlam, would all be damaged, in very different ways, by Vietnam. The only Prime Minister associated with Vietnam to emerge politically unscathed by it was Menzie’s, the man responsible for the original commitment”. *A Certain Grandeur*, p.4.

⁵ Geoffrey Bolton, *The Oxford History of Australia Volume 5, 1942–1988: The Middle Way*, Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1990, p.188. ‘The Search for New Directions’ is Bolton’s descriptive label for the 1966–1975 period. See his *The Middle Way*, pp.163–244. For affirmation from one of Whitlam’s opponents see Patrick Tennison, *The Lucky Country Reborn*, Hill of Content, Melbourne, 1976, pp.8: “The eventual defeat of the Coalition in 1972 can be traced back to events that began even before Holt’s 1966 victory. These included the then Government’s Vietnam policy – and conscription”; and 36: “In the run-up to the 1972 election, the Cairns Vietnam Moratorium demonstrations ... made mass public protest more respectable than ever before ... Those demonstrations showed everyone that in the face of heavy numbers united by moral outrage, the authorities were prepared to stand aside. They gave the cue to other smaller groups, from trade unions to suburban activists steamed up about municipal issues”.

⁶ Laurie Oakes and David Solomon, *The Making of an Australian Prime Minister*, Cheshire, Melbourne, 1973, p.12.

⁷ Oakes and Solomon, *The Making of an Australian Prime Minister*, p.12.

⁸ See Freudenberg’s chapter on this conflict: ‘Is the Tumbrel Ready?’, in *A Certain Grandeur*, pp.24–38. Interestingly, the Australian New Right began to formulate its theoretical opposition to these trends in the mid-1960s also, in the formation of Hayekian discussion groups at Melbourne University and the 1966 establishment of the Alfred Deakin Lecture Trust, the first of a number established to propagate liberal thought. See David Kemp, ‘Liberalism and Conservatism in Australia since 1944’, in Brian Head and James Walter, eds, *Intellectual Movements in Australian Society*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1988, p.337.

⁹ Mick Young, who headed the 1972 ALP National Campaign Committee, states that “the ‘It’s Time’ slogan was the lynchpin, the centrepiece of our campaign”. Mick Young, ‘The Build-up to 1972’, in the Australian Fabian Society, *The Whitlam Phenomenon*, p.107.

¹⁰ This point is made by Stephen Foley and Marshall Wilson in their *Anatomy of a Coup: The Sinister Intrigue Behind the Dismissal*, The Canterbury Press, Scoresby, 1990, p.23.

¹¹ Thanks to Steve Brock for bringing this to my attention.

¹² For an account of this campaign which emphasises the importance of these techniques see the chapter ‘The It’s Time Machine’ in Laurie Oakes and David Solomon, *The Making of an Australian Prime Minister*, Cheshire, Melbourne, 1973, pp.90–113. See also Neal Blewett, ‘Labor 1968–72: Planning for Victory’ in Henry Mayer, ed., *Labor to Power: Australia’s 1972 Election*, Angus & Robertson and the Australian Political Studies Association, Sydney, 1973, pp.6–16. Mick Young himself has suggested that Don Dunstan was in fact “almost a decade ahead of anybody else” in exploiting “all the modern techniques of campaigning”. However, he notes that “the period leading up to the 1972 campaign was the first time the Labor Party gave a commitment to the use of market research at national level”. He suggests also: “There is no doubt that the campaign, which was different from any seen on a national level, did capture the imagination of the Australian people in an unprecedented way. We did use slick marketing techniques, and did package Whitlam to a certain extent”. And in relation to Young’s introduction of the duchessing of journalists, at the 1969 ALP National Conference, described by Oakes and Solomon, Young admits: “The 1969 Conference played an important role in promoting an image to the public of Whitlam as a truly significant Australian political figure. It was the first Conference totally open to the media”. ‘The Build-up to 1972’, pp.99, 98, 107, 96.

¹³ As Graham Little states: “By 1972 there were many Australians – young, educated, women – who could hardly wait for Australia’s turn at the cultural revolution Kennedy appeared to have set going more than a decade before”. “It was not until Whitlam’s election”, Little continues, “that all these [cultural] pressures were released”. Little, ‘Whitlam, Whitlamism and the Whitlam Years’, in the Australian Fabian Society, eds, *The Whitlam Phenomenon*, pp.63, 65–66. For an extended account of the connection between the Whitlam-led ALP and new cultural developments within Australian society see Donald Horne, *Time of Hope: Australia 1966–72*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1980; especially his chapter ‘Waiting for Whitlam’, pp.157–167. A more theorised account of the cultural momentum supporting the rise to power of the Whitlam government is Lindsay Barrett, *The Prime Minister’s Christmas Card: Blue Poles and Cultural Politics in the Whitlam Era*, Power Publications, Sydney,

2001. And a more impressionistic sense of Whitlam's and his party's embodiment of cultural trends can be derived from Frank Moorhouse, ed., *Days of Wine and Rage*, Penguin, Ringwood, 1980.

¹⁴ Conservative intellectuals have tended to be even more harsh in their depictions of McMahon than his political opponents, as though the desire to downplay the significance of Whitlam's 1972 victory necessarily leads to a denigration of Whitlam's opponent. A representative example of McMahon's general depiction can be seen in Alan Reid, *The Whitlam Venture*, Hill of Content, Melbourne, 1976. According to Whitlam: "It now tends to be forgotten that McMahon was an extraordinarily skilful, resourceful and tenacious politician". *The Whitlam Government*, p.12.

¹⁵ John Carroll, citing figures from C.D. Kemp, one of the founders of the right-wing think-tank, the Institute of Public Affairs, writes: "Keynesian theory was to dominate government policy in most Western countries from the end of the Second World War until around 1970, a twenty-five year period that produced sustained and stable growth with near-full employment. In the Australian case the 1945–70 period was particularly impressive. A comparison of average annual growth rates between 1950 and 1970 sees Australia at 4.7 per cent, ahead of Canada (4.5 per cent), the USA (3.7 per cent) and the U.K. (2.8 per cent). Over the same period the average rate of unemployment was 1.25 per cent per annum. Between 1950 and 1975 the population rose from 8 to 13 million, real GNP jumped from \$5 billion to \$17 billion, and output per person rose by 80 per cent. In addition the acreage under crop doubled, iron ore production leapt from 2 to 93 million tonnes, employment in manufacturing rose from 900,000 to 1,300,000. The 1960s was the most extraordinary period of economic growth in Australian history. Output per person rose at an average yearly increase of 4.5 per cent in manufacturing, 5 per cent in the rural sector, and 9 per cent in mining. Real GDP per head rose 37 per cent in the 1960s. Likewise Australia's inflation rate was stable and low, with a superior record to that of Japan, France, or the U.K., and slightly inferior to that of Canada and the USA. Above all, Australia sustained a high level of investment, a tribute to the stability and confidence fostered by the federal government". 'Economic Rationalism and its Consequences', in John Carroll and Robert Manne, eds, *Shutdown: The Failure of Economic Rationalism and How to Rescue Australia*, Text, Melbourne, 1992, p.8.

¹⁶ "There was ... a widespread belief by the early 1960s that poverty had at last been conquered". Greg Whitwell, *Making the Market: The Rise of Consumer Society*, McPhee-Gribble, Melbourne, 1989, p.26.

¹⁷ See Whitlam, *The Whitlam Government*, pp.229–276, 25–182, 553–590. During the 1972 election campaign, Whitlam had already announced that under his government Australia would choose a new national anthem. The idea for this announcement came from Rupert Murdoch. See Freudenberg, *A Certain Grandeur*, p.236.

¹⁸ This general statement has been made many times. See for example Bruce Bennett: "Menzies' departure as Prime Minister in 1966 was widely regarded as the end of an era, though it was not until the Whitlam Labor government of 1972–1975 that Australia's winds of change blew strongly with a new cultural nationalism". Bruce Bennett, 'Literary Culture Since Vietnam: A New Dynamic', in Bruce Bennett and Jennifer Strauss, eds, *The Oxford Literary History of Australia*, Oxford, Melbourne, 1998, p.239. For an extended account of the cultural nationalism of this time see Horne's 'An Australian Australia?' chapter in his *Time of Hope*, pp.139–155. Other significant commentaries include those of Stephen Alomes: *A Nation at Last? The Changing Character of Australian Nationalism 1880–1988*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1988; and John Rickard, *Australia: A Cultural History*, Longman, New York, 1988.

¹⁹ Whitlam, *The Whitlam Government*, p.14.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.18.

²¹ Bolton, *The Middle Way*, p.215.

²² The following summary of policy initiatives is taken from the daily record published by the *Sydney Morning Herald* and included in Whitlam, *The Whitlam Government*, pp.19–22.

²³ The Government did gain an increased number of Senators through this election, but still not a majority.

²⁴ See Stuart Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia* (second edn), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004, pp.232–233.

²⁵ See Bolton, *The Middle Way*, p.219.

²⁶ Freudenberg records that the suggestion to appoint Coombs came from Rupert Murdoch. See *A Certain Grandeur*, p.236.

²⁷ As Tim Rowse makes clear, the Whitlam government's commitment to cutting tariffs and to the implementation of other aspects of micro-economic reform recommended by the Industries Assistance Commission was entirely consistent with the Keynesian approach to public policy. See Rowse, 'The Social Democratic Critique of the Australian Settlement', in Jenny Hocking and Colleen Lewis, eds, *It's Time Again: Whitlam and Modern Labor*, Circa, Melbourne, 2003, pp.219–243. The chief architect

of this policy in the Australian context was undoubtedly Nugget Coombs. See Tim Rowse, *Nugget Coombs: A Reforming Life*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002. See also Micahel Pusey, *Economic Rationalism in Canberra: A Nation-building State Changes its Mind*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, pp.162–163.

²⁸ This point is made by Colin Howard, University of Melbourne Hearn Professor of Law, in Foley and Marshall, *Anatomy of a Coup*, p.vi.

²⁹ See Donald Horne, *Death of the Lucky Country*, Penguin, Ringwood, 1976, pp.32–33, 12.

³⁰ See David Marr, *Barwick*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1980.

³¹ See Bolton, *The Middle Way*, pp.237–238.

³² On the portrayal of the Whitlam government during the 1975 election campaign see Sean Scalmer, *Dissent Events: Protest, The Media and the Political Gimmick in Australia*, UNSW Press, 2002, pp.139–140; and Bridget Griffen-Foley, *Party Games: Australian Politicians and the Media from War to Dismissal*, Text, Melbourne, 2003, pp.217–234. “The Murdoch papers were the last to become hostile to the Whitlam government, but when they did, they were the most strident”, writes George Munster. See his *Rupert Murdoch: A Paper Prince*, Viking, Ringwood, 1985, p.107. On Murdoch’s personal role in this media campaign see pp.107–112.

³³ The most detailed accounts of this are Greg Whitwell, *The Treasury Line*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1986; and Leon Glezer, *Tariff Politics: Australian Policy-making 1960 – 1980*, Melbourne University Press, 1982. See also Whitlam, *The Whitlam Government*, pp.207–214; and Freudenberg, *A Certain Grandeur*, pp.349, 354.

³⁴ See especially Griffen-Foley, *Party Games*, pp.217–234.

³⁵ The most extensive exploration of this possibility is made by John Pilger: ‘The Coup’, in his *A Secret Country*, Vintage, London, 1990, pp.187–238. See also J.A. Nathan, ‘Dateline Australia: America’s Foreign Watergate’, *Foreign Policy* 49, 1982–83, pp.168–185; Tim Rowse, ‘The CIA and the Kerr Coup’, in A. Curthoys, A.W. Martin and Tim Rowse, eds, *Australians from 1939*, Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates, Sydney, 1987; Joan Coxsedg, Ken Coldicutt and Gerry Harant, ‘Scenario for a Coup’, in their *Rooted in Secrecy: The Clandestine Element in Australian Politics*, Committee for the Abolition of Political Police, Balwyn North, 1982, pp.21–42; Dennis Freney, *The CIA’s Australian Connection*, the author, Sydney, 1977; and Lyndall White, ‘Is that a government in Your Pocket ... or ... ? The CIA in Australia’, *Semper*, 3 May 1982, p.6. In his own history, Whitlam records that in 1977 US President Carter sent a personal emissary, Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher, to meet Whitlam in Sydney. Via Christopher, Carter assured Whitlam that the US administration would “never again interfere in the domestic political processes of Australia”. *The Whitlam Government*, p.52.

³⁶ Hugh Emy and Owen Hughes note that during the Fraser government “there was already a small group of Dries in the Liberal party pressing for lower tariffs and financial deregulation but, beyond setting up the Campbell Inquiry into the latter, Mr Fraser did little to accommodate them, for which he was subsequently much criticised”. *Australian Politics: Realities in Conflict* (second edn), Macmillan, Melbourne, 1991, p.192.

³⁷ Brian Head, ‘Introduction: Intellectuals in Australian Society’, in Head and Walter, *Intellectual Movements in Australian Society*, p.29.

³⁸ The shift in the public policy framework taking place at this time is spelt out by Michael Pusey: “Written into the policy discourses of the Whitlam years we ... find a much more ‘constructivist’ understanding of social needs as demands set upon the state, the economy, and indeed upon ‘politics’, by the reproduction of society *per se*. The discourse is predicated in forms of civil society and of a ‘public sphere’ that have a certain autonomy, and even some primacy, *vis a vis* the economy and the formal structures of the state. It is a discourse that allows social needs to be read as indices to social problems arising from changes in the institutional and cultural structures of society (work, family, community, education, popular culture and the arts, etc.)”. In the post-Whitlam era, on the other hand, Pusey argues that a public policy framework of economic rationalism “creates and itself depends upon a *hyper-objectification of the market* and market processes and ... this goes hand in hand with an *uncoupling of the economic and socio-cultural* contexts and premises of state action”. The result is “a certain kind of *systematising abstraction* that ‘tries’ to convert *action* into system co-ordinated *behaviour*”. *Economic Rationalism in Canberra: A Nation-building State Changes its Mind*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1991, pp.164, 171.

³⁹ Manning Clark, ‘The Years of Unleavened Bread, December 1949 to December 1972’, *Meanjin* 32: 3, 1973, in *Manning Clark: Occasional Writings and Speeches*, Fontana Books [no place], 1980, p.202.

⁴⁰ Manning Clark, ‘History Will be Kinder to Labor than the People’, *Australian*, 7 January 1976, in *Manning Clark: Occasional Writings and Speeches*, pp.203–208. A less detailed response to Kerr’s dismissal of Whitlam is Manning Clark, ‘The Violent Option’ in Myfanwy Gollan, ed., *Kerr and the*

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- Consequences: The Sydney Town Hall Meeting, 20 September 1976*, Widescope International Publishers, Camberwell, 1976, pp.26–31.
- ⁴¹ Clark, ‘History Will be Kinder to Labor than the People’, p.203.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, p.204.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.206.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.206.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.207.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.208.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.208.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.208.
- ⁴⁹ Manning Clark, ‘Are We a Nation of Bastards?’, *Meanjin* 35:2, 1976, in *Manning Clark: Occasional Writings and Speeches*, pp.209–214.
- ⁵⁰ Clark, ‘Are We a Nation of Bastards?’, p.210.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.210.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, p.213.
- ⁵³ Manning Clark, *A Short History of Australia* (second edn), Macmillan, South Melbourne, 1982.
- ⁵⁴ Clark, *A Short History*, p.229.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.238.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.239.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.239.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.239–240.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.240.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.241.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp.246–247.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, p.246.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.246.
- ⁶⁴ John Warhurst, ‘In the Public Arena’, in Carl Bridge, ed., *Manning Clark: Essays on his Place in History*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1994, p.157.
- ⁶⁵ Warhurst, ‘In the Public Arena’, p.156.
- ⁶⁶ Mark McKenna, ‘“I Wonder Whether I Belong”: Manning Clark and the Politics of Australian History 1970–2000’, *Australian Historical Studies* 122, 2003, p.369.
- ⁶⁷ Warhurst, ‘In the Public Arena’, p.156.
- ⁶⁸ Carl Bridge, ‘Introduction’, in Bridge, *Manning Clark: Essays on his Place in History*, p.3.
- ⁶⁹ Bridge, ‘Introduction’, p.1. According to McKenna, Clark is “the only Australian historian who came to enjoy national celebrity status”. “I Wonder Whether I Belong”, p.366.
- ⁷⁰ In Macintyre’s estimation: “While his position as a writer and influential figure in Australian cultural life is assured, his professional reputation as a historian is at present less certain”. Stuart Macintyre, “‘Always a Pace or Two Apart’”, in Bridge, *Manning Clark: Essays on his Place in History*, p.29. For Craven: “Perhaps Manning Clark, like Dickens a century ago, is capable of appearing corny to the historians who have come after him, even as they acknowledge him as great, because they are not distant enough from the embarrassing manners of their Father”. Craven, ‘The Ryan Affair’, in Bridge, *Manning Clark: Essays on his Place in History*, p.187.
- ⁷¹ Horne, *Death of the Lucky Country*, p.10.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*, p.10.
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp.16–17.
- ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.95.
- ⁷⁵ Michael Sexton, *Illusions of Power: The Fate of a Reforming Government*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1979, p.126.
- ⁷⁶ Sexton, *Illusions of Power*, p.126.
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.9.
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.9.
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.262.
- ⁸⁰ Ross McMullin, *The Light on the Hill: The Australian Labor Party 1891–1991*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1991, p.375.
- ⁸¹ Owen Hughes, ‘That Was a Time’, in Hugh Emy, Owen Hughes and Race Mathews, eds, *Whitlam Re-visited: Policy Development, Policies and Outcomes*, Pluto Press, Leichhardt, 1993, p.252.
- ⁸² Hughes, ‘That Was a Time’, pp.252–253.
- ⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.253.
- ⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.253.

- ⁸⁵ Ibid., p.253. Another significant personal account is Carmen Lawrence, ‘Whitlamites? Impressions of a ’72 Novice Voter’, in Hocking and Lewis, *It’s Time Again*, pp.96–109.
- ⁸⁶ Foley and Wilson, *Anatomy of a Coup*, p.23.
- ⁸⁷ Ibid., p.23.
- ⁸⁸ Ibid., p.27.
- ⁸⁹ Ibid., p.24.
- ⁹⁰ Ibid., pp.23–24.
- ⁹¹ Patrick Tennison, *The Lucky Country Reborn*, p.10.
- ⁹² Ibid., p.11.
- ⁹³ Ibid., p.7.
- ⁹⁴ Ibid., p.2.
- ⁹⁵ Ibid., p.5.
- ⁹⁶ Alan Reid, *The Whitlam Venture*, Hill of Content, Melbourne, 1976, p.39. On Reid’s history as a protracted attack on Whitlam see James Walter, ‘Gough Whitlam: Bursting Limitations’, in Judith Brett, ed., *Political Lives*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1997, p.29.
- ⁹⁷ Walter, ‘Gough Whitlam: Bursting Limitations’, p.28.
- ⁹⁸ Ibid., p.28. According to Foley and Wilson, “*Time* magazine, in only the second cover story ever devoted to an Australian political leader since Sir Robert Menzies, dubbed it ‘The Whitlam Whirlwind’”. *Anatomy of a Coup*, p.24.
- ⁹⁹ Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia*, pp.231–232.
- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p.233.
- ¹⁰¹ Stuart Macintyre, ‘Temper Democratic, Bias Australian: One Hundred Years of the Australian Labor Party’, *Overland* 162, 2001, p.9.
- ¹⁰² Bolton, *The Middle Way*, pp.243–244. Bolton’s chapter on the Whitlam government is entitled ‘A Shining Aberration’.
- ¹⁰³ John Molony, *The Penguin Bicentennial History of Australia: The Story of 200 Years*, Viking, Ringwood, 1987.
- ¹⁰⁴ Molony, *History of Australia*, p.355.
- ¹⁰⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p.369.
- ¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p.357.
- ¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p.358.
- ¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p.358.
- ¹¹⁰ Ibid., p.363.
- ¹¹¹ Ibid., p.362.
- ¹¹² F.G. Clarke, *Australia: A Concise Political and Social History*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1989, p.255.
- ¹¹³ Clarke, *Australia*, p.255.
- ¹¹⁴ Ibid., p.265.
- ¹¹⁵ Martyn Lyons and Penny Russell, ‘Introduction’, in Martyn Lyons and Penny Russell, eds, *Australia’s History: Themes and Debates*, UNSW Press, 2005, p.xv.
- ¹¹⁶ Marilyn Lake, ‘Affirmations of Difference’, in Patricia Grimshaw, Marilyn Lake, Ann McGrath and Marion Quartly, eds, *Creating a Nation, 1788–1990*, McPhee-Gribble, Melbourne, 1994, p.305.
- ¹¹⁷ Laksiri Jayasuriya and Jenni Cook, ‘A Struggle for Equality’, in Verity Burgmann and Jenny Lee, eds, *Making a Life: A People’s History of Australia since 1788*, McPhee-Gribble and Penguin, Fitzroy and Ringwood, 1988, p.173.
- ¹¹⁸ Rickard, *Australia: A Cultural History*, p.216.
- ¹¹⁹ Ibid., p.245.
- ¹²⁰ Ibid., p.247.
- ¹²¹ Ibid., pp.245, 217.
- ¹²² Lyons and Russell, ‘Introduction’, p.xv.
- ¹²³ Rickard, *Australia: A Cultural History*, p.244.
- ¹²⁴ Horne, *Time of Hope*, p.177.
- ¹²⁵ Horne, *Death of the Lucky Country*, p.93.
- ¹²⁶ Ibid., p.93.
- ¹²⁷ Bolton, *The Middle Way*, p.216.
- ¹²⁸ Stuart Macintyre, ‘Whitlam’ in Graeme Davison, John Hurst and Stuart Macintyre, eds, *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1998, p.684.
- ¹²⁹ Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia*, p.235.

- ¹³⁰ Race Mathews, 'Introduction', *Whitlam Re-visited: Policy Development, Policies and Outcomes*, p.14.
- ¹³¹ Hughes, 'That Was a Time', p.253.
- ¹³² Molony, *History of Australia*, p.370.
- ¹³³ Horne, *Death of the Lucky Country*, p.95.
- ¹³⁴ Molony, *History of Australia*, p.355.
- ¹³⁵ Macintyre, 'Temper Democratic, Bias Australian', p.8.
- ¹³⁶ Hocking and Lewis, 'Thirty Years Later', p.5.
- ¹³⁷ Gordon Bilney's 1986 assessment remains accurate: "No Australian government has been as exhaustively analysed: how and why it came to power, what it did and failed to do, how it fell". Bilney, 'The Whitlam Government: Some Personal Reflections', in the Australian Fabian Society, *The Whitlam Phenomenon*, p.17. See also Hocking and Lewis, 'Thirty Years Later', in Hocking and Lewis, *It's Time Again*, p.1: "The thirtieth anniversary of the election of the Whitlam Government on 2 December 2002 was marked by an extraordinary level of media coverage. It is difficult to imagine any other government or any other Prime Minister whose tenure continues to attract such intense debate thirty years later".
- ¹³⁸ According to James Walter, for example, "political observers" have written "more about Whitlam than about any other Australian Prime Minister". Walter, 'Gough Whitlam', in Brett, *Political Lives*, p.29.
- ¹³⁹ See Nathan Hollier, 'From Hope to Disillusion? The Legacy of the Whitlam Government in Australian Policy and Culture', in Hocking and Lewis, *It's Time Again*, pp.414–443.
- ¹⁴⁰ Ron Eyerman's historically, sociologically and phenomenologically sensitive study of intellectuals is the most sophisticated and comprehensive work on this category. For Eyerman, "intellectuals are first of all that social category which performs the task of making conscious and visible the fundamental notions of a society". And in a later extrapolation he argues that the intellectual is best conceived of as "an emergent role, constructed by individual actors within historical contexts that condition, but do not determine, its form and content". He presents this as "a creative process in which various 'intellectual' traditions serve as resources, providing ideals and models from the past, which contemporary actors make use of". "These traditions", he goes on to say, "can either be sources of inspiration, models of what an intellectual should be like, or serve as foils against which alternatives can be formed". Ron Eyerman, *Between Culture and Politics: Intellectuals in Modern Society*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1994, pp.6, 187.
- ¹⁴¹ David McLellan, *Ideology* (second edn), Open University Press, Buckingham, 1995, p.1.
- ¹⁴² McLellan, *Ideology*, p.2.
- ¹⁴³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴⁴ Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (original German publication 1962), Polity Press, Cambridge, 1989, p.27.
- ¹⁴⁵ Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p.15.
- ¹⁴⁶ McLellan, *Ideology*, p.3.
- ¹⁴⁷ McLellan lists this first use as having taken place in 1797, but Raymond Williams quotes Taylor referring to Destutt de Tracy's use of the word in 1796. See Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Fontana, Glasgow, 1975, p.126.
- ¹⁴⁸ McLellan, *Ideology*, p.5.
- ¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p.6.
- ¹⁵⁰ For an influential statement of this general argument see M.H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*, W.W. Norton, New York, 1953.
- ¹⁵¹ Quoted in E.L. Griggs, ed., *Collected Letters of Samuel Tayler Coleridge* (volume II), Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1956–71, p.709.
- ¹⁵² Hegel was born in 1770, the same year as Wordsworth and Beethoven. On Hegel and German Idealism see Tom Rockmore, *Before and After Hegel: An Historical Introduction to Hegel's Thought*, Berkeley and London, University of California Press, 1992.
- ¹⁵³ McLellan, *Ideology*, pp.6–7.
- ¹⁵⁴ See McLellan, *Ideology*, pp.7–8.
- ¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p.6.
- ¹⁵⁶ See for example Lucien Goldmann, *Method in the Sociology of Literature* (William Q. Boelhower, trans. and ed.), Blackwell, Oxford, 1981.
- ¹⁵⁷ McLellan, *Ideology*, p.82.
- ¹⁵⁸ Ibid., pp.82–83.
- ¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p.83.

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- ¹⁶⁰ For a sophisticated and still instructive development of this idea see R.W. Connell, 'Crisis Tendencies in Patriarchy and Capitalism', in Connell, *Which Way is Up? Essays on Class, Sex and Culture*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1983, pp.33–49.
- ¹⁶¹ For a discussion of the role of these insights in Marx's thought see Daniel R. Fusfeld, *The Age of the Economist* (sixth edn), Scott, Foresman/Little, Brown Higher Education, Glenview and London, 1990, p.66.
- ¹⁶² Connell, 'Crisis Tendencies in Patriarchy and Capitalism', p.34.
- ¹⁶³ For a concise account of the concept of culture see Williams, *Keywords*, pp.76–82. Questions of cultural definition will be dealt with in detail in chapter two of this thesis.
- ¹⁶⁴ This belief has both left and right-wing implications. Margaret Thatcher, who would presumably have seen herself as a very cultured person, famously suggested that there is no such thing as society, only the individual and the family. For her, culture was about binding people who shared different political interests into a common national identity, one supportive of the political status quo, on the basis of their common human or common British experience.
- ¹⁶⁵ See Williams, *Keywords*, p.77.
- ¹⁶⁶ For an account of the place of 'culture' within the French Enlightenment see again Williams, *Keywords*.
- ¹⁶⁷ Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (1961), Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1965, p.62.
- ¹⁶⁸ Williams, *The Long Revolution*, p.62.
- ¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.62–63.
- ¹⁷⁰ Connell productively applies Noam Chomsky's analysis of generative grammar to an understanding of class, and this mode of thinking is applicable here. On Connell's 'generative' definition of class see his *Ruling Class, Ruling Culture: Studies of Conflict, Power and Hegemony in Australian Life*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1977, pp.1–7. On the role of this concept in Connell's thought see Demetris Demetriou, 'Towards a Genealogy of R.W. Connell's Notion of "Structure"', in Nathan Hollier, ed., *Ruling Australia: The Power, Politics and Privilege of the New Ruling Class*, Australian Scholarly Press, Melbourne, 2004, pp.24–44.
- ¹⁷¹ Williams, *The Long Revolution*, p.61.
- ¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p.62.
- ¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.63.
- ¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.70.
- ¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.63.
- ¹⁷⁶ Andrew Milner, *Literature, Culture and Society* (second edn), Routledge, London, 2005, p.41.
- ¹⁷⁷ Williams, *The Long Revolution*, p.61.
- ¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.61.
- ¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.62.
- ¹⁸⁰ Milner, *Literature, Culture and Society*, p.41.
- ¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁸² *Ibid.*
- ¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.33.
- ¹⁸⁴ "The study of literature takes its place somewhere between history and philosophy". John McLaren, *Australian Literature: An Historical Introduction*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1989, p.vii.
- ¹⁸⁵ Williams, *The Long Revolution*, p.63.
- ¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p.64.
- ¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.63.
- ¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.64.
- ¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁹² *Ibid.*
- ¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp.64–65.
- ¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.65.
- ¹⁹⁵ Perhaps the best general history of this period, and one which complements the thought of Williams, is Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789 – 1848* (1962), Abacus, London, 2003.
- ¹⁹⁶ Williams, *The Long Revolution*, p.10.
- ¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.10.
- ¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.11.
- ¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.11–12.
- ²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.12.