Unbecoming-of-Age: Australian Grunge Fiction, the *Bildungsroman* and the Long Labor Decade
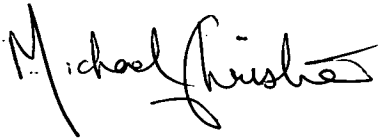
by

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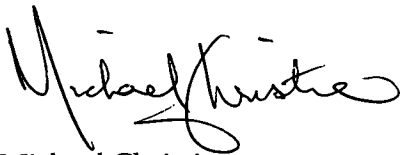
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Michael Christie

Abstract

This thesis interprets and explains changes in aspects of the Australian literary and political fields that occurred during the period sociologist Peter Beilharz has named the long Labor decade: 1983 to 1996. During this period tropes of youth, illness and mobility, and the *Bildungsroman* form were central to the textual embedding, via the putative modernisation of Australian Labourism, of Neoliberalism in Australian political culture. This thesis's central argument is that at its best Grunge and post-Grunge literary fiction both register and attempt to resist Neoliberal governmentality through the tropes of youth, illness and mobility, and through the *Bildungsroman* form.

The introduction surveys the critical reception of Grunge fiction and presents the thesis' central literary-theoretical concepts which are taken from Franco Moretti and Fredric Jameson's historical sociology of literary form. It argues that the effective application of these methods of literary history to Grunge fiction requires a locally and temporally specific historical sociology and that Peter Beilharz's *Transforming Labor* is a productive text from which to further generate a late twentieth-century Australia-centred historical sociology.

Chapter one analyses the textuality of the non-fiction writing of the long Labor decade through Beilharz's hermeneutic historical sociology. After establishing its key terms the chapter moves into three studies of central figures and texts of the period: prime ministers Gough Whitlam and Paul Keating, and Paul Kelly's *The End of Certainty*.

Chapter two reads the *oeuvres* of Frank Moorhouse and Amanda Lohrey against the loss of Whitlam and Whitlamism and the emergence of Neoliberal forms of government. It also interprets *The Reading Group* and *Forty-Seventeen* – two of their pre-Grunge novels – against the post-Whitlam sense of mourning and loss.

Chapter three returns to Grunge fiction and reads Andrew McGahan's *Praise* and *1988* and Christos Tsiolkas' *Loaded* in affiliation with the Neoliberal textuality of the stories told by and of Keating.

Chapter four utilises the analysis of *The End of Certainty* to read three post-Grunge novels. Elliot Perlman's *Three Dollars*, Andrew McCann's *Subtopia* and Anthony Macris' *Capital, volume one* are interpreted and explained as responses to the embedding of Neoliberalism in Australian and global political culture that Kelly's master-work participates in through its use of the *Bildungsroman* form.

The thesis concludes with a short survey of other fiction of the period and a brief outline of areas for future research suggested by the thesis.

Acknowledgements

This thesis was supported by a number of communities and individuals.

This thesis is dedicated to Christopher W. Lobb and my father Robert Christie.

Contents

Prologue.

An Account of the Long Labor Decade

> I do not know whether we will ever reach mature adulthood.
> (Foucault, 1997: 318)

> Two trends coalesced during the 1980s – the internationalisation of the
> world economy in which success became the survival of the fittest; and
> the gradual but inexorable weakening of Australia's 'imperial' links with
> its two patrons, Britain and America. The message was manifest –
> Australia must stand on its own ability. Australians, in fact, had waited
> longer than most nations to address the true definitions of nationhood –
> the acceptance of responsibility for their own fate. (Kelly, 1994: 13)

> I am [. . .] interested in how the subject constitutes itself in an active
> fashion through practices of the self, these practices are nevertheless not
> something invented by the individual himself. They are models he finds
> in his culture and are proposed, suggested, imposed on him by his
> culture, his society, his social group. (Foucault, 1997: 291)

Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci wrote that

> [t]he starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one
> really is, and is 'knowing thyself' as a product of the historical process to date
> which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an
> inventory. The first thing to do is to make such an inventory. (1971: 324).

While I appreciate that Gramsci's choice of verbs here could be construed as

recommending an account, it is fitting that this thesis begins with an ambiguity

over terms that can turn either toward narrative or economic meanings. While I

will proceed by keeping to the spirit of Gramsci's advice, I want, however, to shift

into a narrative mode in order to tell my own story of citizenship and formation,

or *Bildung*.[1] Not because I think it is of great interest, but because it helps to orient

the different directions that this thesis sets out on. I lived through the long Labor

decade in three ways pertinent to this thesis: my experiences in a small family

business; participation in Sydney musical culture; and by studying English at

Technical College and at University. Having lived through it my first reference

points are those historical traces this time deposited in me.

There are a number of rites of passage that can mark the transition from adolescence into adulthood; ones that can also signal the crossing from minor to formal citizen. When I turned 18 in 1983, just too late to vote in the Australian Federal election that former President of the ACTU (Australian Council of Trade Unions) Bob Hawke won at the helm of the ALP (Australian Labor Party), I could've confidently flashed my provisional driver's licence at Bryant's band room on Sydney's Northern Beaches. In order to prove I was legally entitled to drown around eight 12 ounce plastic cups of scotch and carbonated coke-syrup mix that night at Manly Vale Hotel while watching, listening and half-dancing to Liverpool band "Echo and the Bunnymen", I would've exchanged that moment of adult recognition but just like the time at Bryant's the previous year when the high-school based all-male gang had gone to see Manchester band "New Order" play no one asked me for ID.[2]

In 1983 I went to Macquarie University in North Western Sydney, to Study Arts/Economics, dropped out six months later and went to work in the family business for the next eight or so years. Christie's Hire was a building and party equipment hire business in Brookvale, near Manly. The business was built in the late 1960s, and 1970s on jackhammering out the sand and ironstone footings that many of the houses around Manly are firmly pinned into. In the 1980s the business expanded into hiring pig spits and trestle tables, mirror balls and marquees. We hired out a lot of wallpaper strippers in the 1980s: the 1970s being the epoch of flock and foil wall coverings.

I didn't really start to get asked for ID at pub-rock venues until I had my Black Driver's Licence and was paying taxes. By that stage post-punk bands like "New Order" no longer played at suburban pubs like the Manly Vale Hotel, and they no longer played guitar-based post-punk music having moved into electronic synthesised and computer sequencer-based dance music.

When I was finally being asked to show identification, Prime Minister Hawke's popularity had been tarnished by what some political commentators claimed was an opportunistically early election, held in late 1984, and his Federal Treasurer

Paul Keating's media presence was on the ascendant. On 14 May 1986 Treasurer Keating issued a strange and dramatic warning on the nationally syndicated AM radio's talk-back king, John Laws, radio show. A sharp descent in the value of the Australian dollar on foreign currency exchanges, and an acceleration in the deficit on the national Current Account, impelled Keating to address the Australian public explaining "that Australia 'was living beyond our capacities to meet our obligations by $12 billion [and] we just can't let that continue'" (cited in Edwards: 296). In response to a question from Laws about using interest rate increases to address the current account problems, Keating replied "'Then you are gone. You are a Banana Republic'" (296).

It was around this time that Dad began to computerise the hire business. Ahead of the game. His partner, my Uncle, known as the ideas man of the two, resisted this as faddish and wasteful and demonstrated this to me by contrasting the computer with the slide rule: a complex wooden calculation device that I never got the hang of. But being an ideas man my Uncle soon came around to the idea that computerising stock, contracts, and accounts, taxes and wages saved time, and made money.

By the end of the 1980s my Uncle, Aunty and my four cousins had moved north of Sydney after a cleaving of the brothers. They bought an acreage on which they set up a skirmish, paint-ball business. It's still going.

I spent much of the 1980s working in the family business accumulating and playing musical equipment, reading John Irving and Elmore Leonard novels and smoking bongs. To see bands you had to travel to the city or the inner west as band music venues left the suburbs and some pubs were dismantled and redeveloped as townhouse complexes, as Bryant's would be in the 1990s.The various subcontractors hired to refashion the old hotel hired diamond-blade bricksaws, concrete vibrators and aluminium scaffolding from my family's business.

By the end of the 1980s the stable set of staff who had been there since the mid-1970s were gone, and a regime of casualisation was increasingly in place. My father, an economist by training who had worked for the Public Service Board when Sir Robert Menzies still ran the show in the early 1960s, made the business efficient, productive, lean and flexible enough to weather the high interest rates of the late 1980s and the proceeding recession. At the end of 1990 I broke it to my Dad that I would be going back to University, via a TAFE (Technical and Further Education) course. I had seen the American movie *Dead Poets Society* and wanted to be an English teacher like the one Robin Williams played.

By the beginning of the 1990s an investment in piano lessons during the 80s opened a few doors into reggae and funk covers bands. I was finally making my way in the world.

I left home for good.

After TAFE at New South Wales University in 1992 studying for a Bachelor of Arts in English and History, combined with a Bachelor of Education, Secondary School, I was soon under the spell of a version of post-colonial literary theory, which made the afterlife of Australia's colonial past present to me in ways that I found deeply exciting and challenging. It seemed to be a good time to be doing postcolonial study in the early to mid 1990s as the Keating mythos, in Meaghan Morris's terms, morphed from its economics phase in the 1980s to the history phase in the 1990s (1998: 13). There was a feeling of certainty around in those days that the slow climb out of the 1990-91 recession was likely to continue and if you felt yourself to be on the Left that a Republic was around the corner, that white Australia was finally getting comfortable with its geographical proximity to Asia, and that the Mabo decision and the legislative framework put in place to administer Native Title claims were building momentum toward an act of reconciliation.

After living near North Sydney TAFE, my partner and I had moved to Camperdown near Sydney University in 1992 and while there I started to see bands again, especially at the urging of my old high school friend and band mate

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Chris Lobb, who had kept the postpunk flame alive through the 1980s while I had drifted into the apostasy of funk and reggae cover bands: playing for money rather than beers. In those days the centre of the inner-west band circuit was Newtown's Sandringham Hotel, and a group of us spent Federal election night there in 1993, ostensibly to immerse ourselves in a "Peg" gig, expecting Keating to have been another short-lived prime minister – following in Gough Whitlam's footsteps (1972-75) – after his long, public, acrimonious struggle with Bob Hawke. I remember Lobb close to tears that night as the commentators on the old colour TV perched in the corner of the public bar at the Sandringham, began to strike a tone of amazement at the polling numbers and scrutineers' reports. Even though I was from a small business family, I felt that Keating's victory was for a Left that I was part of too: perhaps a cultural, even postcolonial Left. And the vanquished that night, John Hewson's Liberal-National Party coalition, seemed rightly to have been repudiated. They had campaigned on a near-universal consumption tax and other Neoliberal measures that, while not so distinct from Labor's policies, appeared a step too far down the Thatcherite-Regan path. We watched in the Sandringham as Keating took to the Bankstown Sports Club stage:

> Well, this is the sweetest victory of all – this is the sweetest. This is a victory for the true believers, the people who in difficult times have kept the faith and to the Australian people going through hard times – it makes their act of faith all that much greater.
> It will be a long time before an Opposition party tries to divide this country again. It will be a long time before somebody tries to put one group of Australians over here and another over there.
> The public of Australia are too decent and they are too conscientious and they are too interested in their country to wear those sorts of things.
> This, I think, has been very much a victory of Australian values, because it was Australian values on the line and the Liberal Party wanted to change Australia from the country it's become – a cooperative, decent, nice place to live where people have regard for each other.
> And could I say to you that I wanted to win again, to be there in the 1990s to see Australia prosper, as it will.
> The thing is, I said to the Australian people "we've turned the corner". Can I say now, after the election, let me repeat it: we have turned the corner. The growth is coming through. We will see ourselves as a sophisticated trading country in Asia and we've got to do it in a way where everybody's got a part in it, where everyone's in it.

There's always cause for concern but never pessimism and Australia, wherein for the first time in our history, located in a region of the fastest growth in the world, and we've been set up now, we are set up now as we've never been set up before to be in it, to exploit it, to be part of it.

It offers tremendous opportunities for Australians and now we have to do it, and we have to do it compassionately. (Keating, 1993: pars. 1-8)

In 1995 I wrote an honours thesis on three of David Malouf's novels, arguing that Malouf's postcolonialism worked alongside both a romantic, transcendental conception of the power of the creative imagination, and a Heideggerean philosophy of being in which existential authenticity was enabled by the anticipation of death, or encounters with primary ambivalence. I received my combined degree after practical teacher training in 1996, and in need of a steady income soon returned to the family business after it became apparent that there were few English teaching jobs available. So I went back to the family business, some English tutoring and music.

When Keating had won the leadership of the federal ALP, amidst a recession that cut deeply, in 1991, a Seattle band called "Nirvana" was gathering a mass culture storm around their songs and performances. Just as the band that "New Order" formed out of – "Joy Division" – had been a cult touchstone for my generation, "Nirvana" combined similar cult cachet with mainstream success. Grunge arrived not only in the musical world but, strangely, became the name foisted on a style of dirty-realist urban fiction in Australia. Andrew McGahan's *Praise* published in 1992 and set mainly around Kangaroo Point and the old New Farm in Brisbane, is generally considered the germinal grunge novel, followed by a number of similarly styled novels in the period up to 1995. 1995 was a year of literary scandals. The year when the appellation grunge was retrospectively bestowed and the generationalism that Mark Davis describes and attacks in his book *Gangland* (1999) become a key weapon in the culture wars that Keating was so engaged in. Critics and reviewers with parental personas wondered if Grunge lit was as lazy as *Praise's* Gordon? Good writing took hard work, and didn't rely on the easy shock value of graphic sex, graphic drug use and graphic language. Good writing required a level of maturity that had to be earned and experienced. Grunge was

typing not writing. At least Christos Tsiolkas' Ari in *Loaded* could be slotted into the fictional politics of identity, but all that reckless drug taking, clubbing and beat sex. And no job.

By the mid 1990s, in my year of practical teaching and in the Labor Party's last year in Federal Government for more than a decade, I was playing in a more alternative revue-style band with Chris Lobb and Peter Fenton, who was attempting to reinvent himself, and earn a bit of extra cash on the side, outside of the postpunk persona he performed in his main band "Crow".[3] I was never that close to Peter, but was very impressed by him: a dynamic performer, with the onstage charisma of Robert Forster from the "Go-Betweens" and the song-writing talents of Don Walker of "Cold Chisel". Peter had been chosen to play the asthmatic, premature ejaculating, unemployed Gordon, opposite Sacha Horler as Cynthia Lamonde in the film adaptation of *Praise*. When I read the novel I was caught by its realism and Gordon's voice. It was depressing and somehow uplifting and it flowed – like "Nirvana's" song *Lithium* – in turns angry and melancholic. Gordon's failure to mature, his failed formation or *Bildung*, resonated with me like the best of Peter Fenton's songs, like "New Order's" debut song *Ceremony* which was their transition song performed first as "Joy Division" with Ian Curtis before his suicide. Reading *Praise* was like letting my feelings surface onto the page. I felt dirty reading it, but elated at the same time. As though something, perhaps a ghost, was released.

> I was beaten, I was tired of questions. I *did* know what I was doing. The problem was that the knowledge was deeply unconscious, it was a premonition, it was a gut-level instinct. I knew I had to stick it out with this life for *some* reason, some important reason [. . .] It wasn't anything external at all. It was something profoundly internal. Something to do with simple survival. With existence. (McGahan, 1995a: 258)

The genre of post-punk music was formative for me: it felt right. By the end of the long Labor decade I was performing and recording music with a number of bands, including "Crow" who also contributed to the soundtrack of the movie adaptation of *Praise*. How I came first to read and engage with McGahan's debut novel is not through Australian literary but Australian musical culture. This might seem an

irrelevant, even vain, point to make, especially in the prologue of a thesis, but this personal optic is also an aural amplifier. There is a considerable literature on the culture and sociology of musical aesthetics and the dominance of optical and visual metaphors to describe the operations of the psyche – think of how the concepts of the imaginary and the gaze dominate cultural analyses – and thought should not prevent us from valorising sound thinking; thinking through and on sound and music as cultural forms of historical experience.[4] The musical culture of the period is for me, and the Sydney Inner West milieu I mixed in, not one where punk is followed by "Nirvana's" Grunge rock. This narrative is common in the musical culture context accompanying literary reviews of Grunge fiction, eliding the period of postpunk and the historical sociology of musical form.[5] Thinking together my own experiences in small family business and musical culture over the period enables an approach to Australian Grunge, political and *Bildung(sroman)* novels from a number of boundaries in the field of knowledge that while demarcated by Australian literary studies and Australian political texts are also subject to the sounds of jackhammer moils striking out sandstone and the grinding of over-driven bass guitars.

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In social theorist Peter Beilharz's book *Transforming Labor: Labour Tradition and the Labor Decade in Australia* (1994), the period of the book's title is itself transformed in the preface, written after the 1993 election victory for the ALP and Keating, where Beilharz writes:

> The election of a fifth consecutive federal Labor government on 13 March 1993 astonished many people, the present writer included. Until that point, the working title for this study was *The Labor Decade—Innovation and Exhaustion in Australian Politics 1983-93*. My considered sense for the moment is that this title could still apply—apart from chronology. The extension of the *long Labor decade* to 1996 represents a reprieve rather than a great historic shift [. . .] Viewed in terms of its past or its ethos Labor is indeed in many senses dead, or at the very least exhausted. (1994: ix, emphasis added)

By the end of the long Labor decade, in March 1996, like Gordon Buchanan in *Praise* and Peter Beilharz above, I also felt melancholic, ready for the true believers, the real Australian political and cultural Left to take back government. Not yet ready to mourn the end of a Labor Government and all the hopes and desires invested in it after one defeat, it could be said that from this distance the end of the long Labor decade signalled more than the last rattles of a dead, exhausted Australian political-cultural formation: it was a loss that could not be named or worked through, but was instead denied and acted out. Music was for me a way of getting through that period: learning about and playing in traditions that were recent and old; participating in creating music and being present while other bands and artists emerged. I also think that *Praise*'s Gordon Buchanan's voice and reflections begin to name that structure of feeling that can get through a loss like the one Peter Beilharz attempts to name, describe and analyse in 1994, and which Meaghan Morris also writes of in its wake:

> Given that the contradictions between [the tourist industry-based] culturalist program [involving 'state support for an export image of Australian as an urbane, socially liberal, *multiculturalist* heaven'] and the economic realities of life for most rural and working-class people had been obvious for a decade before the "Keating era" [1991-96] had began, it is not surprising that the era ended with a devastating defeat for Labor at the federal election of March 1996. For historians, it will be a long time before this period can be seriously evaluated. (1998: 13)

This thesis is a contribution toward that serious evaluation through a combined literary and political history of the long Labor decade.

Introduction.

Boundary Work and Australian Literary Studies

1. Reappraising Grunge Fiction

> [G]enres arise in response to particular predicaments, particular needs, particular cultural logics, particular choices. These are the kinds of things a good literary history accounts for. (Gelder 2008: 76)

Grunge fiction has an uncertain and precarious status in Australian literary studies. This precarious status can be seen by analysing the ways in which Grunge fiction has been embedded or treated in Australian literary studies and history. These analyses and stories of the emergence and critical reception of Grunge fiction have been told through four main frameworks, which all emphasize different theoretical approaches to the debut novels of Andrew McGahan, Christos Tsiolkas and Justine Ettler. These frameworks seek to place Grunge fiction into either a contest of literary generations fought over the conception and validity of new experiences and styles; into established traditions of 'dirty' or social realism; to situate, and often to thereby dismiss, it within a moment of marketing hyperbole; or to read Grunge fiction as a genre centrally concerned with the depiction of the abject.

Sometimes aspects of more than one of these four frameworks are present in a single entry or essay on Grunge, which often serves to place the term under a kind of Derridean erasure: ~~Grunge~~ fiction (Spivak lxix).[6] This typical way of representing Grunge fiction is found in the recently published survey of Australian fiction *After the Celebration: Australian Fiction 1989–2007*. In the chapter focussed on women's writing Paul Salzman gives three paragraphs to Grunge fiction for the purpose of framing his criticism of the representation of "the abject body in grunge fiction written by women" through Ettler's *The River Ophelia* in particular (Gelder and Salzman, 2009: 205). Salzman compares Ettler's novel unfavourably to Mary Fallon's *Working Hot* – which, unlike Ettler's, radically rewrites its literary-sexual context – and Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting* – which has for Salzman, at least, a redeeming black humour (205-6). But it is how Salzman uses the frameworks about Grunge fiction to set up his criticism of Ettler's novel that is of particular interest as all four are brought into play in his three

paragraphs. Salzman effectively places Grunge fiction under erasure by, on the one hand, valorising the term by employing it, and, on the other, by consistently de-legitimising any claims that the term has to describe and name singular literary phenomena. Salzman achieves this de-legitimation through ascribing the motives of grunge authors to a cynical exercise in ticking abject subjects off a list of "grunge bases: drugs, vomit, shit, rough sex, a youth culture that embraces a certain chic poverty, and a barely suppressed misogyny (possibly as an ironic reflection on the characters)" (204). The link between abjection and the sort of niche marketing list Salzman parodies is reinforced by his initial historical evaluation of "grunge fiction [as having been] fashionable in the early 1990s [and] practis[ing] a kind of *épater le bourgeois*" (204). The story of Grunge fiction Salzman is telling here is one of a younger generation of apprentice writers who made false claims about their novels' innovations in form and content, and who sought to create a reading market through narratives that were told with vulgar language and that depicted abject bodies and graphic sex (204-6).

The precarious place of Grunge fiction is clearly on display in this recent Australian literary history. Salzman takes the four frameworks used to position, interpret and explain Grunge fiction and turns them to the service of reducing the sub-genre to a moment in marketing hyperbole that clothed itself in literary generationalism as a means of aspiring to claims of consecrated literary status or symbolic capital (Bourdieu 122-23 and 255). The validity of Grunge's newly-found concern with abjection is dismissed by Salzman on the basis that "there isn't anything new as such about the depiction of the transgressive body in fiction" and that such concern is, again, ultimately designed to shock an older readership (205).

As a second symptomatic example of where and how Grunge fiction resides in Australian literary history we will consider Delys Bird's chapter on "Contemporary Fiction" in *The Cambridge Companion to Australian Literature*, which was published in 2000. Bird gives a paragraph to Grunge fiction. She writes: "[it] became the new fiction of the 1990s, labelled in this way to appeal to the youthful reading audience to whom it was marketed" (206). She lists what have become the

central Grunge authors and their primary work in the sub-genre: Christos Tsiolkas' *Loaded*, Andrew McGahan's *Praise*, and Justine Ettler's *The River Ophelia*. And she observes that the writers are young, "often products of writing schools," that their work has an "explicit, sometimes relentless focus on sex, drugs and life on the margins of society" and that the fiction "may also be preoccupied with generational conflict with authority figures" (206). Here in this chapter's penultimate paragraph, residing within a sub-section titled "THE NEW PROFESSIONALS," we can again see both the precarious inscription of Grunge fiction into Australian literary history – shunted into the end of the chapter like an afterthought – and the thematics through which it has been critically received working to situate Grunge on the border-line of Australian literary history: literary generationalism, marketing hype, inner-urban dirty realism, and youthful writing (205).

The theme of abjection, that is central to Salzman's critique, is missing in Bird's critical description. In its stead, however, is praise for McGahan's *Praise* and *1988* which "are interested in the political and personal implications of grunge living, giving his writing a dimension this fiction often lacks" (206). With this evaluation of McGahan's early fiction Bird firms the sub-genre's toehold on the monolith of Australian literary history through the concept of "grunge living". She implies that his novels legitimately narrativise these techniques of self in such a singular way as to have their own name. While not mentioning abjection, the "grunge living" that Bird finds in McGahan's early novels cannot be separated from the diseased and abject bodies of Gordon Buchanan and Cynthia Lamonde in *Praise* in particular.

This fourth framework – of abjection – arrives with Bird's consideration of Grunge fiction to give the sub-genre a sociological and existential authenticity that firmly de-formalizes the early work of McGahan and Tsiolkas. It is then only a short step in the arguments that are routinely made about Grunge fiction to link the authenticity of "grunge living" to the callowness of the writer and the writing, as Salzman does when he asserts: "If grunge really was so age-specific, perhaps it

makes sense that as writers get older they leave it behind. Given the passage of time, it is also easier to see the limitations of the nihilism and repetitiveness of many of these novels" (205).

It is no surprise, then, that Grunge fiction is situated within Australian literary history in these precarious ways. The four frameworks through which it has mostly been interpreted police the limits of what these texts might mean for us, and what we might do with them, at a time when they have become literary history; at a time when the first wave of their most intense period of production, distribution and reception is surely over. As Grunge fiction moves into the textual terrain of Australian literary and cultural history there are opportunities to push at the limits of the four hermeneutic frames and to reappraise novels like McGahan's *Praise* and *1988*, and Tsiolkas' *Loaded*. There are cultural and political boundaries in these hermeneutics that have proscribed the textual affiliations that can reasonably be made with Grunge fiction. These hermeneutic frameworks are themselves symptomatic of the cultural politics and, indeed, political culture that not only have shunted Grunge fiction into the remaindered punk bin of Australian letters, but has more importantly struggled to offer a literary history and practices of literary criticism that detect and analyse the emergence and dominance of Neoliberalism in Australian political culture.

Such proscriptions and impasses forestall the traversals and connections enabled by a "horizontal and promiscuous, not vertical and monogamous [reading of] the cultural field" within which Grunge fiction circulated (Gelder, 2008: 72). The occlusion of such boundary work in regard to Grunge fiction has been at the cost of a critical discourse – a potentially public debate – on the cultural forms through which Neoliberal techniques of the self became embedded into Australian political culture in the 1980s and 1990s.[7] It is the central contention of this thesis that Grunge fiction both registers and attempts to resist the narrativisation of Neoliberal rationalities and techniques into areas of Australian political culture.

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In order to build and put the arguments for these claims this thesis will move through the following structure. The next section of this introduction will outline the theory of boundary work. I will then take a set of crucial texts that codify the four frameworks for interpreting and explaining Grunge fiction and critically analyse the theoretical bases of these four approaches. My purpose in this section of the introduction is to begin to push against the cultural and political boundaries that are encoded into these approaches, and to begin to multiply, through a horizontal promiscuity, the textual affiliations of Grunge fiction.[8] These four frameworks are: literary generationalism; literary traditions and innovations; marketing hype; and the theme of abjection.

The next section will present the thesis' central literary-theoretical concepts which are taken from Franco Moretti's and, to a lesser extent, Fredric Jameson's historical sociology of literary form. Here I will argue that the effective application of the methods of Moretti's literary history to Grunge fiction demands that a locally and temporally specific historical sociology needs to be presented: the late twentieth-century Australia-inflected historical sociology that emerges through Peter Beilharz's work on the long Labor decade.

The subsequent chapters of the thesis are structured through this initial horizontal and periodising movement. Beilharz's periodization of Australian political-cultural modernity – the long Labor decade – emerges out of his hermeneutics of the texts that take as their subject of the ALP Government, 1983-96. Beilharz's melancholic and mournful work of interpretive historical sociology provides the structure upon which the thesis chapters are formed. Thus the first chapter, after establishing the key terms of this historical sociology – Labourism, Social-liberalism, industrial citizenship, economic rationalism and Neoliberalism – moves into three studies of key figures and texts in the period.

The first study focuses on the traditions that the ALP Prime Minister Gough Whitlam encapsulated for some writers on the Left during the period. The

keynotes of this genre of writing were expressions of loss and betrayal, often mounted as accusations against the Hawke-Keating Governments which were defined in opposition to the Labor traditions that Whitlam and his Government were claimed to have embodied. My interest here is in the narrativisations and texualisation of Whitlam and Whitlamism, for Whitlam becomes, I argue, a ghostly figure that haunts the long Labor decade, as a spectre of a lost tradition and of a lesson in governmental mis-management. The second study hones in on the figure of treasurer, then prime minister, Paul Keating. Here I analyse the richly imaginative rhetoric of Keating himself alongside the biographies and memoirs of Keating. Thirdly I seek to draw back from the central figures of the period into analysis of what can be regarded as the central text of the period: Paul Kelly's *The End of Certainty*.

Having established the non-fictional texualisation and narrativisation of the period, the remaining three chapters of the thesis jump tracks and move back into a literary critical and literary historical mode that is structured by the hermeneutic model Beilharz proffers. Thus chapter two reads the *oeuvres* of Frank Moorhouse and Amanda Lohrey against the loss of Whitlam and Whitlamism and the emergence of Neoliberal forms of government. It also reads two of their novels against the post-Whitlam sense of mourning and loss.

Chapter three returns us to Grunge fiction. Now we are ready to read *Praise, 1988* and *Loaded* with the armoury of textual affiliations and openings across cultural and political boundaries that have to some extent already been seen to be largely closed and occluded. The textuality of the stories told by and of Keating provides the network which the readings of these three Grunge novels will move into and affiliate with.

Chapter four utilises the reading made in chapter one of Kelly's use of the *Bildungsroman* form to narratively embed Neoliberal governmentalities into Australian political culture as the basis on which to read three novels which also invoke this period and these generic conventions. Elliot Perlman's *Three Dollars*, Andrew McCann's *Subtopia* and Anthony Macris' *Capital, volume one* are

interpreted and explained as responses to the embedding of Neoliberalism in Australian, and indeed global, political culture. While *Three Dollars* is disabled and disfigured in its response, *Subtopia* and *Capital, volume one* use sophisticated politics of literary form to both resist and point to ways out of Neoliberalism.

The thesis concludes with a short survey of other fiction of the period and a brief outlining of areas for future research suggested by the thesis.

2. Reading on the Boundaries

The analysis of the Bird and Salzman interpretations of Grunge fiction offered above would appear to indicate that the novels have been subjected to plural approaches. Literary generationalism, marketing hype, possible innovations in form, and the theme of abjection are used as frameworks through which the interpretation and explanation of Grunge fiction is conducted. Such apparent pluralism, however, is no guarantee that this fourfold hermeneutics crosses any significant boundaries in seeking to affiliate Grunge with contemporary texts, political culture or other cultural forms. Of course, choosing two survey-styled entries that can only give little consideration to Grunge fiction because of space restrictions might be seen as too little and too selective a sample from which to make any firm evaluations. So, while the Bird and Salzman passages do reveal the working of a set of frameworks, it is to a more detailed analysis of key writings of Grunge that this thesis will turn, in order to re-engage with and interpret the gaps, silences and contradictions that these writings inscribed. The crucial writings of Mark Davis, Kirsty Leishman, Ian Syson and Joan Kirkby on Grunge fiction codify significant aspects of the frameworks that Bird and Salzman use, and also attempt to push through the cultural and political boundaries within which their own readings of Grunge and its historical context are structured. Each of these four texts on Grunge is a kind of boundary work, and this concept now needs to be

explained before moving into analysis of these influential forms of boundary work on Grunge.

The concept of boundary work derives from social epistemologist Julie Thompson Klein's studies of trans- and interdisciplinary knowledge production and was introduced into Australian literary studies by Robert Dixon (2004). For Dixon, Klein argues that "at present new knowledge is most often produced by boundary crossing in the form of interdisciplinary and cross-cultural research, and that this tends to be located in the shadow structures – the dynamic, informal networks and collaborations that form beneath and across the surface structures" (32). These boundaries "are open, their cognitive border zones ragged and ill-defined" (32). Dixon points out that,

> [Klein's] preference is for a field in which boundaries are not dissolved, but maintained and at the same time constantly transgressed. [. . .]. The term "boundary work" as Klein uses it [. . .] does not simply mean either the policing of disciplinary boundaries or their collapse, but is meant positively to embrace the sum-total of all boundary work, including boundary crossings, especially between disciplinary neighbours. (33)

Dixon's explication of boundary work as a shuttling between, rather than dissolution or fervid defence of, disciplinary boundaries provides a productive model for approaching the interdisciplinarity of the four influential texts analysed below. My purpose here is to delineate the terrain of the framework invoked and then to analyse it from both sides of the boundary on which concerns from within the literary discipline meet those from within the political, sociological, economic, epistemological and the psychological disciplines, invoked on the other side.

Literary generationalism

Literary politics holds a central place in Mark Davis' *Gangland: Cultural Elites and the New Generationalism*. Davis' forensic tracking of the networks of Australia's media and cultural elite extant in the early to mid 1990s is given an explicitly literary focus through two moments in 1995 when the Australian literary field and literary works became flashpoints in the Australian instantiation of the culture

wars.[9] The publication of Helen Darville's award-winning historical novel of Ukranian complicity in the Jewish Holocaust, *The Hand the Signed the Paper*, and Helen Garner's new-journalist account of a sexual harassment case at Melbourne University's Ormond College, *The First Stone*, pushed Australian literature and position-holders in the field into areas of the public sphere normally held by politicians, reviewers and in-house media commentators. Both texts involved young women whose practices of authenticity, speaking position or institutional politics were causes for polarising debates and attacks that left in their wake a striking "reorganisation of public space" (Davis 1997: 210).[10]

The Demindenko affair raised two key issues. In a time when official multiculturalism was under sustained conservative attack, the revelation of the author's non-'ethnic' identity gave succour to those critics who thought the bestowal of the prestigious Miles Franklin on the novel was an act of political correctness. For these critics the fraud Darville perpetrated exposed and mirrored the fraud that multiculturalism was. The novel's complex representation of anti-semitism also prompted a heated public debate where claims about the freedom and rights of the literary imagination were subjected to counterclaims about an author's duty to historical truth and definitive moral judgement.

The debates over Garner's work intersected with those active in the Demindenko affair through the trope of political correctness. In the case of *The First Stone* the flashpoint of political correctness was sparked off from claims that feminism had reached its end-point in achieving the conditions for formal gender equality and that a new, puritan and punitive victim-feminism was gaining institutional support. This new feminism was seen by Garner and key position-holders in the literary and public spheres as unfairly disadvantaging, and in some cases destroying, men. It was also seen as derailing the gains that second-wave feminists, like Garner, claimed to have made. The debates over the issues that Garner's work brought to the surface of the mainstream public sphere were often played out in the terms of conflicting generations: mothers and daughters; old and new feminists, fighting over the direction of feminism's projects, and over who

had the proprietorial rights to this direction considering "the unsuitability of young women as heirs to the feminist tradition" (84).

Garner's *The First Stone* set up the generational trope in Australian feminism as a key determiner of how debate was to proceed. Few voices entering this debate were able to step around and outside the powerful symbolism of older Mother feminists – who had wisdom to impart and the experience on which such knowledge was based – instructing and fretting over newer, daughter feminists – who had new forms of knowledge and experience that second wave feminists lacked. To see feminism cleave through such polarising public talk only confirmed conservative views of the self-interestedness of its claims: feminism had gone too far because it was, like any lobby group, or 'industry', serving its own interests.

In contrast to these two literary events of 1995, Davis gives less analysis to the other minor literary event of the year: Grunge fiction. For Davis the trope of generationalism is also active in the literary public sphere reception of Grunge; structuring how liberal literary coteries responded to the dirty realism of Tsiolkas, Ettler, Jaivin, Berridge and McGahan's fictions.

What links these three events of 1995 is how young voices were lost in the welter of debates that mark the ascendance of the Neo-conservative backlash to Neoliberalism in the form of the culture wars.[11] Yet rather than see these young voices – Tsiolkas and Darville's narrators and the young women of Ormond College – as expressing and acting on the basis of new experiences and knowledges and bringing these into the literary public sphere, I contend that the cultural form of the youth-to-adulthood period of transition – the period of an individual's coming-of-age – is inseparable from what is at stake in each of these three events. In *Gangland* Davis opens up this line of analysis, working on the boundaries between politics and culture. His discussion of Grunge fiction is less concerned with literary form and narrative technique than with the terms on which it was received. Here again we find that the tropes of generationalism structure the critical response. Yet if generationalism is a cultural form that is clearly highly charged in Australian political culture in the early to mid 1990s then

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the fiction concerned with one of western modernity's primary flashpoints of human generationalism – the coming-of-age period – demands to be read as fiction that is also about, rather than merely expressing, the dominant cultural forms of coming-of-age. The boundary work I am arguing for here involves reading Grunge fiction again as metafictions on the literary form of coming-of-age.[12]

New or Old Dirty Realism?

While one result of the Demindenko affair was the ascendance then fall of Helen Dale's (*née* Darville) literary reputation, the stakes in *The First Stone* debates were built on Helen Garner's already considerable reputation as a novelist of 1970s inner-urban realism. In 1995, Garner's claims to author-ity – her position in the Australian literary field – had been established on a string of novels, short stories, and novellas, that enhanced the consecrated status given to her debut novel *Monkey Grip* (1977).

Monkey Grip is a realist representation of youthful inner-city communal share-house life, involving graphic depictions of drug-taking and sexual experiment that is structured by the search to find a moral position from which to reconcile libertarian practices with the responsibilities of autonomy and parenting. Unlike Dale, whose reputation remained contained within the scandal that broke around her text, the life of Garner's *Monkey Grip* appeared to mirror that of Garner as mother-feminist sorting out the wayward-feminist daughters who are her targets in *The First Stone*.

Monkey Grip became a germinal or mother text for those critics and literary historians looking to dismiss the claims of innovation in form and content that were made on behalf of Grunge fiction. Margaret Henderson and Shane Rowlands argue that "[o]ne main problem with using the label 'grunge' is that it reinvents the wheel and thus obliterates other alternative, relevant, and politically engaged antecedents [including] Helen Garner's *Monkey Grip*" (3). In a more recent essay Jean-Francois Vernay writes that "Helen Garner's *Monkey Grip* (1977) may well be

seen as the pioneering grunge novel" (146) and that a "libertarian literary movement was initiated by Helen Garner's *Monkey Grip*" (152). *Monkey Grip*, on these readings, is interpreted as a founding novel in Grunge fiction, with the corollary that *Monkey Grip* is to *The River Ophelia* what older second wave feminists are to younger postmodern feminists. Or, as Garner has grown up now, when Grunge writers grow up they too might write as well as her.

This form of generationalism takes one model of literary politics, one model of literary development, and consigns all others to apolitical, underdeveloped or youthful writing. In terms that resonated throughout *The First Stone* debates, one reviewer made this level of discourse clear when she wrote: "It's tremendously difficult for me, at 40, to hike through these two longish novels about a boy and a girl (respectively) stumbling through their twentieth year [. . .] I just want to snarl "For god's sake, grow up!"" (Veitch cited in Davis, 1997: 130).

If *Monkey Grip* was old dirty realism, to follow this line of argument, Grunge fiction was the new old dirty realism. Critics like Davis and Kirsty Leishman have argued, on the contrary, that new experiences and knowledges were brought into Grunge and that these have been dismissed and disavowed by the discourses of generationalism. Leishman claims that "the knowledges informing the values in these [Grunge] novels and short stories proved to be incomprehensible because they were not part of the habitus of [those] encumbent [sic] elites" of the Australian literary field that Davis identifies (96). For Leishman Bourdieu's concept of habitus – a "second nature" or "second sense" "set of dispositions which generates practices and perceptions" – helps to explain the almost unconscious disavowal of the innovations in Grunge fiction enacted by the dominant position-holders in the Australian literary field (Bourdieu cited in Leishman 96, 95). For Leishman the primary innovation of Grunge fiction is its new response to the dominant narratives of Australian identity; narratives which operate on the traditions codified in the *Bulletin* stories of the 1890s and in Russel Ward's *The Australian Legend* (97).

I think this is a very limited reading of those narratives of Australian identity that circulated in the late 1980s and early to mid 1990s. Leishman's rhetorical gambit of contrasting Grunge fiction to these traditions of the Bush myth is clearly to establish an argument in which there are ruptures in innovation of Grunge fiction without considering the writings of Peter Carey, David Malouf, or Kate Grenville – to name but a few – who have successfully complicated these literary traditions. Indeed, by the time Grunge fiction is a literary event the Australian prime minister who best represented the larrikin, easy-going matey ethos that Leishman outlines – Bob Hawke – had been replaced by a more complex, ambivalent figure in Paul Keating. Keating's story of Australian identity, and indeed his governmental practices of Australian character and identity, exceed the national fictions Leishman wants to pose as the foil to Grunge's experiments in "a lived philosophical commitment" (Turner cited in Leishman 97).

Leishman's boundary work brings Bourdieu's sociology of the cultural and literary fields into the analysis of Grunge fiction's critical reception. Her further claim is that Grunge presents a generational break with the old forms and narratives of a hegemonic Australian identity. I agree with the direction of Leishman's argument, but you only need to read Murray Bail and Frank Moorhouse's parodies of *The Drover's Wife* to know that the Bush-Nationalist narratives of identity had long been unsettled prior to Grunge's arrival. The issue of a 'lived philosophical commitment' that the narrators of Grunge fiction present as the alternative to dominant narrativisations of Australian character is a more complex one. Leishman's thematic reading heads through the literary text to a mimesis of philosophical conduct. This level of explanation gives Grunge fiction a political project. Yet the aesthetic, or formal, level at which Grunge fiction practises its philosophies are elided in Leishman's explanation. Rather than position Grunge in contrast to questionably hegemonic narratives of national identity, I will take her boundary work and re-position it between a set of political and governmental texts that are contemporary to those of Grunge. Leishman's foray into the reading of Grunge against a limited array of narratives of national identity misses the opportunity to make more horizontal and promiscuous textual affiliations. Rather

than contrast Grunge to the mythologies of Australian character that Bob Hawke embodied and aroused, the textualised figures of Gough Whitlam and Paul Keating will be affiliated with key texts of Grunge fiction in order for a different ensemble of narratives of national identity to be placed into the ambit of Grunge fiction.[13]

Reads like ~~Grunge~~ spirit

However much Grunge, as a term, is under erasure, it has a more solid status in the Australian literary field than it did when it emerged in 1995 when there was a considerable contest over the validity of the name.[14] Critic Paul Dawson argued that "grunge lit is seen by most as a facile and modish form of writing. But grunge is not so much a literary movement as a market category" (119). Ian Syson, in one of the more cogent critiques, argued that use of the term "Smells Like Market Spirit" (Syson, 1996: 21). Syson writes that

> [w]hatever else it might name Grunge also refers to a marketing ploy. Observing the street cred that grunge bands like Nirvana possessed, elements of the literature industry saw a way of obtaining relatively high levels of credibility and sales among a large and untapped 25–40-year-old market by promoting a set of new writers as being the literary equivalent of that same sentimental teen spirit. And if the rumours of the sales of Justine Ettler's *The River Ophelia* are anywhere near the truth, then the ploy has worked—at least in terms of sales. (21)

Syson's substantive point, however, is not to dismiss the novels classified and marketed as Grunge fiction as similarly representative of that sentimental teen spirit *because* they have been marketed in an opportunistic manner. The marketing of Grunge is, indeed, part of the broader political and economic context that Syson sees as being inscribed into these novels: Tsiolkas' *Loaded* "has captured a moment in Australian history at which some basic cultural promises are in the process of being broken" (22). Thus Syson's argument is that the Grunge novel, and *Loaded* in particular, "is a working class novel written when it is not possible to write one" (22).

Syson never articulates precisely why such a novel is impossible to write in the early 1990s. He does, however, offer a sketch of contemporary historical sociology and political-economy, and draws lines from this sketch back to Grunge fiction. Elements in this impression include the claims that "[o]ver the last decade a growing rationalist spirit has moved into place in Australian cultural policy" and that contemporary business practice "is about ransacking communities and their cultures and patterns of behaviour in order to commodify and privatise them" (25-26). For Syson "Grunge, in its powerful and directed forms, is more a *response* to that growing market spirit" and it "articulate[s] the rumblings of a structure of feeling that is being demolished at its deepest levels" (26).

The main boundary on which Syson's essay works is that of marxist-based nationalist literary criticism and literary history abutting an analysis of the contemporary political economy of the literary publishing field. For Syson, the Australian literary field of 1995-96 is subjected to a 'market spirit' which frames literary production and reception through "regimes of value" that work to elide representations of working-class existence and working-class reading formations.[15]

Before moving to consider the fourth dominant framework through which Grunge fiction has been received, it is worth dwelling on the role that Grunge as musical culture plays in Syson's influential essay. A shared musical and literary boundary is one that is inscribed into the term Grunge. Yet it rare for both sides of the boundary to be given a concomitant and serious analysis. Grunge music is often positioned in essays on Grunge fiction as the truly teenage and commodified world against which 'adult' cultural forms are contrasted and Grunge is defined as a marketing exercise. To take Grunge music seriously seems, somehow, unthinkable; a boundary not to be crossed. As an initial crossing, Syson's essay is a good place to start, not least because Nirvana's "Smells like Teen Spirit" suggests his title.

Syson despatches Grunge as a cultural term – shared by both literary and musical culture – by fixing its etymology to the "sentimental teen spirit" that Nirvana express (21). He has no interest in considering Grunge as a term for a cultural

movement that encompasses both musical and literary form for reasons to do with the teenage-ness of Grunge music and the fundamental incommensurability of pop/rock musical and literary form:

> At the 1995 Melbourne writers' festival, Linda Jaivin made a point in the session on Grunge that might have laid the label to rest. She asked, "But what is Grunge in the literary context?" Maybe it's a bit like trying to work out what the difference is between realist and modernist electric guitar solos – the question doesn't make any sense. (21)

On the surface the incommensurability of Grunge musical and literary forms is prefigured into the analogy that Syson chooses to underline his point. But this apparent disjunction is based on a romantic discourse of musical form in which all rock music is understood as expressive of subjective authenticity: whether it be teenage or African-American alienation and rebellion (Frith and Horne 88-92). The distinction Syson is unable to voice is that between Fordist and post-Fordist electric guitar solos; between the guitar solos that made sense during the period Zygmunt Bauman characterises as heavy capitalism and solid modernity: Fordism, and that of light capitalism and liquid modernity: post-Fordism (Bauman 25). Indeed, one way to characterise the electric guitar solo heard in Nirvana's "Smells like Teen Spirit" is to hear it as both imitative of the vocal melody – and thereby expressively realist, because imitating the lyrical song – and to hear it as post-Fordist, because while it is sonically redolent of overdriven Chicago Blues solos, and hence alluding to rock's Fordist period, it is also treated with chorus and phase-shifting effects, which take the solid and heavy Fordist timbres and bent blues notes and liquefy and lighten them.[16] Difficult to hear is the sustained final note of the guitar solo which is held through the beginning of the final verse. This last section of the guitar solo morphs from its imitation of the vocal melody into an electronic pulse that becomes spectral and ethereal (Smeaton). In one guitar solo Kurt Cobain offers a rich aural text, moving from Fordist realism into an uncertain and haunted post-Fordist timbre and sonics. Read and heard together with the musical video and the lyrics, "Smells like Teen Spirit" is a complex work of art that combines situationist politics in its video and a form of punk-Adorno-esque negation in its lyric and vocal grain (Marcus, 1995: 744-46). Nirvana are both

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expressing teen spirit and attempting to get outside it, to negate it and turn its commodified conditions from a spectacle into a situation.

The hermeneutics of Grunge musical culture and form is a curious aspect in the reception of Grunge fiction. Syson's disavowal of Grunge as a musical form signifying anything except sentimental teen spirit appears to be based on a misreading of Nirvana's signature song, which he parodies in his essay's title. His suggestive claim that Australian Grunge fiction is a literary response to the demolition of structures of feelings in Australian political culture, closes its ears to similar demolitions of structures of feeling being responded to in American musical culture. Is Grunge fiction also post-Fordist and practising negation to attempt to move outside a teen spirit that is corrupt, no longer a source of radicalism or resistance? What social and political forms are the equivalent of Fordism in Australia? If Fordism was an historic compromise between male manufacturing wage earners and the owners of industries like Ford, then how did the historic compromises function in Australia? What was happening to these compromises, or settlements, in the period when Grunge fiction took shape?

Apart from the literary-musical boundary that I have sought to focus on above there is a suggestive allusion made in Syson's essay that I will pick up again later in the thesis as it provides another basis on which to shift the boundary on which it does its work. The allusion is to Michael Pusey's Habermasean critique of economic rationalism. In chapter three I will make new affiliations between the Grunge fiction that Syson considers and texts which also register these market rationalities.

Abjections

Joan Kirkby's chapter "Literature", in *Americanization and Australia*, is one of the few discussions of Grunge fiction to present an argument for its commensurability with Grunge musical culture. For Kirkby, the "distinctive rough, 'dirty', 'sludgy' sound" of bands like Nirvana were "in defiance of the comfortable, easy listening

style of mainstream rock bands and were directed at a young generation disaffected with lifestyles no longer meaningful or available to them" (230). Kirkby builds her genealogy of Grunge fiction through an etymology of the term, finding that it is a US slang term: "a back formation of the adjective grungy [. . .] deriving from 'a blend of GRIMY, DINGY & *grunt*, childish euphemism for defecate' and as slang meaning 'dirty, mess, disreputable, etc.; unpleasant in any way'" (229-30). In the Australian context Grunge is defined "firstly as 'a substance of an unpleasant nature, especially dirt, scum or slime' and secondly as 'a guitar-based form of heavy rock music'" (230).

Kirkby works on the boundary where Grunge as musical culture meets the term as 'sign' to argue that "it is a useful term in the Australian context," in part because it "arises in response to cultural issues that are both local and global [and] is part of a larger phenomenon characteristic of post-industrial, urban cultures" (233). It is also useful as it "is closely related to the abject, Julia Kristeva's term for a visceral identity crisis in which the insides of the body erupt within signification in an obsessive imagery of ruptured bowels and wombs and excrement and slime, rendering unstable the subject's sense of social and symbolic identity (233).

Kirkby interprets Grunge fiction through the concept of the abject as a social and psychological process. She argues that "grunge [. . .] might be defined as the abject made conscious, owned, integrated and demystified" and that "[i]n *The River Ophelia* the narrator completely owns and demystifies the abject; in *Praise* the abject is no longer abject; and in *Loaded* the abject is powerfully manipulated as a social critique" (233, 235).

Kirkby's essay has not been the only one to use Kristeva's social-psychoanalytic concepts of the abject and abjection to read Grunge fiction with. While Kirkby argues that *Praise* "demystifies the abject, becoming an affirmation of the everyday and of bodies as the basis of subjectivity" (238) Vivienne Muller treats *Praise* to a

> social protest reading [in which] the signifiers of the abject and grotesque pimpled bums, bleeding skins, flabby bodies, misshapen flesh, drug altered bodies and minds would appear to collectively symbolise revolt against the deterministic socio-cultural institutions (bureaucracies, hospitals, schools,

police) with their moral directives towards the corps propre. [. . .] Such a reading of the grotesque body in *Praise* would also yield it as a site of contestation of the 'official' discourses of good and proper bodies with their 'healthy' imperatives of employment, heterosexuality, marriage, monogamy and parenthood. (152-53)

Unlike Kirkby's reading of *Praise* Muller opens her interpretation to the social dimensions of identity formation, offering a reading of McGahan's debut novel that permits it to be a critique of contemporary techniques of the self; a critique of, what Foucault calls, forms of governmentality.[17] The abject, polluted, sexually faulty body of Gordon is contrasted for Muller to the "healthy body in middle-class terms [which] is also the employed body" (153). So, while Kirkby reads *Praise*'s thematisation of abjection on a purely psychological level, Muller is prepared to consider that this thematisation enacts a "postmodern scepticism towards the unified subject signalling a current crisis of identity for the young" where the "nihilism in grunge is read as a sort of refusal of the hegemony of the dominant capitalist ethic" (152).

Different again is Karen Brooks' use of the term abject to chart readings of Grunge fiction. Brooks explicates a psycho-geography of the movement and becomings of characters across and on the interstitial zones between the city and the suburban. While Muller situates *Praise* within the time-space of global modernity and late capitalism, and Kirkby tightens the interpretive lens of abjection to bore down on individual identity formation, Brooks argues that in *Praise* and other Grunge novels "an understanding of the [human] subject is contingent on an interplay between the psychosocial, the body and the physical environment" (89). For Brooks the "characters who embrace the ambiguous, liminal and abject spaces that lie within and between sub/urban living become spatial vessels that are able to cross and recross the boundaries of institutional power, geo-political, psychosocial and psychosexual boundaries" (98). This reading of the possibilities of movement and spatial identity enabled by proximity to abjection in Grunge fiction is both libertarian and idealistically utopian.

The utilisation of Kristeva's concept of the abject as an interpretive instrument by these three readings opens up a boundary on which Grunge fiction becomes an object of primarily psychological literary signification. Yet the genealogy of the concept of the abject also comes by way of Georges Bataille and Mary Douglas' anthropology (Kristeva 64-6, 69). For Kristeva, Douglas argues that "filth is not a quality in itself, but it applies to a *boundary* and [. . .] represents the object jettisoned out of that boundary, its other side, a margin" (69). The materiality of the abject is secondary to the social fact of the boundary. Indeed, Douglas writes: "[m]atter issuing from them [the orifices of the body] is marginal stuff of the most obvious kind. Spittle, blood, milk, urine, faeces or tears by simply issuing forth have traversed the boundary of the body. [. . .] The mistake is to treat bodily margins in isolation from all other margins" (cited in Kristeva 69). The call to consider the social existence of the boundaries across which abjection occurs works to remind us that alongside "abjection [being] coextensive with social and symbolic order, on the individual as well as on the collective level [it also] assumes specific shapes and different codings according to the various "symbolic systems"" (68). Abjection is historical, as it "varies according to time and space, even though it is [also] universal" (68).

*

Part of what is abject about Grunge fiction is its status within the Australian literary canon. It is both inside and outside the canon, a topic in Australian literary history that proceeds, as we saw above when discussing Salzman's writing on Grunge fiction, under erasure. Before moving into the theoretical section of this introduction it is worth dwelling on a powerful reading of a text from within the genre that could more justifiably be called the abjected form of Australian letters in the 1980s and 1990s: poetry.

John Forbes' poem "Watching the Treasurer" is the basis for a reading of Australian political culture through the mediatised figure of the treasurer of the poem's title, Paul Keating. While what Forbes and Morris have to say about Keating is formally distant, each draws attention to the utopian effects that were

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invited by Keating's rhetoric. For Morris the utopias of Keating's economic

fundamentalist discourse enable an ecstasy for those who speak it. This ecstatic

response, however, has its abject. Citing an evocative phrase from Pusey's work

that is cognate with Grunge, Morris writes that economic fundamentalism is "a

philosophy that treats society as a by-product ("Sludge") of market forces

tempered *only* by the actions of an elite cast of experts [who practise] a *furious*

rhetoric of Reason" (1998: 180-81). What is abjected by "that utopia/ no philosopher

could argue with, where/ what seems, is & what your words describe/ you know

exists" are the "political alignments of a century [and] even those "new social

movements" most critical of Laborism [sic]—feminism, anti-racism,

environmentalism—[which] found themselves recast by its decline as

"entrenched" and "vested" interests obstructing *radical* change" (Forbes cited in

Morris 1998: 158, 178).

While the four frameworks for reading Grunge fiction analysed above offer

unorthodox boundaries on which to work new textual affiliations, Morris' reading

of Forbes' poem models the direction that this thesis heads in. What is exemplary

about Morris' reading is: how it is anchored by a critical analysis of her own

affective and intellectual investments in the subjects of her essay; how a close–

reading of a literary text can at once be promiscuously horizontal and focussed;

and how it can be psychoanalytic and socio-historical, practising rhetorical

analysis and political-economic theory as it moves from one section to another.

Above all Morris' interests in Keating overlap with mine.

There is a dense network of tracks through which Keating's textuality circulated.

Morris' essay travels over this dense network in ways that make the four

framework essays analysed above appear suburban. Yet Morris' essay nowhere

mentions Grunge fiction, which is not on her horizon. Her practices of boundary

work, while exemplary, do not articulate Grunge fiction to the largely media and

theoretical texts that she moves through to form her reading of Keating and

Forbes' poem.[18] Moving toward Morris' practices requires the four modes of

boundary work analysed above to be both pushed further into their existing zones,

and shifted into new interdisciplinary zones. In these new zones, especially, our understanding of Keating's rhetoric and textuality can take soundings of *Praise*'s poetics and textuality, and interpreting *Praise*'s feelings of structure will assist in explaining the structures of feeling that Morris and Forbes, for example, hear in Keating's talk.[19] This understanding, interpretation and explanation are what will be performed in chapter three.

It is perhaps only as it passes into Australian literary history that we can reappraise, interpret and explain Grunge fiction outside of the circuitry of the culture war debates that structured its conditions of reception. Before jumping tracks and moving into analysis of what lies on the non-literary track of this thesis in chapter one, the main method of literary criticism used in this thesis, the historical sociology of literary form, will be detailed.

3. On the Historical Sociology of Literary Form

Moretti's rhetoric of fiction

> [F]ormal patterns are what literature uses in order to master historical
> reality, and to reshape its materials in the chosen ideological key: if form
> is disregarded, not only do we lose the complexity (and therefore the
> interest) of the whole process — we miss the strictly *political* significance
> too. (Moretti, 2000a: xiii)

In key essays from the collection *Signs Taken for Wonders* (2005), in his analysis of the *Bildungsroman* in European Culture in *The Way of the World* (2000a), in *Modern Epic* (1996), and even through his more recent "quantitative turn" in *Graphs, Maps, Trees* (2007a), literary historian Franco Moretti has consistently performed his literary studies from a Marxist-based theory of the historical sociology of literary form.

For Moretti literature is neither fully autonomous from the society out of which it emerges and into which it circulates, nor is it determined by the mode of production in the last instance, as is claimed in the literary theories that base their

metaphysics on the Althusserian problematic (Jameson 2003: 25-6). Literature, instead, works through a morphological *bricolage* that brings various symbolic forms, conventions of narrative, together in a single text (2000a xii, 5). These forms, or narrative morphemes, are generated out of "*rhetorical innovations*, which are the result of chance" (1996: 6). And yet the forces impelling which of these innovations are selected and how they are combined to enact the morphological *bricolage* of the individual literary text is a matter of "*social selection*" (6). These forces of selection point to "the idea that literature *follows* great social changes – that it always 'comes after'. [Where] [t]o come after, however, does not mean to repeat ('reflect') what already exists, but the exact opposite: to *resolve* the problems set by history" (6).

In Moretti's literary practice the analysis of the literary text's form is to be placed into a dialectic with a sociological analysis that is mediated, and delimited, by the shared historical *milieu* of text and society (6). To invoke Said's terms, acts of criticism move between text and its affiliations to the "world" by way of what he calls "genuine historical research" (Said 1991: 175). Like Said, Moretti aims his literary practice at understanding and explaining how and why literary texts operate on, with and even against "power relations" (1996: 6). He argues that a literary text's "[r]hetorical 'daring' testifies to a will that wants to overturn the power relations of the symbolic order [while] '[c]ommonplaces' and semantic inertia, for their part, are the potential *result* of that daring no less than its opposite" (2005: 8).

For Moretti, "literary discourse is entirely contained within the rhetorical domain" as "the substantial function of literature is to *secure* consent. To make individuals feel 'at ease' in the world they happen to live in, to reconcile them in a pleasant and imperceptible way to its prevailing cultural norms" (2005: 4, 27). But what literature, in most but not all of its instances, is seeking to secure consent for, and what those cultural norms are, requires "[k]nowledge of the socio-historical context of a literary work or genre" (8). This historically specific sociological knowledge

> is not [. . .] an 'extra' to be kept in the margins of rhetorical analysis. In
> general, whether one is aware of it or not, such knowledge furnishes the

starting point for interpretation itself, providing it with those initial hypothesis [sic] without which rhetorical mechanisms would be hard to understand, or would tell us very little indeed. (2005: 8)

Moretti has tended to focus his literary history around moments of great transformation and crisis in Western European history. His study of the *Bildungsroman* situates its emergence

> [a]t the turn of the eighteenth century [when] much more than just a rethinking of youth was at stake. Virtually without notice, in the dreams and nightmares of the so-called 'double-revolution', Europe plunges into modernity, but without possessing a *culture* of modernity. If youth, therefore, achieves its symbolic centrality, and the 'great narrative' of the *Bildungsroman* comes into being, this is because Europe has to attach a meaning, not so much to youth, as to *modernity*. (Moretti, 2000a: 5)

Similarly his analysis of Joyce's *Ulysses* reads its historical sociology as being no less than "the crisis of liberal capitalism" at "the end of the liberal century" – the nineteenth century (2005: 201, 189). While these judgements are made within powerfully persuasive essays of literary study, there is in Moretti's palpable enthusiasm a tendency to fall for, in what he himself has warned is, the "'*Zeitgeist* fallacy'" where,

> [a] satisfactory level of rhetorical [literary formal] analysis has been reached. The configuration obtained seems to refer unambiguously to a particular hierarchy of values. So one performs the conclusive welding-together of rhetoric and social history. Let us suppose that up until now the argument has been flawless. It is precisely at this point that one makes a mistake. One succumbs to the allure of the sweeping generalization[:] *the* idea – single, solitary, resplendent – in which a whole epoch is supposedly summed up. (2005: 24-5)

What is singularly productive about his practices of literary history is how he brings the concept of symbolic form to the forefront of his literary history and situates it on the boundary between the literary text and the historically understood operations of that society which it shares. His studies of the *Bildungsroman* at times border on the dangerously historicist in that the conception of modernity he uses positions Western European modernity as the *avant garde* of human development. He provides, however, an exemplary application of the "the idea [. . .] that literary genres are problem-solving devices, which address a contradiction in their environment, offering an imaginary resolution by means of

their formal organization" (2006: 73). His analysis of the classical *Bildungsroman* as a genre structured by youth as a symbolic form which works to make sense of Western Europe's "dreams and nightmares of the so-called 'double-revolution' [through which it] plunges into modernity, but without possessing a *culture* of modernity" provides a model for analysing the symbolic form of youth as a highly-charged trope during the period of Grunge fiction's production and reception: the 1980s and 1990s (2000a: 5).

Moretti argues that the signifier – youth – comes to carry a new conception in the late eighteenth century, "a symbolic shift" in which being young is no longer defined by not being an adult, but comes instead to symbolise a period of open uncertainty; of "exploration", "mobility" and "perennially dissatisfied and restless" "interiority" (4). Youth is chosen to symbolise the protean nature of the industrial and political revolutions of the eighteenth century "because of its ability to *accentuate* modernity's 'essence', the sign of a world that seeks its meaning in the *future* rather than in the past" (5). As Moretti argues, however, youth can become this central symbolic form for Western European modernity because it also ends (5-6). The protean, revolutionary nature of capitalist modernity that Marx writes of as a "[c]onstant revolutionizing, uninterrupted disturbance of all social relations, everlasting uncertainty and agitation [. . .] All fixed, fast-frozen relationships, with their train of venerable opinions, are swept away [. . .] All that is solid melts into the air" finds in the symbolic form of youth a symbolic end, as youth itself ends and comes of age with the onset of adulthood (Marx cited in Berman 95).

This symbolic form of youth structures the plot and narration of the *Bildungsroman* genre through which ideological content is presented and naturalised. One of Moretti's most striking claims is that the political work that the *Bildungsroman* performs is not to embed "intolerant, normative, monologic" ideologies into a culture so much as to provide a symbolic form that allows the bourgeoisie to think a contradiction that, rather than being solved, must be lived with "and even transform[ed] into a tool for survival" (2000a: 10). The *Bildungsroman*, on this

reading, is a form that helps the modern subject to live with that *"interiorization of contradiction"* that, for Moretti, marks "modern socialization" (10).

Moretti's analysis of the morphology of the *Bildungsroman* enables us to begin to extricate the complex political and social affects and ideas that 'youth' carried as a symbolic form in Australian political culture in the 1990s. As the discussion in the "Reappraising Grunge fiction" section above sought to make clear, the trope of youth has been at the centre of not only the critical reception of Grunge, but has also played a primary role in the generationalism that structured significant sections of the culture war debates in Australia in the mid-1990s. The symbolic form of youth as a period of experimentation, rebellion, innocence and irresponsibility carries the implication that such conduct will settle into patterns of adult behaviour, and that this maturation take shape on the foundation of a coming-of-age, or *Bildungs* – a formation of the autonomous and socialized self. In Grunge, however, this formation fails. And its failure is less a matter of authorial immaturity than a generic convention. The question that Moretti's methods of historical sociology of literary form raises in the case of Grunge is what type of modernity do we read these failed *Bildungs* with and against?

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While Moretti's method of an historical sociology of literary form provides the primary literary model for the readings of literary texts that are performed in chapters two, three and four his historical sociology comes close to universalising a conception of Western European modernity that is historicist, in Dipesh Chakrabarty's pejorative sense of the term, and that flattens out geographic and localised specificities (2000: 6-16). In order to borrow the model of Morretti's methods without its grand periodising and Eurocentric assumptions, chapter one will present a compressed and localised temporal and spatial grid out of which an historical sociology that affiliates with Grunge fiction will be presented. Before coming to this historical sociology, Fredric Jameson's methods of literary criticism will be considered as these are also the bases on which the readings will be conducted in the later chapters.

> [H]istory is *not* a text, not a narrative, master or otherwise, but [. . .], as an absent cause, it is inaccessible to us except in textual form, and that our approach to it and to the Real itself necessarily passes through its prior textualization, its narrativisation in the political unconscious (Jameson, 2003: 20)

Like Moretti's, Jameson's literary criticism is based on a Marxist historical materialism. While their methods and periodisations are largely compatible there is a significant difference in how each conceives of the relationships between symbolic, or literary, forms and the phenomena of the historical Real that such forms seek to represent. So, while Moretti builds his historical sociologies out of a range of sources as wide as Darwin's theory of evolution, to Goethe's philosophy of form, Jameson's historical sociology is relentlessly anchored and drawn back into the orbit of the totality of history. There is also a considerable variation in their approaches to the uses and subsumption of psychoanalytic theories in their work. In this area Jameson, unlike Moretti, has subsumed and seeks to work with the theories of post-structuralist linguistics and psychoanalysis that culminate in Lacan's re-reading of Freud, and in Althusser's appropriation of Lacan's psychology for his theories of Marxism.

For Jameson literary criticism and literary history are practices of working through levels of hermeneutics whereupon the subsequent levels seek to reinterpret, and even remake, the text against a widening horizon of social and historical significance. Interpretation takes

> [p]lace within three concentric frameworks, which mark a widening out of the sense of the social ground of a text through the notions, first, of political history, in the narrow sense of the punctual event and chronicle-like sequence of happenings in time; then of society, in the now already less diachronic and time-bound sense of a constitutive tension and struggle between social classes; and, ultimately, of history now conceived in its vastest sense of the sequence of modes of production and the succession and destiny of the various human social formations, from prehistoric life to whatever far future history has in store for us. (Jameson 2003: 60)

The first "narrowly political or historical" horizon of interpretation grasps "the individual work [. . .] essentially as a *symbolic act*" (61). At the second hermeneutic level the individual text falls away "to be reconstituted in the form of the great collective and class discourses" and "the *ideologeme* [. . .] the smallest intelligible unit of the essentially antagonistic collective discourses of social classes" becomes the "object of study" (61). Finally, along the orbit of the third concentric circle, "the ultimate horizon of human history as a whole" is the totality against which particular social formations are posited and relativised in relation to "their respective positions in the whole complex sequence of the modes of production" (61). In this final level of interpretation, Jameson writes, "both the individual text and its ideologemes know a final transformation, and must be read in terms of what I will call the *ideology of form*, that is, the symbolic messages transmitted to us by the coexistence of various sign systems which are themselves traces or anticipations of modes of production" (61-2).

As was noted above in the case of Moretti's universalising and Eurocentric conceptions of modernity, this thesis seeks to read Grunge fiction against a much more compressed and localised historical sociology than what Jameson wants to move against in his third hermeneutic framework. Indeed, the perspective that Jameson calls for – effectively one at the end of history – is highly fraught. And the fragility of its status can be seen not least in the notion of a prophetic, even messianic, transmission to us through the text of future modes of production.

What, however, Jameson's model of a widening series of concentric hermeneutics does offer is a means by which to take a psychological and individual reading of a text and re-position such literary fictional phenomena as mourning and melancholy, for example, as responses to socially significant loss. The advantage of Jameson's approach over Moretti's, in this domain, is that he re-configures aspects of Lacanian psychology – itself a re-reading of Freudian psychology – into a theory of the political unconscious. The political unconscious is the realm of the Real of history, that can only be approached by moving through a text via the concentric circles of the three hermeneutics and their widening horizons listed above. In

chapter four I take Jameson's first and second hermeneutic frameworks, and his notion of the political unconscious, and apply these to the reading of the post-Grunge novel *Three Dollars*.

A final point of comparison between Moretti and Jameson's historical sociology of literary form concerns the concepts of mediation and homology. For Jameson, the key to Marxism as a theory with which to grasp the relationships between aesthetic – or symbolic – forms, and forms active in the mode of production, is to remember that Marxism is not a mechanical but an historical materialism (30). It is thus the "isomorphism, or structural parallelism" of a mechanical conception of homology which makes rigid, determinist relations between levels of society, rather than those of the "text and its social subtext [that are represented] in the more active terms of production, projection, compensation, repression, displacement and the like" that a historical materialism more fruitfully enables (28-9). While Jameson finds utility in the notion of homology he is wary of the manner through which it can be used to make a too literal pairing of forms, such as that of the production of texts with the production of commodities (30).

Moretti also sets aside the mediating concept of homology. Rather than *"equating,"* for example, the structure and function of a text when considering how to practise a sociology of literature, Moretti writes,"[w]hat is in question is *correlation*, not necessarily *homology"* (2005: 130). For Moretti something like the Althusserean relative autonomy of levels keeps the concept of homology as isomorphism from gaining any firm hold on those relationships of literary morphemes to social phenomena that he prefers to characterise using the figures and terms that arise in the dialectic between interpretation and explanation (153-54). I will follow Moretti's example in this thesis and seek, where possible, to generate the figures of mediatory relationships out of the terms of the texts themselves. In chapter two, for example, my reading of *Praise's* main characters' diseases – asthma and eczema – is abstracted through the medical classification of these both being atopic illnesses. This form of illness is then read across to the Neoliberal practices of economic government that I have chosen to affiliate with *Praise*, specifically, and

Grunge fiction more generally. This reading across extrapolates from the figures of youth that both Grunge and Paul Keating's language share. Rather than present a strict homology between Gordon's asthma and financial government, what I will do here is shuttle between the Australian political body of Gordon's illness and the ill body politic that Keating narrates as becoming healthy, in order to explicate one of the specific ways that Neoliberalism became embedded into Australian political culture.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

Moretti's methods of literary history share much with Fredric Jameson's Marxist periodisations and views on the history of modernity and capitalism's various stages. The key to the historical sociology of literary form, for both Moretti and Jameson, is genre, concerning which Jameson argues that

> the strategic value of generic concepts for Marxism lies in the mediatory function of the notion of genre, which allows the coordination of immanent formal analysis of the individual text with the twin diachronic perspective of the history of forms and the evolution of social life. (2003: 92)

While accepting the specific claim made here by Jameson concerning the "mediatory function" of literary form, the notion of an "evolution of social life" has a too portentiously teleological direction and universality for this thesis, which seeks instead to work 'closer-to-home' by focussing on a small number of texts and nationally inflected instantiations of Liberalism, Labourism and Neoliberalism.

In order to avoid the lure of Moretti's *zeitgeist* fallacy, the fragilities of the total view of history from which Jameson purports to be moving in his final concentric circle, and instead to move horizontally and promiscuously into that affiliative network of texts that Grunge fiction is a contemporary of, but has rarely been read with, this thesis will jump tracks and move into a localised and tightly periodized hermeneutics of the texts of the long Labor decade. By working through the writing and textualisation of the long Labor decade we will be ready to begin to read Grunge on those boundaries that require a more exacting historical sociology to make the affiliations occur. It is to that labour that this thesis now turns.

Chapter One.

Writing the Long Labor Decade

> By virtue of being a settler-capitalist society, simultaneously coloniser and colonised, Australia developed in the twentieth century as a modern society only in a partial sense; its labour movement was dominated largely by a romantic vision, whether rural or suburban, and its industrialising movement came late, and hardly at all by European standards. The extraordinary feature of the [long] Labor decade was precisely that it involved an attempt to modernise Australia and modernise the Labor Party, but at the risk of emptying out the labour tradition. In this sense, the [long] Labor decade may be viewed as the prolonged terminal moment of Labor's century. (Beilharz, 1994: ix-x)

Peter Beilharz's periodisation, the long Labor decade, provides the basis for, and enacts, his mournful and melancholic writing on the transformation of the ALP, the organised trade union movement and allied Left intellectuals before and during the years 1983 to 1993. It is drawn from his 1994 book *Transforming Labor: Labour Tradition and the Labor Decade in Australia* where in the book's preface the recent election of the Keating-led Government extends the period placed in the book's original title from *"The Labor Decade"* to "the long Labor decade" (ix). The books' purpose is "to rummage and ruminate through the rubble of expired hopes and industrial waste presently called Australia" using an interdisciplinary boundary work that is part "social theory and labour history" (xii). His writing on the long Labor decade employs the mode of "an essay, ruminatory in style, and its method, if it is to be named, is more like hermeneutics, than anything else, for the study makes no claim to be strictly an historical work so much as a series of reflections on history mediated by some of its texts" (xiii). This hermeneutic approach to the textuality of the long Labor decade provides a model for, and the periodisation with which to orient, this thesis' readings of the non-fiction texts of the period.[20]

The essential argument of *Transforming Labor* is that in "moral and ethical terms" the Hawke-Keating Government "has failed" and "[v]iewed in terms of its past or its ethos Labor is [. . .] in many senses dead, or at least exhausted" (ix). The more detailed argument of the book is that events in the global political economy had a decisive impact upon the Australian labour movement and ALP which backed itself as the active political and economic modernizers in the face of a thin, underdeveloped bourgeoisie (3, 6). This transformation of Labor – the

political party and activity – came with electoral success for the party but at the expense of "emptying out the labour tradition" (x). Beilharz, while seeking to place the period within "longer historical and civilisational sensibilities" and keen to avoid the "disabling" lure of "nostalgia" is also seeking "to detail the peculiarities of Australians" (x, xii). It is his hermeneutic movement between these historical specificities and the transnational sociological phenomena of modernity that produces his reading of the textuality of the long Labor decade.

<center>*</center>

In many ways the recession of 1990-91 is the key event of the long Labor decade, as it was during this period that Labor's traditions were shown to be secondary to its Neoliberal beliefs and practices. For Beilharz Labor's response to the events of the 1990-91 recession is a surfacing of its deeper structural movement away from its traditions in "arbitration and protection" toward "economic rationalism [and] the deregulated political economy of labour" (5). This movement is, not least for Beilharz, a disorienting loss and he ruminates on the senses of betrayal and loss by reflecting on the discourses and institutional bases of Australian Labourism, Australian Liberalism and Western capitalist modernity. In *Transforming Labor* the period is textualised in non-fiction as one in which Labor traditions and Labourist discourse became profoundly problematic, the extant ideological maps that marked Left and Right were ripped up, government of the economy became central to political discourse, and grand claims asserting the necessity for, and realisation of, a new and modern Australian Settlement were made and contested (7-10)

Naming and delimiting the field through Beilharz's periodising heuristic enables a section of the heterogeneous and dense field of recent non-fictional writing to be ordered into a set of political texts useful for exploring, interpreting and explaining a significant aspect of the political, cultural and literary history of the Australian Left by beginning with the fact that the ALP was in Government for thirteen years.

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From the perspective of the twentieth first century's first decade, Beilharz's reading of the textuality of the long Labor decade is a partial and incomplete one. For example, his interpretation of Paul Kelly's *The End of Certainty* and especially of Kelly's powerfully influential heuristic – the Australian Settlement – is now one among many. He focuses much of his analysis through the figures of Whitlam and Keating, but consideration of the textualisation of both these key characters of the long Labor decade stops at biographical and psychological boundaries. The biographies of Keating that emerged around the time of his initial challenge for the leadership of the ALP in 1991, and that were published subsequent to Beilharz's book form a rich stratum of textuality that will be interpreted and explained below.

Transforming Labor orients the historical sociology against which the readings of the pre-, Grunge, and post-Grunge fiction will proceed. The textualisation of the long Labor decade that Beilharz makes available will, however, be extended and deepened into three areas: labor tradition and the ghosts of Whitlam; biographies of Paul Keating and his rhetoric; and Paul Kelly's *The End of Certainty* focused on his heuristic of the Australian Settlement and Neoliberal globalisation. Each of these will form the basis of the three sets of literary readings conducted in this thesis' subsequent three chapters. Before moving into these three areas of the textualisation of the long Labor decade, I will introduce, detail and historicise key political and sociological terms that are central to the historical sociology of the period: Labourism, Social-liberalism, industrial citizenship, economic rationalism and Neoliberalism. I will also define how I will use these terms in the remainder of the thesis. Finally in this section I will argue that a Labourist-Social liberal armature generated, structured and protected the political culture of the post-war period in Australia until the collapse of the Bretton Woods system and the concomitant crisis of Social-liberal Keynesian demand management in the early 1970s. The collapse of this American-based system was followed by the emergence of new forms finance capitalism articulated to Neoliberal forms of government. How these events in the world-system affected, and were

textualised within, Australian political culture is what the remainder of chapter one seeks to interpret, analyse and explain.

1. Coming to Terms with the Long Labor Decade

Labourism

Fundamental to a consideration of the periodisation of the long Labor decade is the middle term: Labor and its discourse Labourism. Australian Labourism is a central discursive, ideological, cultural and institutional form of twentieth-century Australian political culture. The cultural and post-colonial projects of the second Keating Government (1993-96) are certainly important but they sit uneasily within those currents of Labor traditions that form around industrial issues and events. Beilharz writes that "[h]istorically [. . .] labourism kept returning as the more durable core of the Australian left. This may reflect its practicability; it also suggests, in one sense, that a weaker distinction than that firmly drawn between socialism and labourism might be appropriate, for labourism after all is also a kind of socialism" (38). But if labourism is a kind of socialism it is "the Australian version of those kinds of socialist reformism which construct socialism as a variation on capitalist civilisation rather than its negation. It is this longer, mainstream labour tradition which is now at risk" (38).

The gap between the discourse of socialism, as the negation of capitalism, and Labourism is made more explicit in Jim Hagan's *The History of the A.C.T.U.*, where he argues that

> [t]he tenets of Labourism were White Australia, Tariff Protection, compulsory arbitration, strong unions, and the Labor party. White Australia kept out Asiatics who threatened the standard of living and the unions' strength; tariff protection diminished unemployment and kept wages low; compulsory arbitration restrained the greedy and unfair employer; a strong union movement made it [. . .] possible to enhance and supplement arbitration's achievements; and Labor Government made sure that no one interfered with these excellent arrangements. (1981: 14)[21]

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Similar to Hagan, Frank Bongiorno sees the articulation of trade unions to the ALP as the central mechanism of Labourism:

> [t]he idea that an independent Labor Party, supported by a strong trade union movement, should seek a redistribution of wealth in favour of the working class through the parliamentary system [. . .] has been a tenet to which any activist working in the Labor Party has had to subscribe. It meant that socialism had to be a gradual affair because Labor sought to achieve its aims through popularly elected parliaments. ("Labourism")

More succinctly, Beilharz writes that it is "the ideology, or better, the culture of the labour movement as it is articulated politically" (1994: 36). Ralph Miliband argues that its ideology resides in core demands that are industrial first, and social second:

> Labourism is above all concerned with the advancement of concrete demands of immediate advantage to the working class and organised labour wages and conditions of work; trade union rights, the better provision of services and benefits in the field of health, education, housing, transport, family allowances, unemployment benefits, pensions and so on. (cited in Beilharz, 1994: 36)

Rob Watts defines Labourism so nebulously that it appears as an orientation towards the state that the social movement formed out of Trade Unionists uses to enact claims solely for improving their material conditions. For Watts, Labourism is merely "a strategy of using the state to advance the interests of the workers, deploying whatever political and discursive material is to hand" (52).

Labourism is a flexible set of practices, institutional relationships and ways of making meaning that articulates the labour movement to the Labor Party and both to the apparatuses of the state in the interests of improving material working rewards and conditions as a first measure, and in gaining social goods and conditions as a second goal. One key question of the long Labor decade for Beilharz was whether or not Labourism was flexible enough a discourse to weather the dismantling of Hagan's first three tenets without becoming empty and ceasing to be a source of tradition which could be drawn on to generate a political culture capable of participating in shaping the political economy (Beilharz, 1994: 4-5). Furthermore, could Labourism still be said to be active in Australian political culture once the 'protection' that it had struggled to institute was disappearing? (3)

Was Australian Labourism during the long Labor decade so discredited that it was unable to re-vitalise by re-articulating to formations on its Left and even Right wings? If there was a emptying of Labor tradition, as Beilharz argues, then was this disposal to be rued considering that Australian Labourism had been racist and heavily biased against equal opportunities for women for much of its existence? (McQueen, 2004: 30-44; Sawer, 2003b: 373-75). Was Labourism flexible enough a discourse to be modernised without being entirely lost?

Beilharz's *Transforming Labor* is a long, mournful and sometimes melancholic argument against such effective flexibility not because Labourism is not a flexible discourse but because the political economy upon which it functioned no longer existed in 1994. Beilharz's argument in *Transforming Labor* is that Australian Labourism is a species of the discourses of modernity, and like modernity comprises an interconnected series of Janus-faces: Social-liberal with socialist; backward-looking Romantic with forward-looking modernist; statist with civic; and utopian with pragmatic (36-48). Of course, Beilharz's judgement about the culture-political economy relationship in Labourism is not to be taken uncritically. If the Hawke-Keating Government fundamentally altered the governance and shape of the Australian political economy then how are we to assess the degrees and origins of what determined these changes: were such governing changes inevitable considering the shifts in geopolitics and global finance and trade capitalism, or were they contingent and driven by nationally immanent cultural, social and political forces? Was Labourism a large ensemble of traditional forms and principles, utopias and pragmatic alliances, or did it possess a hard core of central tenets that if refused or negated would empty the 'tradition' to the point that it could no longer be meaningfully drawn on? Where does Labourism fit into narratives of the long decade? Was Labourism, as a set of principles and traditions, fundamentally recast by the Hawke-Keating Government? Was there a betrayal of a socialist or social democratic project, or were the accusers nostalgic for, or melancholy about, a type of Labourism that had never existed, except as hope and oppositional critique? These are all difficult questions which will be addressed throughout the thesis. The beginnings of an answer, however, requires shifting our

focus to the discourse to which Labourism was articulated through long periods of the twentieth century: Social-liberalism.

Social-liberalism

The re-discovery of Social-liberalism by political historians like Marian Sawer, and indeed cultural historians like Davis, points to the recent sense of the loss of the classical liberalism against which Social-liberalism first emerged in the nineteenth century with its critique of contract and atomistic individualism (Sawer, 2003: 9; Davis, 2007: 18). Sawer argues that Social-liberalism's core commitment is the ethical use of the state's apparatus to promote a positive, rather than negative, freedom in light of the failure of contractual liberalism: "[t]he social liberals did not seek the abolition of the market economy but believed that it must be subordinated to the democratic state which put the welfare of its citizens before the sanctity of contract and the rights of property" (4). For Sawer, the roots of twentieth century Social-liberalism lie in a "reinterpretation" "of [t]he central value of liberty" "in terms of the opportunity for self-development rather than freedom of contract":

> [t]he state has the capacity and the duty to remove constrictions such as those caused by lack of education, poor health and bad housing, and to promote the positive liberty of the individual; this had priority over rights of property of sanctity of contract. [. . .] [T]he state was no longer seen simply in terms of its role as law enforcer and upholder of contracts but, rather, in terms of its ethical mission in nurturing the development of its citizens. (10-11)

There is some debate over the distinction between Social-liberalism and social democracy as terms describing consistent ideological theories which produce policies based on sets of commitments, explanations and understandings. In the Western European setting social democracy is often associated with the German SDP of the Weimar Republic which, under Eduard Bernstein, while aiming to arrive at socialism (a non-capitalist social system and political economy) was in no hurry to get there(Adams 159-64).[22] What is important in the Australian context, however, is that while there have been moments of social democratic Government – Whitlam's project aimed at a form of social democracy through nationalising

medicine and higher education, and the Chifley Government sought to nationalise

the banks – the dominant social form of political discourse has been social

liberalism, or what was called, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,

New Liberalism (Rowse, 1978: 37-43). Tim Rowse argues that

> [l]iberty in the 'New Liberalism' became closely identified with individual
> welfare, and the maintenance of civic freedom with the maintenance of class
> harmony and consent. The ideology of the Australian working class in the
> political sphere has been a reformism which sits quite comfortably within this
> doctrine. Concessions to working-class power have continued to take the
> form of enlargement of the 'neutral' state's judicial and welfare functions.
> (1978: 9)

Although no longer dominant, as it was in the immediate post-Federation period,

Social-liberalism survived throughout much of the post-war period. Its survival,

however, was caught up in Menzies' sustained attack on the social dimensions of

citizenship directed through his cold war demonising of Labourism and indeed

of Labor as the party of authoritarian collectivism (Brett, 1992: 33-5; Capling, 124-

25).[23] Judith Brett has analysed the techniques of Menzies' rhetorical attack on

Labourism and her influential reading is that it interpellated citizens as the bearers

of moral status based on the free conduct of family-centred individuals in the

intimate-domestic and civil spheres (Brett, 2003: 123). Brett argues that Menzies

centred his rhetoric on the space of the domestic home because "[a]s a symbol of a

full experience of individuality, the home stands in opposition not just to the

depersonalised world of work but to all aspects of modern life which seem to

diminish the individual's sense of agency" (1992 46-7). While Labor's vision of

citizenship was to be realized through "labour force participation [f]or Menzies [. . .]

the self-sufficiency of home-making, not work per se, was ultimately the process of

social integration—citizenship as home ownership" (Capling 125). Yet, the conditions

of home ownership, and the Australian dream, were tied into the post-war boom

and the Social-liberal Keynesian techniques of government that managed the

economy during this period. Thus the survival of Social-liberalism through the

Menzies period can be seen, as Stuart Macintyre argues, in the fact that '[u]nder

the leadership of Robert Menzies, [the Liberal] party accepted the responsibilities

of government to maintain full employment, provide social welfare, and enhance

opportunity' ('Liberalism' 392). These 'responsibilities' are in line with the Social-liberal belief "that the democratic state could and should play a central role in providing its citizens with equal opportunity for self-development" (Sawer, 2003: 9). We can therefore see the Menzies period as one in which Social-liberalism, while under significant rhetorical and policy attack, remains central to the techniques of governing the political economy. It might be the case that the commitment to full employment was less an ideological one than merely an unexpected consequence of the post-war boom. Nevertheless, such a policy commitment guided the behaviour of the Menzies Government and this, combined with its acceptance of Arbitration and tariff protection, indicates that Menzies' conservatism was articulated to Social-liberal beliefs and practices (Capling 28-9).

Indeed, the post-Depression Social-liberal Keynesian system of demand-side macro-economic government was also articulated to a version of limited Fordist political economy, to the partial provision of welfare services and to Arbitration Court decisions in an assemblage of governmentalities in the post-World War Two period that strongly embedded Social-liberal rationalities and practices within post-war Australian political culture (Capling 8-10, 28-30). In the post-war period until 1973-74 this assemblage created a stable forcefield. Social-liberalism's imbrication with Labourism can be seen, for Sawer, in "[t]he nature of the Australian Labor Party (ALP), as the most important vehicle of social liberalism for much of the twentieth century" (7-8). Spinning like an electric armature Labourism and Social-liberalism together used the energy of the post-war boom to generate the basis on which fundamental political and cultural forms continued to be produced, protected and take shape. To come to terms with the long Labor decade we also need to analyse this central articulation of the post-war period as the effects of its attenuation from the early 1970s resounded through the long Labor decade.

Australian Labourism was primarily articulated to Social-liberalism throughout the twentieth century. We can see and feel this articulation through the heuristic of an armature.[25] This armature generated, protected and provided the framework for fashioning the white male productive wage earner as *the* citizen-subject and thereby primary object of government. It was a complex structure of feeling centred around the concepts of protection and the just wage, the driver for a set of institutional tools – centrally the Arbitration Court – and increasingly those utilities that provided education, health, and housing services through the welfare state, during the post-war period.[26] It brought together a harmonic convergence of political actors who enacted and were emboldened by its forcefield and energy.

The Arbitration Court was the key state institution which both directed energy into the armature and was in turn driven by it. The court was given dynamic institutional weight through the Harvester decision made by the head of the court Social-liberal Henry Higgins who, in 1907, judged that employers should pay wages according to the need of the male employee in so far as such need was measured not on the basis of an employer's capacity to pay but rather on the basis of what a nuclear family required to live reasonably: the living wage (Sawer 58-9; Castles, 2002: 44).[27] Sawer calls this decision "the defining event of Australian social liberalism" (58).

The establishment of this court and the Harvester decision might sound like distant, minor events in the long Labor decade, but any sense of the depth of change in the long Labor decade must account for the loss that the evacuation of the commitment to this institution wrought. Combined with the Social-liberal practices of Keynesian government which dominated the post-World War Two period until 1973-74 and which were articulated also to the institutions of the "New Protection" – tariffs and racially based labour migration limits – the Arbitration Court's governance of social citizenship through industrial techniques melded Labourist and Social-liberal tenets into a forcefield that established a

hegemony surviving numerous challenges until the 1970s when it began to break down.

Higgins' 1907 Harvester Judgement and its significance for the long Labor decade was seen in the choice of H. R. Nicholls for the name of a political society whose main goal was to "promote a debate on industrial relations and to promote the system's reform": meaning to expunge the Arbitration Court and thereby this central institution of the Labourist-Social-liberal armature from Australian political culture (Castles, 2002: 43; Kelly, 1994: 253, 260-62). Nicholls was editor of the *Hobart Mercury* newspaper and won a contempt of court case against Higgins after labelling Higgins "a political judge" in 1911 ("Nicholls, Henry Richard", Nicholls cited in Kelly, 1994: 260). A group of businessmen, lawyers, academics, intellectuals and politicians formed this New Right society in 1986; its invitation to join was co-signed by future federal Liberal Party treasurer and deputy leader Peter Costello, and it read in part: "[w]e would probably have to go back to the early days of Federation, and the debates leading up to the passing of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act, to find a precedent for this debate" (cited in Kelly 260). Ironically, Costello held the federal lower house seat named after Nicholls' enemy, and it was Costello who earned his New Right political reputation as an industrial barrister in the Dollar Sweets case where common law was successfully used to break a union strike in 1985 (Kelly, 1994: 258). This case and others like it weakened the power of the Arbitration Commission and the Unions (255-59).

This movement in the long decade away from the institutions and forms of the armature struck at the core political arrangements that had provided the protective forcefield and framework for much of Australia's post-federation history. These arrangements have been described by Francis Castles as composing a "wage-earner's welfare state" (Castles, 1994: 8). Castles' conception is, for Beilharz, based on "the relative strength of the local labor movement, linked together with a largely economic or material conception of wellbeing, [which] saw the

development of political and welfare arrangements which functioned primarily in the interests of men as workers rather than of citizens as such" (Beilharz, 1994: 7).

Castles has four axioms for the Australian wage-earners' welfare state:

> occupational welfare has been more important than state expenditure [;] collective saving for social security provision has been outweighed by private saving for owner-occupied housing [;] the preferred model of social services financing has been progressive taxation [; and] women have had a different and lesser status than men. (12-5)

He argues that it survived into the 1980s despite the changes to its central axioms that the social movement for women's equality, the collapse of the White Australia policy and the diminution of the role of wage regulation all brought (16). Castles notes that while "the Whitlam government flirted with more European notions of social insurance as well as beginning Australia's disengagement from high levels of tariff protection," the "post-tax dispersion of male wages from employment as egalitarian as any in the advanced world" remained a central pillar of the wage-earners' welfare state into the mid-1980s (16).

Writing on what he calls "the Labor decade" Castles declares any interpretation of Labor's impact in the area of Social protection to be "paradoxical" as the government's "policy activism" promoted managerial and economic rationalist techniques in administration which did little to change the "policy norms" in the area of social protection (17). Castles argues that Hawke-Keating Labor adapted rather than overturned the wage-earners' welfare state, with the reintroduction of universal health care and introduction of the S.G.C (Superannuation Guarantee Charge) being cases of social and industrial citizenship respectively (21). Yet the living standards of average wage earners over the Labor decade – which in a wage-earners' welfare state must be the prime metric – decreased, the use of the Arbitration Court decreased and the financialisation of the Australian economy produced forms of market-based income other than wage-earning ones (22-3). The key change, though, is in the loss of male full-time jobs due both to the steady increase of female labour force participation and to changes in manufacturing

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brought about by "structural reforms," striking at the central pillar of the wage-earners' welfare state: protection of the white wage-earning male (22).

While Castles sees the wage-earners' welfare state as being "refurbished," rather than demolished, his 1994 essay is not interested in the regimes and techniques by which citizen-subjects are themselves refurbished (25). In order to enter this characteristic of the Labourist-Social-liberal armature, and to begin to analyse how citizen-subjects were being reshaped and re-sculpted in the long Labor decade we need to bring the discussion and analysis to this level and consider industrial citizenship.

Industrial citizenship

> In Australia, after a brief flourishing of social-liberal views of citizenship [. . .] labourism became a dominant cultural ethos in the 1950s. As a result, industrial citizenship came to be substituted for social citizenship in Australia. Workers were identified as citizens, citizens as workers; to the exclusion of those who were deemed less socially useful. The more open-ended social-liberal conception of citizenship reappeared momentarily under Whitlam, only to wither under Keating. (Beilharz, 1993: 113)

In a discussion in his book *Citizenship and Civil Society*, Thomas Janoski theorises the concept of the "development of the citizen-self" (92). He argues that the self is born and develops into pre-existing structures and practices of rights and duties exchange with other selves, collectives, and the state: "[c]itizens form a self-concept in relation to the state with its rights and obligations, which they express to others" (93). For Janoski the formation of the citizen-self will

> emerge out of [a childhood and adolescent] dependent position to engage in various types of exchange [. . .] The rational being, making calculations independent of all persons and institutions, is perhaps the furthest from the actual development of citizenship that one can imagine. And to a large degree adolescents and young adults are doing their utmost to construct a viable self at this time that will take rights and obligations into account. This self ultimately intervenes between rational calculations and action. (92)

The development of the citizen-self, or the citizen-subject, occurs within and through institutional and discursive structures and practices which shape both a

being and a becoming-self. The physically developing proto-citizen-self, experienced in childhood and adolescence, is guided to form as *the* citizen-subject that the dominant political culture takes as its core subjectivity. The citizen-subject is both a status – that is recognised – and a narrative, or temporal becoming – a subject that seeks to be recognised, or that seeks to participate in exchanges that are currently denied or prevented. The citizen-subject is Janus-faced: it faces inward toward feelings and beliefs about status, aspiration, resentments and envy, love and fellowship; and it faces outwards towards the redistributions and exchanges that occur in the private-market, public and state spheres. The citizen-subject is a fusion of practices and forms of thought that is interpellated by discourses. This formation will be historically specific and there will be dominant formations, especially ones that tie it to national character. In Australia, for much of the post-war period, the primary citizen-subject was the industrial citizen (Beilharz, 1993a: 113; Pixley 128-29; Watts 47).

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Industrial citizenship is granted a minor status in T.H Marshall's influential theory and history of citizenship. In this anglo-centric theory and history the attainment of civil rights, in the eighteenth century, is followed by the expansion of political rights, in the nineteenth, which are both complemented in the twentieth century by the social rights that arrive with greatest force through the Keynesian welfare state (Marshall 27-8; Janoski 32). The right to bargain collectively through trade unions for improved pay and conditions at work operates for Marshall through "a secondary system of industrial citizenship parallel with and supplementary to the system of political citizenship" (44).

Marshall's position on industrial citizenship, however, has been critiqued (Fudge 635). Jack Barbalet observes that "[i]t is particularly odd [. . .] that 'industrial rights' are mentioned by Marshall in his account of the development of modern citizenship, but are not included by him as an authentic component of [it] along with civil, political and social rights" (22). Marshall subsumes industrial to civil

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rights and for Barbalet this is problematic as civil rights are individual, and not collective rights, whereas industrial rights "are not individualistic" and through their exercise via trade union collectives "can only function properly if the rights of their individual members are subordinate to the rights of the collectivity" (26). By this reasoning industrial citizenship is a primary category of citizenship and, writing in 1988, Barbalet argued that this primacy is also supported by a "body of legislation in all advanced capitalist countries which in fact does confer industrial rights" (25-6). Indeed, in Australia in 1988 the body of legislation supporting these rights, while waning, were still part of the Labourist-Social-liberal armature.

For Colin Crouch industrial citizenship is "the acquisition by employees of rights within the employment relationship, rights which go beyond, and are secured by forces external to, the positions which employees are able to win purely through, labour market forces" (cited in Fudge 636). And for Barbalet these rights are based on

> a status limiting the commodification of persons in employment and therefore includes the right to influence the terms of employment, the conditions of work and the level of pay, and is therefore also the right to develop and sustain the independent means of achieving these things through the organization of combinations or unions. (Barbalet 26)

The Australian post-war Labourist-Social-liberal armature generated, protected and provided the framework for industrial citizenship, forming a world and citizen-subjects that share much with those living within what Gramsci called Fordism. David Harvey defines the Fordist "regime of [capital] accumulation" as that particular "body of interiorized rules and social processes" in which "complex interrelations, habits, political practices, and cultural forms" enact a "mode of regulation" based on a "tense but firm balance of power [. . .] between organized labour, large corporate capital, and the nation state (1990: 126, 122, 133). For Harvey "[p]ostwar Fordism has to be seen [. . .] less as a mere system of mass production and more as a total way of life. Mass production meant standardization of product as well as mass consumption; and that meant a whole new aesthetic and a commodification of culture" (135). The Labourist-Social-liberal armature and its primary form of citizenship – the industrial citizen – were well

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suited to take advantage of similar conditions in the period of the post-war boom as the Australia Government, like many others, "engineered both stable economic growth and rising material living standards through a mix of welfare statism, Keynesian economic management, and control over wage relations" (Harvey 135; Capling 8-11).

Employing the term citizenship, alongside my use of the terms Labourism and Social-liberalism, enables a line of connection to be drawn between the concept of Fordism and the rights and duties bearing and practising subject: the citizen. The discourse of citizenship, while varied, brings with it the presence of state *and* subjects. As this thesis moves between the two tracks of the literary and political fields, and shuttles over interdisciplinary boundaries, the presence and forms of the citizen will assist us in keeping track of what, when and where we are moving through. It is, then, important to see the long Labor decade as being also concerned with a reshaping and re-forming of industrial citizenship. When we return to reconsider Grunge fiction in chapter three, and during the reading of Amanda Lohrey's *oeuvre* in chapter two, the loss of industrial citizenship and the manner by which it is being re-shaped and reformed during the long Labor decade will provide the grounds for sketching a Janus-faced figure that can be turned either inward to the self or outward to the state; where the public-political forces of the state meet the private-moral desires and feelings of the individual. It is my contention that Grunge fiction and Grunge musical culture can be understood as similar responses to a shared structure of feeling which is, in Australia, felt as the loss of industrial citizenship. While in Australia industrial citizenship was articulated to literary-print culture social formations, in America industrial citizenship emerges more in concert with Fordist musical-culture. If, as Morris asserts, "a certain aphasia can follow from the decline of industrial citizenship", then this thesis aims to produce a literary history that listens to and decodes the feint traces of meaning that are present amidst its loss and the subsequent silence (1998: 203).

It remains for me to introduce, define and detail how I will subsequently use the terms of economic rationalism and Neoliberalism. Coming to these terms will help us in moving beyond this aphasia.

Economic rationalism and Neoliberalism

The post-war commitment to full employment using Keynesian techniques of macro-economic government, kept the Labourist-Social-liberal armature in place and turning until 1973-74 when a coincidence of high inflation and high unemployment contradicted the Keynesian expectation of either high inflation or high unemployment (Brennan and Pincus 67-8; Rowse, 2003: 224, 234). To extend the figure of the armature, we could say that in 1973-4 the field against which the armature turned had altered. This field is the political economy which in 1973-4 had begun to shift toward a more financialized, networked, and flexible system (Harvey, 1990: 141-72). The functioning of the Keynesian mode of government began to burn out: the fiscal management of demand operated in and around a reconfiguring field that no longer responded to these techniques of economic government. In Australia the Labourist-Social-liberal armature began to unwind.

As the field shifted new forms of political culture emerged to take advantage of these new conditions in the global political economy. During the long Labor decade one of these forms was named economic rationalism and subjected to a sustained critique led by the Habermasean sociologist, Michael Pusey. Pusey's critique has been mentioned in the thesis introduction: Ian Syson in his essay on Grunge fiction alluded to a "growing rationalist spirit [that] has moved into place in Australian cultural policy," while for Meaghan Morris Pusey's argument that economic rationalism recasts ""society as the *object* of politics" and thus as "some sort of stubbornly resisting sludge"" provides a figure on which her theory of the ecstasy this discourse produces gains purchase (Syson 25; Morris, 1998: 180).

For Beilharz, Pusey's 1991 work is the "single most important critical event" in reading the arguments about corporatism in the long Labor decade (1994: 160). He

reads Pusey's book as a social democratic moral critique of the colonisation of the lifeworld by senior Canberra Treasury and Finance bureaucrats who had been university-trained to analyse society through the narrow grid of economic rationality (160). The problem was a "surplus economisation", rather than a post-war public service focus on politics and society (160). Glossing Pusey, Beilharz argues that "[t]he problem with markets was that their advocates refused to recognise that they might have limits, that monopoly markets, say, for health care or education were likely to return us to *laissez faire*, the two nations and implicitly, to increased levels of social and personal violence in everyday life" (160-61). Beilharz finds Pusey's book has an "implicit nostalgia. Post-war reconstruction, Chifley, Curtin, Coombs and Whitlam seem here to stand in for Australia's Golden Age" but the core reading he extracts from *Economic Rationalism in Canberra* is its portrayal of "the general cultural sense that Labor's century is over [and] that the slide is now largely complete from social liberalism back to economic liberalism" (161).

Pusey's Habermasean analysis sees the bureaucratic and economic "steering media" that shape, and "colonize the lifeworlds" of everyday Australians, as primarily forces rather than as also being discourses (Johnson, 2000: 113, 115). For Carol Johnson, his reading of economic rationalism largely abjures the idea that what is considered economic is cultural or textual as much as it is material, or a steering medium that colonises the communicative rationality possible only in the lifeworld (112, 114-15). Thus Pusey writes:

> the claim is no longer that the state must 'get out of the way' to enhance the steering capacity of the economy but rather that politics, administration, and all the resources of the state shall be mobilised instead to liquefy, dissolve, and instrumentalise every aspect of the lifeworld (including political citizenship, identity, autonomy, responsibility, freedom, and culture) which still resists the external logic of 'incentivation' administered from the top down through an internationalisation of totalitarian 'business democracy'. (Pusey, 1991: 240-41)

Pusey's is a near Gothic characterisation of vampiric steering media that double-team the almost pure and innocent lifeworld. His alarming portrayal of economic rationalism raises the stakes in finding the right response to the mortal threat that

Pusey's theory describes. Yet these stakes are predicated on a particular temporality and a liberal spatialisation of the spheres of activity. This temporality assumes that the capitalist market is always protean and destructive and that we who reside in the lifeworld face it either with or without state-based protections: capitalist modernity is always predatory and the best means of resisting and civilising it are always those of social democracy (7, 107; Beilharz, 1994: 161). Under the rule of economic rationalism we are once again without armature: the stubbornly resisting sludge that economic rationality must drive through in its quest for growth and efficiency. Pusey's spatialisation is constructed on discrete spheres and forms of subjectivity which are presented as pre-existing their interaction rather than being formed in relation, or through liberalism itself (18, 164). Civil society is positioned as being formed separate to the state and the markets, rather than emerging with them.

Both Pusey and Beilharz raise an ambivalence in the reading of the long Labor decade. Was economic rationalism a return to a less protected state of capitalist modernity, a slide from Labourism back to economic liberalism? In other words do we read the period as the final removal and dismantling of the armature – the last remnants of the institutions and commitments of New Protection – that had been put in place by the agents of labour and the New (Social-) Liberalism in the early twentieth century? Effectively, is the long decade the return to the conditions of the 1880s or 1920s when markets ruled and working people had only the same liberal protections as their employers? In some ways the temporal logic of Pusey's, and even Beilharz's, argument is to answer yes to these questions: capitalism is the horizon of modern civilisation and it can always be relied on to be protean and destructive. In this view Labor's deregulation of financial and labor markets during the long decade pulled the state back and out of those areas that Labourism and Social-liberalism had for much of the twentieth century sought to govern and regulate. But to what extent is this ostensible deregulation actually another type of regulation? To what degree is capitalism less a protean, cyclic Gothic monster than something that emerges new from its periodic crises and emerges with new political cultures by its side?

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In a 1995 review of Beilharz's *Transforming Labor* Carol Johnson wonders "what use Beilharz might have made of more recent Foucauldian approaches to issues of political economy and governmentality" (102). In *Governing Change: from Keating to Howard* she sees the emergence of Australian Neoliberalism less in terms of an ideology which presents itself as the necessary withdrawal of the state through such practices as "privatisation, deregulation, free-markets and the increasing role of the private-sector" than through "other forms of state activity" including "shaping and influencing the behaviour of its citizens, encouraging new forms of self-managing and self-regulating behaviour by individuals and relying on the disciplinary power of the market to influence citizen behaviour" (2000: 100).

Johnson's understanding of Neoliberalism is a Foucauldian, rather than orthodox, one. In the orthodox view, which is represented by David Harvey and Pierre Bourdieu, for example, Neoliberalism is virtually synonymous with Pusey and Beilharz's characterisation of economic rationalism: a withdrawal of the state before the power of global financial capital (Harvey 2007: 35-9; Bourdieu 2007: par. 4). Linda Weiss has argued that rather than making states powerless those practices of Neoliberalism she is analysing under the rubric of Globalization have not removed but rather reconfigured the regulatory reach and force of states towards the demands of finance capital and transnational corporations (1998: 188-212). [28] For Weiss there is a danger in understanding Neoliberalism by confusing types of regulation with regulation as such:

> The problem with the 'powerless' argument is not that it is wrong about the new constraints on government capacity to make and implement policy. Rather, the problem is the tendency to see such constraints as absolute rather than relative, and as representing 'the end of state history' rather than an evolving history of state adaptation to both external and internal challenges. (189)

Foucault's conception of Neoliberalism comprises political rationalities and political techniques, rather than just an ideology about market freedom (2008: 215-38). For Foucault Neoliberalism is a form of governmentality that guides the

techniques by which states *and* individuals govern themselves and are governed (15-7; Dean, 1999: 55-8). The advantage of this approach is that it sets aside the claims of an ideological focus and critique in order to track the reasoning or rationality upon which government practices are based. Such an approach uncovers the view that

> contemporary forms of liberalism differ from earlier forms in that they do not see the market as already existing in some natural form but as something that government needs to actively construct through establishing particular political, legal and institutional conditions. The state is then faced with the additional dilemma of needing to encourage the development of the particular forms of 'autonomous' and 'free' individuals that neo-liberal styles of government depend upon, given that liberal sovereignty in general takes a less directly coercive form than more authoritarian forms of rule. (Johnson, 2000: 102)

This is an argument which seeks to explicate the 'Neo' in Neoliberalism. A complementary historical argument is that the target of Neoliberalism in many countries was the Social-liberal techniques that were instituted through Keynesian practices in the post-war period until the early 1970s. 'Neo' refers to the specific nature of this historically recent object of critique; a critique which projects itself along the well-worn liberal path of "governing too much" but which, because of its Keynesian and Social-liberal object, can be called New (Foucault, 2008: 319).

Johnson sees Neoliberal governmentalities operating during the long Labor decade in the project of identity construction and thereby behavioural 'encouragement': "[i]n the Keating [G]overnment's practice, governmentality took the form of attempting to construct a range of identities in ways that are compatible with Labor's conceptions of reconstructing the Australian economy" (2000: 104). Under Neoliberalism the citizen-subject generated, protected and sculpted by the Labourist-Social-liberal armature no longer works. A new range of citizen-subjects is required to survive in the new "field".

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With the collapse of the Bretton Woods Financial System in 1971 and the OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) oil Shocks of that period, a new global political economy based more around finance and credit emerged out of the long post-war economic boom (Harvey, 1990: 141-45). This new political economy no longer responded in predictable ways to the techniques of Keynesian fiscal macro-economic management, techniques which effectively begun to break down and were replaced by monetarism, the pressure to produce budget surplus, and a roll-back of welfare state measures (Capling 50-2). In Australia the Labourist-Social-liberal armature that had generated, protected and produced the core national character in the form of the industrial citizen-subject during the post-war period, was at the beginning of its end as the global and national economy became increasingly financialized (Bell 20-1, 31-9). There was, however, a belief that the Labourist industrial citizen could re-form, or even mature into the Neoliberal citizen. Indeed, as we will consider below, alongside this belief, was a textualisation of this reform and coming-of-age. Before we arrive at these narrativisations and textualisation of the long Labor decade, it is worth making this argument clear.

Beilharz argues that as the conditions of the global political economy began to shift profoundly it was Labor and Labourism that led the process of modernisation as a way of attempting to accommodate these changes. But rather than see this process as a substitution of Neoliberal for Labourist forms of government, or one of letting the market rip, analysis of the textuality of the long Labor decade reveals instead, that the disarticulation of Labourism from the Labourist-Social-liberal armature involved a narrativisation of the Labourist attributes of the national character. This narrativisation, while complex, was in some ways simply the emplotment of this Labourist national character into a coming-of-age structure. Analysis of what the characteristics of the adult formation were and how this formation was to be achieved reveals that how Neoliberalism happened in Australia was, in part, through the coming-of-age of the Labourist industrial citizen as the Neoliberal citizen. This textualisation of the long Labor decade, however, will be more properly the subject of the later parts of this chapter. It is to discussion and

consideration of the textualisation of the loss of Whitlam and Whitlamism that the thesis now turns.

2. Labor Tradition and the Ghosts of Whitlam

> There have long been bipartisan attempts to demolish Whitlamism. (Whitlam, 1992: 5)

> [T]he Dismissal was not just the end of a government that had dreams grander than "responsible economic management", it also marked the beginning of the end of the era of social democracy. The ghost of the Whitlam government has stalked the Labor party ever since [.] (Hamilton 7)[29]

> [T]he spectre of the Whitlam tragedy has cast a sallow haze over everything Hawke does. (Maddox, 1989: 66)

Leader of the Australian Labor party from 1966 until 1977, and prime minister from 1972 until November 1975, Edward Gough Whitlam and the project that his name came to embody, Whitlamism, haunted the long Labor decade. Whitlam and Whitlamism signified and inhabited Australian cultural and political life in multiple ways during this period and as Whitlam approaches his own century, the meanings and affects attached to him still carry a powerful charge for many on the Left ranging from anger to despondency.[30]

A sense of extraordinary loss

In seeking to understand the long Labor decade Beilharz argues that the Whitlam Government is "memory's frame" for measuring the extent of the Hawke-Keating Government's realisation of Labor tradition (1994: 81). Yet, Whitlam and Whitlamism are entwined in denial, hopes, melancholy and nostalgia that resound through the long decade making such memories cloudy. Beilharz seeks to work through the loss of these hopes, melancholy and nostalgia by arguing that Whitlam offered a limited opportunity for social democracy where the white, male, industrial citizenship of Labourism was being expanded into social, and

even cultural, citizenship: "industrial citizenship came to be substituted for social citizenship in Australia. The more open-ended social-liberal conception of citizenship reappeared momentarily under Whitlam, only to wither under Keating" (Beilharz, 1993a: 113). This limited yet lost opportunity was nevertheless a fundamental advance on the restricted economism of Labourism, albeit an advance tied into the property-based largesse that underscores the active citizenship of Social-liberalism. Whitlamism and Whitlam are objects for Beilharz's work of mourning which he works through by imagining the modicum of reform the Whitlam Government might have achieved and by arguing that it was harmed by being subjected to attacks from the radical left, who should have been working for the limited social democracy actually offered (1994: 84). For Beilharz this Whitlam era Left-outsider positioning was haunted by guilt after 1975: "[t]he failure of the Australian radicals to construct more positive political connections with the Australian Labor Party in retrospect represented and gave rise to a sense of extraordinary loss" which would be manifested in a mania for policy in the 1980s when a reversal to an insider-ness policed "the very idea of criticising 'our' government" (84).

The ghost of Whitlam for Graham Maddox, like Beilharz, is one of opportunities lost. The manner of Whitlam's dismissal has led to

> a party whose political world was torn apart in 1975 [. . .] The whole personality of the Labor Party has been so distorted and confused by a bewildering failure that the trauma colours and conditions all present activities. Where politics was once a matter of practical dreams and reforming visions, 'wiser' council now teaches that politics is 'the art of the possible'. The trouble is that the Whitlam era seems to have taught that most things are impossible, and 'the possible' is a stunted and desiccated art form. (1989: 4)

Maddox angrily writes: "[t]he reforming zeal of the Whitlam government clearly presents a sharp contrast to the meticulous caution, if not outright conservatism, of the Hawke ministry" (151). His main argument is that the Hawke-Keating government were scared (and scarred) by the 1975 trauma from honouring the Labor tradition of social reform: "Whitlam's activity was not fully 'socialist' in its outcome, but his career was an attempt to restore the legitimacy of socialism as a

genuine alternative in the political debate" (160). Whitlam's ghost is here a socialism-to-come: a hope for an alternative to capitalism. [31]

For many on the Australian Left it is the memory of and hope for a Whitlam-led Labourism expanded toward a cosmopolitan and internationalist social-democracy that the long Labor decade was measured against. Paul Kelly observes that the 1972 election of the Whitlam government "[w]as hailed as a watershed at the time [and it] generated powerful emotions within both the professional political corps and the wider community" (1995: 2).

The hopes invested in Whitlam, however, were also entangled in the rise of the social movements, the new cultural nationalism, the anti-authoritarianism and protests against the Vietnam War and the generally buoyant mood provided by the long post-war consumer-based boom (Brett, 2003: 132-47). For Donald Horne "if he had become prime minister in 1969 there would not have been associated with him that aura of aspiration which had developed around him by 1972, and still glows, so that he seems to shine as a monument to the hopes of the late sixties and early seventies" (1987: 11).

The nature of Whitlam's dismissal also adds to the difficulty of disentangling Whitlam and Whitlamism from the practices through which he governed (McMullin 374). Thus Beilharz oscillates in his judgements of Whitlam. On the one hand Whitlam "was always a meritocrat, a social liberal [whose] regime was [. . .] a brief breakout into social democracy [and] who could be described as a cultural moderniser. His mission was that of social reform: in the arts as in social science" (1994: 93). On the other hand: "[p]lainly Whitlam's working model of the household is still that of the Keynesian, full-employment, male-headed family" and his "particular contribution was to modernise neither the economy nor industrial labour but the Australian Labor Party itself, which then made possible the opening process which involved further modernising polity and economy" (95, 91).

In the political biographical writing of the long Labor decade Whitlam appears also as an ambivalent figure for Keating.[32] As a formative presence in Keating's early experience of federal parliament, Whitlam was on the one hand "the fellow who gave us hope for the future [. . .] the one who could get the themes pulled together and advance them, advance us all. He was a social democrat and we, as young people in the party, were terribly committed to him" yet he also "had little respect for Whitlam's political judgement or grasp of economic policy and had no hesitation in dissenting" (Keating cited in Gordon, 1993: 46-7; Edwards, 1996: 121).

Indeed, in two vituperative speeches Keating gave in the late 1980s, he sought to slay the socialist ghosts of Whitlam, which he saw as being summoned into the world of the living by "the romantics who choose to regard the 1972 Whitlam program as a purist application of high-minded Labor principle [but who] have a highly selective view of historical facts. The truth is the program was essentially about winning votes" (Keating, 1998: 45). Keating casts Whitlam's project in terms of a pragmatic drive to power, rather than a classically Roman Republican civic programme (46; Beilharz, 1994: 94). His project was one of policy failure in the fundamentally important area of economic government:

> The Party, at last hungry for government had failed to mature as a government. The ideals and objectives were constant but the economic growth upon which the 'programme' was based, was disappearing. The task became, not the distribution of wealth but its creation, but neither Whitlam nor his successor as prime minister seemed to recognise it. (Keating, 1998: 46-7)

While conceding that Whitlam's 'policy failure' was less a failure in principles than one of adjusting to the profound shifts in the international economy, Keating figures Whitlam as an immature leader: an idealist who, while pragmatic enough to take power, lacked the maturity to accommodate the new forces that required a re-calibration of the Keynesian economic instruments which no longer worked: it "was unmoved by the collapse of the Bretton Woods world monetary system, the October 1973 oil price shock and the attendant rise in world inflation. [. . .] The

problem of the Whitlam Government was that the gap between ideals and outcomes grew to a chasm over that three-year period" (46).

Whitlam returns, for Keating here, in three ways. Firstly, the return of Whitlam is as a spectre of accusation or betrayal over having abandoned those Labor traditions which Whitlam was felt to have embodied: hope, principle, social democracy, egalitarianism, Keynesian Social-liberalism (Kelly, 1994: 2, 661). To use Freudian terms Keating does not mourn this lost object, but attempts to describe it in the 'ego' of the ALP as a lack of flexibility in the Whitlam Government which was unable to respond to global economic shifts. [33]

Whitlam's second lesson for Keating and the Government in which he was economic leader was to adapt and be flexible in economic policy with one eye on the working lives of ordinary people, to keep the economy growing so as to create wealth. Labourist principle here is not so much maintained through political failure with the reward of a sentimental honour in integrity, but rather reduced to economic management in the putative interest of workers: "mature people in the labour movement [. . .] have concluded that fixing the economic fundamentals is the reform which underpins all others" (50).

The third ghost of Whitlam, is that of social democracy: the opening or ambit that Whitlamism promised in the form of the state enabling a wider, expanding citizenship through the application of Social-liberal universal welfare state measures, like public health insurance and free university education (Bolton: 220-22). This ghost presented a stronger challenge to Keating who, in order to remain Labourist, invoked his own promise that the uplift into domains of social citizenship for working Australians was expanding and accelerating:

> [t]here can be no question that the dominant items on the national agenda in 1983 were economic. Thus it was essential that the items on Labor's agenda also be economic. This is not a matter of compromise – it is a matter of profound and central importance to the way of life and well-being of the working people of Australia. It is at the centre of Labor's own concerns and the whole basis for the historical role of the Australian Labor Party. Most importantly, it is not a focus to be set aside at any stage, no matter how propitious, in favour of the pursuit of some radical alternative aspiration for

society. The dignity and self-respect of Australian individuals and families depends on prolonged economic growth and development. (1987: 180-81).

Keating effectively falls back on the basis of Labourism as industrial citizenship; as *the* fundamental citizenship right: "[a]fter all, there is little more basic than the right to work" (1998: 48). How this basic right becomes figured into economic rationalism's growth paradigm, and into Neoliberal rationalities, is also the story of how the private economy, the social, cultural and political spheres, and practices of the self become regulated in the interests of global financial capital through the long Labor decade.

A figure of hope

There is one more ghost of Whitlam which is textually disembodied in the writing of the long Labor decade into cultural, social, political and economic forces and phenomena. For Horne Whitlam's ascendance emerged alongside the coming-of-age of Australian intellectual and artistic life in the 1960s, which also

> co-incided with the 'social movements' that spread throughout the prosperous liberal-democratic societies in the late 1960s and early 1970s – environmentalism, permissiveness, feminism, multiculturalism and others. Both sets of aspirations to change – those that generated in Australia itself and those that came from 'Overseas' – were later to attach themselves to Gough Whitlam as a figure of hope. (1987: 11)

Indeed, as Horne argues "it was not Whitlam or 'Whitlamism' that created these effects. In a sense, these effects created 'Whitlamism'" (11).

Although written outside the long Labor decade Lindsay Barrett's study *The Prime Minister's Christmas Card* seeks to embody the spectral presence of Whitlam and Whitlamism, arguing he "was a *political* modernist [who] spoke the social language of modernity, the discourses of social progress, cohesion and unity, which for him were far more than rhetoric," and who was thereby not so much spoken by these discourses as practising techniques in the arts of self and state government (10). These techniques of government are for Barrett modernist and social-democratic, giving a social bloc a figure to identify with and arts of government that at least appeared to complement their own: "Whitlamism will

always be reducible in one way or another to the actual figure of Whitlam himself, the statesman who was for Australia the archetype of the postwar social democrat. With Whitlam the public political figure, modernist political and aesthetic discourses came *together*, each informing the other" (2001: 11).

Barrett's is a Foucauldian reading of Whitlamism which he sees as a "practice of, government" that was "modernist [because of] its stress and reliance on two givens, the twin concepts of expansive, pervasive social management at the hands of a benevolent bureaucracy, and faith in the eurocentric ideal of continuous social and technological progress" (10). Whitlamism's governmentality became residual by the time of the long Labor decade when "[t]he Whitlamist ideal of creating an environment in which everyone had a right to [. . .] develop to their full potential, was gradually replaced over the next twenty years by a faith [. . .] underpinned by a fanatical embrace of the more extreme aspects of free market economics" (237).

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Keating was, for Beilharz, one of the prime slayers of that accusatory ghost of Whitlam who spoke through the long Labor decade in the name of the hopes generated by the Labourist-Social-liberal armature. Beilharz's Keating sought to put to rest the "Whitlam nostalgia [that] enabled the construction of the Hawke cabinet as 'Labor fakers' who lacked any substantial entitlement to the tradition of the light on the hill" (1994: 90). Keating's efforts were in the cause of modernisation: modernising the ALP, the labour movement and the national economy (91-2). He presented this project of modernisation in a figuratively rich and narratively seductive rhetoric that ranged from highly evocative tropes to epic narratives telling Australia's story, essentially, as the modernisation of the Australian economy. His own life-story was told in a number of biographies and memoirs that fused his maturation and development with that of the national economy, while as treasurer and prime minister he told the national-economic story through figures of youth, illness and mobility. By turning next to interpreting and analysing the textuality of Keating we can understand some of the central

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means by which Neoliberalism became embedded in Australian political culture as narrative and tropes.

3. Stories of Paul Keating

> As far as I'm concerned, politics has always been an ideas market. When you run the ideas, you run the market. (Keating, 1995: 7-8)

> By 1983 the Australian economy had been sick for a decade. (Keating, 1987: 181)

Paul Keating excited a mixture of fascination and revulsion. Meaghan Morris's 'ecstatic' response to Keating's television appearances – when hearing his voice she would "run and fling myself down in front of the television calling out ecstatically 'It's him! It's him!'" –was counterbalanced by reactions to what were seen as his smug arrogance (Morris, 1998: 161; Williams, 1997: 96). As treasurer he asserted his claim to have authored, operated, conducted and engineered a number of fundamental economic reforms including the float of the exchange rate, the relaxation of regulations permitting the entry of foreign banks into the Australian finance market, the lowering of tariffs, and the introduction of new markets in aviation and communications (Keating, 1999; Brennan and Pincus, 2002: 68-78). These reforms were enacted against the backdrop of a series of eight semi-corporatist incomes and prices compacts, the Accords, which were agreements, designed to trade wage claim restraint for low inflation and an increased social wage including the universal health insurance scheme known as Medicare, between the ALP as Government and the ACTU as the peak trade union body (Beilharz, 1994: 116-74).

While the Accords were Labourist compacts, the Neoliberal reforms of the period were argued for, explained and narrated by Keating in language rich in metaphor and analogies. The central object of Keating's rhetoric was the economy, which he represented in two main ways: as a human body, and as a machine or engine. In using such modes of figurative language Keating was drawing on traditions of the

metaphor of the 'body politic' that have long been part of the language of western statecraft (Rasmussen and Brown, 2005: 469). The economy was not only the object of his governing and narratives, but also that which emerges and changes along with his ascension toward the position of Australian prime minster. So, before analysing Keating's rhetoric, the narrativisation of his life will be discussed as this is an aspect of the textuality of the long Labor decade that reveals another means by which Neoliberalism became embedded in Australian political culture.[34]

Econographies of Keating

Early in his 1996 biography *Keating: the Inside Story*, John Edwards ties Keating's story to the story of Australia that Edwards will tell through and as his subject:

> A career so long and including so many of the key episodes of Australia's recent political history that his story was not only part of his own generation, the generation born in the last years of World War II, but also part of Australia's story, of a country's [rapid and far-reaching transformation]. [. . .] Keating had been formed by this change [. . .] as a child and a young man, and then he himself had influenced it with the float of the dollar, the deregulation of Australian finance, the substantial end of tariff protection and the tilt to Asia, so that now in his fiftieth year he embodied a good bit of the country's history. (Edwards, 1996: 7-8)

The linking and even fusing of a national narrative to a biographical one is a common element in two other Keating biographies of the long Labor decade: Edna Carew's *Paul Keating: Prime Minister* (1992) and Michael Gordon's *Paul Keating: a Question of Leadership* (1993). In all three biographies the figure of Keating is portrayed as emerging from and being formed through a series of social and political institutions. From his family he is oriented toward Catholic-Labor and toward valuing small-business enterprise; from the Labor Youth Council he learns about local-branch politics; and from Labor maverick Jack Lang he learns about Labor history and the visceral power of political language (Carew 5-12; Gordon 38-44; Edwards: 58-63). As Keating moves into federal parliament and works his way into a ministerial position in the dying days of the Whitlam Government the lessons he learns multiply (Carew 35-44).

What all three Keating biographies have in common is the explicit representation of how as treasurer he is fundamentally formed by his encounter with the national economy and how the new economy is in turn formed by him. This narrative structure is common to the *Bildungsroman* literary genre, where, as Mikhail Bakhtin argues,

> human emergence [. . .] is no longer man's own private affair. He emerges along with the world and he reflects the historical emergence of the world itself. He is no longer within an epoch, but on the border between two epochs, at the transition point from one to the other. This transition is accomplished in him and through him. (1986: 23-4)

While Gillian Whitlock has observed that Australian biographies are often sociographic: "complex patternings, intersections and designs emerge [and] work their way through individual lives but are characteristic of wide social, cultural and historical patterns" what is noticeable about these biographies is that they are more econographic: the formation of Keating as treasurer coincides with the emergence of the re-formed Australian economy and with the economy itself (236). Thus the importance of Keating's claims to the prime ministership in the Gordon and Carew biographies being founded on his, and not Hawke's, leadership of Australia through economic leadership. Understood through Bakhtin's theory of the *Bildungsroman*, these narrativisations of Keating's life function by fusing his emergence to an interregnum which, for all its uncertainty, is presented as organized by the force of the historical future: an historical future in which the Australian economy has become more competitive, more open, growing (Bakhtin, 1986: 24).

In these econographies politics is presented as a matter of economics. The fact that Carew and Gordon's Keating biographies were originally written and first published as campaign biographies goes some way toward explaining why Keating's claims to leadership would so firmly rest on tying political hegemony to the economic hegemony he asserted as treasurer. The effect of fusing the historical and biographical dimensions through an economic story, however, was to reduce the Hawke-Keating struggle to a dramatic battle of egos rather than to any conflict of political positions that exceeded the economic orthodoxy Keating represented.

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One effect of the narrativisation of Keating's political life was to embed in Australian political culture a story of economic modernisation as a powerfully characterised and dramatic tale of politics. This mode of narrating the nation, albeit without the shape of personal biography, is evident also in Paul Kelly's *The End of Certainty*, as will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

Don Watson's 2002 memoir, *Recollections of a Bleeding Heart: a Portrait of Paul Keating PM*, has a melancholic tone which places it closer to Beilharz's *Transforming Labor* than to the three biographies discussed above. Watson's work of mourning is an extended counter-dialogue to Edwards' econography. Both are insider accounts, as Edwards was in the Prime Minister's Office alongside Watson for a time. Watson's sobriquet – 'bleeding heart' – connotes a Social-liberal and Keynesian position on government policy, in contrast to the economically rational 'pointy heads', led by Chief of Staff Don Russell and John Edwards (Watson 38-41). So, where Edwards' biography is econographic Watson's is sociographic, ruminative and keenly concerned to place the importance of public language as a fundamental means of democratic politics above the language of economic rationalism. Writing back to the econographies of Keating, Watson's counter-narrative tells the stories behind the polished sheen of delivered speeches, which are roughed up as the arguments staged during their collective composition are recounted. In the telling of these recollections the opportunities for more Social-liberal modes of government that were lost, live on in the lifeblood of Australian textuality.

Emerging from a tight cocoon

> It was our view that finance is the lifeblood of the economy and that this country's financial arteries were clogged by redundant and outdated regulation and the lack of effective competition. In a sluggish economy that needs investment and dynamic entrepreneurship it is essential that the financial system encourage and sponsor the initiative rather than stifle it. (Keating, 1987: 184)

The events on which Keating staked his claim as leadership aspirant occurred early in the long Labor decade with the decision to float the currency, to permit the entry of foreign banks into the domestic financial markets, and the relaxation of regulations restricting the types of financial businesses that could operate in Australia (Edwards, 1996: 263). How this process was textualised offers insights into the relationship between language and economic government during the period.

This deregulation of finance is presented by Keating as energising the economy, which is portrayed here as the body through which "lifeblood" is flowing. "Regulation" reduces the flow or the mobility of this lifeblood, an image that Keating suggests in the phrase "sclerotic financial market" (2003: par.18). Also, "regulation" slows down the speed of financial flow because it is "old," implying that new, or even a lack of, regulation will accelerate such flows, which are affirmed as more valuable than slower flows which are cast as "sluggish". The purpose of this faster flowing lifeblood in the economic body is to more quickly match initiative and dynamic entrepreneurship with investment. The key concepts and values here are speed, flow, enterprise and innovation. By invoking the body politic tradition in order to narrate and explain the political rationalities of financial government, Keating effectively presents the economy as a self-regulating, natural and organic body that while ill is able to be made healthy: made young and vital.

The youth of the financially deregulated Australian economy is one on the cusp of an independent adulthood: "[t]he float is the decision where Australia truly made its debut into the world – said 'OK, we're now an international citizen'" (Keating cited in Carew, 1992: 114). It is of interest to specify the nature of this coming-of-age for the Australian economy, as how Keating presents the Neoliberalised economy points also to how Neoliberal governmentalities are exerting pressure as practices of self-formation. In Keating's words below the debutante Australian economy, freshly internationalised, is given guidance towards what qualities are expected for its maturation into national adulthood: "the great task of the eighties

was to make Australia an international player in its own right – to make it competitive, outward looking, phobia free [. . .] The pace of change quickened in the eighties. It is moving even faster now. But we can keep up. A decade ago we couldn't" (1995: 33). Here, the development of the national economic body is toward becoming a more nimble, competitive international player who is fearless and extroverted. These qualities are ones suitable for international trade where opportunities are waiting to be negotiated into wealth. A healthy, youthful mobility appears to be called forth in these figures of speech:

> we have rejuvenated our approach to the private sector itself. The simplistic attitude of the past has perceived the private sector as having a boundless spirit, needing tight reins and controls to service social needs. Unfortunately the Australian private economy has not evolved with those characteristics. Rather it evolved in such a tight cocoon that it is a little lost in the harsh world of international competition and much of it is even unfamiliar with strong doses of local competition. (1987: 183)

In this explanation again we find the economy given embodiment. The narrative here is one which begins with the private economy as chrysalis: caught on the cusp of becoming adult. These images of the vulnerable emergence of the private economy are juxtaposed against the Labourist-Social-liberal expectation that Government must intercede to civilise a thriving, careless capitalist machine. Keating's analogy reverses this expectation: through his imagery it is the private economy that must be protected and nurtured as it makes its first flights into the world. This is a perfect image of Neoliberal rationalities in that the natural development of the National private economy is presented emerging into adulthood for the first time and also as precarious, fitting the ambivalence of Neoliberalism that "depicts free markets, free trade, and entrepreneurial rationalism as *achieved and normative*, as promulgated through law and through social and economic policy – not simply as occurring by dint of nature" (Brown, 2006: 694).

The economy was also presented by Keating as a machine or engine: "[we'll] get the economy ticking over like it should with the new motor Labor had given it, get the republic, get reconciliation, get everything wrapped up into a really nice little society to go with the economic motor" (cited in Watson: 333-34). In the post-recession statement *One Nation* Keating wrote "[t]he engine which drives efficiency is free and open competition" and the initiatives contained in the White Paper on Employment *Working Nation*, were "Measures big enough to kick-start the economy and get things going" (Keating, 1992a: 11; Keating, 1995: 109). The engine metaphor connotes mobility, energy and entrepreneurial force. That the motor in the first quote is a new replacement one implies, again, that economies are conceived of as artificial and in need of re-engineering and indeed sometimes replacement. The juxtaposition of the "nice" and "little" society that "wraps" the economic motor, positions society as a decorative afterthought to the real business of Government, which is to redesign the economy. This asymmetry between the social and machinic can also be seen in the following where Keating tells the story of the long Labor decade:

> it was an unprecedented period of deliberate and often brave reform in which the government and the people strived to make Australia a first rate country – a place with a powerful economic engine and a soul to match. Sprawling and strange to outside eyes – but savvy and subtle and worldly. Sometimes you could feel the charge of energy that came from this sense of common purpose. It was palpable. That was when, I have to say, I loved politics and knew the meaning of it with rare intensity. (1999: par. 3)

On one reading the "soul" that matches the "powerful economic engine" would be a "powerful economic" soul. That there is considerable 'play' and ambiguity surrounding how these two nouns – "engine" and "soul" – are matched, points to a tension in Keating's language over the rationalities of the social and those of Neoliberalism. This tension is marked after the recession of 1990-91 when he becomes prime minister and faces a revitalised Liberal-National party coalition led by economist John Hewson and his Neoliberal blueprint *Fightback!* (Beilharz, 1994: 209).

In a number of post-recession speeches Keating articulated the language of social to that of the economic. This was, however, usually ordered by positioning economic growth, efficiency and productivity as the precondition for any subsequent social practices. Thus: "economic growth, while crucial to solving the unemployment problem, is not by itself enough. When market economies are left alone in a recession, the economy's influenza becomes pneumonia for a proportion of the unemployed. And for some of these there is no quick cure when the winter is over for the rest of us" (1995: 259). Here we have the return of the social body as one capable of experiencing illness. While the influenza begins in the economic body it intensifies in the social one; that illness strikes the social body is noteworthy. It is also worth being attentive to the precise nature of the illnesses depicted here. On one level pneumonia is an intensification of influenza, where a virus or bacteria infects the lungs. The question arises: if Keating is so precise in his uses of metaphor and analogy, as we saw with the arteries and lifeblood figures of speech, then what is the virus that infects the lungs a metaphor of? In Keating's post-recession attempts to marry "equity and efficiency," to seam social democratic rationalities to the economic rational, what aspects of his metaphorics remain opaque, and difficult to decipher, and what can be interpreted and perhaps explained? (Keating, 1995: 257; Keating cited in Watson 309).

The White paper on Employment, *Working Nation*, was for Keating a means through which his speech might fuse these rationalities together: the Neoliberal language of productive, entrepreneurial, accelerating, youthful and healthy techniques of government, and the protective, civilising, egalitarian, and meliorist rationalities and techniques that were given fullest force in the Whitlam Government, and were part of the Labourist-Social-liberal armature. In an address after the White Paper was presented, Keating asserted that "I will never accept for Australia the notion of a competitive economy being a synonym for social regression" (1995: 131). The manner by which the unemployed were to be governed, however, intensified the embedding of Neoliberal techniques in

Australian political culture (Dean, 1995). While the language of case management was pastoral, its techniques were also saturated with Neoliberal rationalities, where

> for the first time, case management has been opened up to competition. Individuals will have a choice between the Commonwealth Employment Service and other groups [. . .] Improved effectiveness, more choice, higher levels of service and better outcomes for clients – the familiar phrases of micro-economic reform, the rhetoric of hard heads. And all this in the context of a job guarantee for the most disadvantaged in the labour force. We are challenging the divide: equity in an age of efficiency. (Keating, 1995: 259)

These techniques for governing the unemployed, Mitchell Dean argues are both practices of governmental self-formation and practices of ethical self-formation:

> governmental self-formation concerns the ways in which various authorities and agencies seek to shape the conduct, aspirations, needs, desires and capacities of specified political and social categories, to enlist them in particular strategies and to seek definite goals; ethical self-formation concerns, practices, techniques and rationalities concerning the regulation of the self by the self, and by means of which individuals seek to question, form, know, decipher and act on themselves. (Dean, 1995: 563)

So, rather than interpret Keating's difficulties in attempting to re-join Neoliberal metaphors and analogies to those from the Labourist-Social-liberal era as a problem of balancing priorities, we can see in the example of how the Keating Government responds to the challenge of managing rising unemployment that even a social problem, such as finding work and support for the unemployed, is rationalised through contractual, competitive and entrepreneurial forms of conduct that seek to govern the unemployed subject through "practices [. . .] concerned to remake the individual as an active entrepreneur of his or her own self" (Dean, 1995: 576).

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This is perhaps too much of a pessimistic view of the legacies of Keating. My own work of mourning for a political figure who still excites and fascinates me is more ambivalently worked than to make any final judgements on his legacies. Watson asks

how could you have social democracy if in the higher reaches of politics and the public service people had lost the capacity to talk to each other and the public in a language capable of understanding? Apart from the exhausted sense of triumph, this is the lingering memory of Working Nation – the effort required to extract the meaning. It felt as if, hard up against its most basic ambition, the government *lost the power of coherent speech.* (491-92 emphasis added)

Focusing more on the earlier period of Keating's political life, Morris presents this incoherence as fundamental to understanding the attraction of Keating for some on the Left:

Any treasurer can promise the *economic* discourse has a magic power of "closing the gap that separates language from the experience it encodes", in order to satisfy longing; such closure is the aim of policy. However, the gap between Keating's hypercoded Labor vocality and his managerial language paradoxically also promised that *his* discourse could narrow the gulf between the social values (egalitarian, solidary, compassionate) mythically upheld as national ideals in white working class popular memory, and the *realpolitik* of economic rationalism – elitist, divisive, competitive. (1998: 54)

Morris's analysis of Keating is of a mediatized figure whose rhetorical and narrative practices promised to join Neoliberalized techniques to those embodied in the Labourist-Social-liberal era. Yet at that point in 1990-91 when the national economic body was at its least efficient and productive, ill, slowing and closing in on itself the extent to which Neoliberal rationalities were embedded in Australian political culture was apparent in the failure of those older figures of government to cohere with the newer ones.

If there was a story of the long Labor decade that Keating could tell which acknowledged this aporia, tear or gap, it is to his former speechwriter that we should turn:

Keating said the previous ten years was a story of bravery [. . .] and collective goodwill that had saved Australia [the other story, to be told after the election win, was] the 'inclusive' story, the big picture with people in it [. . .] the emerging story of an Australian Republic in the Asia-Pacific. [. . .] He said the two stories were really one. They joined somewhere in the middle with the recession, but the recession was not so much a chapter as a diversion, a lengthy footnote or appendix. (Watson: 285-86).

This lengthy footnote is packed with all the disease, anger, violence, and incoherence that can't be spoken in the Neoliberal story of the long Labor decade.

This thesis argues that the diseased appendix of the long Labor decade is Grunge fiction. A symptomatic reading of this track of the long Labor decade will be presented in chapter three. Before jumping from the political to the literary track an analysis of the hegemonic story of the long Labor decade, Paul Kelly's *The End of Certainty*, will be given next. Kelly's story has assumed the status of *the* history of the long Labor decade. It is also, like the stories of Keating, a narrativisation of Neoliberal rationalities.

4. *The End(s) of Certainty*: Australian un-Settlement and Neoliberal Globalization

> [T]his introspective, defensive, dependent framework is a crumbling legacy. The major battleground of ideas in Australian politics has become one between what he calls the internationalists – between those who know that the Australian Settlement is unsustainable and those who fight to retain it. I am inclined to almost entirely agree with Kelly. (Keating, 1996: 3)

When Beilharz wonders whether the long Labor decade was "the terminal moment of Labor's century" questions of Australian modernity and 'post'-modernity arise (1994: 13). Understood through the rubric of modernity, the decade is, for Beilharz, when the modernizers like Keating speak the language of making new and refashion the institutional arrangements between labour, Labor and the state (48). In so doing they both reform the Australian political economy and empty Labor tradition (48). Question of modernity arouse other questions concerning the politics of time's "temporalization" and the cultural forms through which time and history are textualised and made available and graspable during the long Labor decade.[35] These questions become central issues requiring interpretation, analysis and some explanation. While Beilharz's *Transforming Labor* is one text that attempts this work through hermeneutic methods and an historical sociology of modernity, Labourism and capitalism in the Australian context, Paul Kelly's *The End of Certainty: Power, Politics and Business in Australia* also presents an

historical sociology of Australian modernity. Unlike Beilharz's essayistic and analytic work of mourning, Kelly's is journalistic, and driven by its narrativity. Stretching back to the Federation period – the 1890s to 1910 – *The End of Certainty* takes a similar temporal framework to Beilharz's, but Kelly instead builds his narrative of the long Labor decade as the necessary and inevitable end to what he calls the Australian Settlement (1994: 1). Central to this narrative of nation is Kelly's story of the inevitable collapse of key aspects of the Labourist-Social-liberal armature under the twin pressures of the changed post-1973 global economy and an endogenous national drive to cultural, social and political maturity.

My central argument below is that Kelly's political history of the long Labor decade achieves its substantial explanatory power through a *Bildungsroman* of nation. This narrative technique, at the same time, gives a persuasive and normalising narrative form to those rationalities of Neoliberalism we saw were being embedded into Australian political culture by Keating. Kelly's *Bildungsroman* of nation plots the long Labor decade as the moment in which Australia's Federation-era Settlement is dismantled and Australia comes-of-age. The narrative techniques that Kelly employs to tell this story – the richly detailed journalistic history of the political dramas of national party politics, Government, and business that fill its 758 pages – have made his tome highly influential: it is one of the most widely read and referred to sources on the long Labor decade, and is still to be found on the reading lists of Australian university subjects in political science and government. [36] It is also subject to a number of sustained and accumulating critiques. This final section of chapter one seeks to add to these critiques through a consideration of the narrative strategies it employs and the ends to which these are put.

Introspective, defensive, dependent

> Two trends coalesced during the 1980s – the internationalisation of the
> world economy in which success became the survival of the fittest; and
> the gradual but inexorable weakening of Australia's 'imperial' links with
> its two patrons, Britain and America. The message was manifest –
> Australia must stand on its own ability. Australians, in fact, had waited

longer than most nations to address the true definitions of nationhood –
the acceptance of responsibility for their own fate. (Kelly, 1994: 13)

In Kelly's *The End of Certainty* the Australian nation is personified and emplotted

through the narrative model, and using the narrative techniques of, the classical

Bildungsroman. In this narrative of nation, a youthful Australian economic self is

presented as being pulled into an uncertain future by irresistible, modernising

global forces. The combination of the twin forces of economic globalisation and

post-colonial de-coupling from Great Britain and America present Australian

political culture with an opportunity to come-of-age: to be independent. For Kelly

this opportunity for independence is to be understood by acknowledging why the

long Labor decade had been such a period of transformation, and indeed loss. The

long Labor decade needed to be understood as the exhaustion of what he calls the

ninety-year-old Australian Settlement:

> The story of the 1980s is the attempt to remake the Australian political
> tradition. This decade saw the collapse of the ideas which Australia had
> embraced nearly a century before and which had shaped the condition of its
> people. The 1980s was a time of both exhilaration and pessimism, but the
> central message shining through its convulsions was the obsolescence of the
> old order and the promotion of new political ideas as the basis for a new
> Australia.
> The generation after Federation in 1901 turned an emerging national
> consensus into new laws and institutions. This was the Australian Settlement.
> (1)

Kelly's Australian Settlement comprises five pillars, or five institutional

commitments, which gained consent from a dominant bloc in the political class in

the immediate post-Federation period, and which he groups "under five headings

– White Australia, Industry Protection, Wage Arbitration, State Paternalism, and

Imperial Benevolence" (1-2). More specifically Kelly characterises these

foundations of modern Australia as:

> faith in government authority; belief in egalitarianism; a method of judicial
> determination in centralised wage fixation; protection of its industry and its
> jobs; dependence upon a great power (first Britain, then America) for its
> security and its finance; and, above all, hostility to its geographical location,
> exhibited in fear of external domination and internal contamination from the
> peoples of the Asia/ Pacific. Its bedrock ideology was protection; its solution,
> a Fortress Australia, guaranteed as part of an impregnable Empire spanning

the globe. This framework – introspective, defensive, dependent – is undergoing an irresistible demolition. (2)

Kelly's essential argument here is that Australian political culture is both reacting to exogenous economic and post-imperial shocks and to an endogenous institutional and cultural agreement that is exhausted. For Kelly

> the 1980s saw the Labor-Liberal paradigm being eroded as the major battleground of ideas [as t]he real division is between the internationalist rationalists and the sentimental traditionalists; it is between those who know the Australian Settlement is unsustainable and those who fight to retain it. (2)

Thus Australian political culture in the long Labor decade is to be understood as being remade in the face of new realities. Kelly's story of the decade is one that uses this heuristic of the ninety-year-old Australian Settlement in order to bring a specific representation of what Tim Rowse calls a "characterology" into this narration of nation (1978: 94). In a close-reading of Keith Hancock's influential "enquiry [into] the status of Australian nationhood or civilisation," *Australia* (1930), Rowse detects a particular logic at work in Hancock's text; a

> generous use of characterological explanations for the flawed policies he is criticizing. Not a particular class or interest (such as a working class defending itself through reforming ideologies), but the idealism of a 'people', the optimistic, generous, reckless instincts of every Australian were evident in its ill-conceived economic and political arrangements. Hancock moves effortlessly from personality to national policy. I shall call the logic of this kind of argument the immanence of subjectivity: the national or social level is reducible to the personal. In *Australia* this logic is exploited enthusiastically. Hancock lifts characterology from the subordinate marginal place it occupies in previous sociological descriptions of Australia, and places it at the centre of his nationhood argument. The dilemmas of an ethical, interventionist [social] liberalism, its aspirations and pitfalls, are evoked as the engaging but innocent quality of the emergent Australian personality. The metaphors of youth, age and maturation which run through the book have a logical as well as a literary felicity. (79, 93-4)

We have seen the logic of this "immanence of subjectivity" where the national or social level is reduced to the personal at work in the language of Keating. For Rowse, Hancock's master-work presents an Australian character through which he makes his arguments about the direction that Australian political culture should proceed by casting Social-liberal ideals as the adolescent stage on the path toward

a "cultural maturity" which was defined by "its defence of British interests in particular and of Australian capitalist interests in general" (79, 81).

Kelly too deploys a characterology, an immanence of subjectivity, which shifts from the qualities he characterises as embedded in the Australian Settlement to those needed and to be affirmed in the time of the post-Settlement. Thus in the following section we can see how Kelly "moves effortlessly from personality to national policy" when he writes:

> The obsolescence of the old order is documented. Since Federation Australia has failed to sustain its high standard of living compared with other nations. Australia's economic problems are not new; they are certainly not the result of the 1980s, the 1970s, or the 1960s. The malaise stretches back much further to the post-Federation Settlement. Australia's economic problem is a ninety-year-old problem. The legacy of the Settlement has been relative economic decline throughout the century. Australia is a paradox – a young nation with geriatric arteries. (13)

Kelly's characterology has similarities with Keating's statement that "It was our view that finance is the lifeblood of the economy and that this country's financial arteries were clogged by redundant and outdated regulation and the lack of effective competition" (Keating, 1987: 184). The similarities between Kelly's and Keating's body metaphors turn on the figure of financial arteries which suggests that the paradox Kelly is referring to is that of a young political culture which has not been mature enough to embrace, by encouraging to make flow, the vital lifeblood of international finance and which has been locked into the debilitating stasis of the Australian Settlement's "introspective, defensive, dependent [. . .] Fortress" (2). The paradox is thus a political culture which has stuck to an immature Settlement and has thereby restricted the economy with "protectionist shackles which stifled its first century" (6). By casting the destruction of the Australian Settlement as inevitable and those who resist its demise as "sentimental traditionalists" Kelly presents a modernisation thesis which gains in power by the immanent subjectivities ascribed to both the old and new Australia; here represented as those in the Fortress and the masculine builders, respectively:

> [t]he [long Labor] decade saw the collapse of the Australian Settlement, the old protected Fortress Australia. In the 1960s it was shaken; in the 1970s its

edifice was falling; in the 1980s the builders were on site fighting about the framework for the new Australia. (13)

Near the end of the long Labor decade, in Kelly's estimation, Australia was building a new, modern home. Coming-of-age.

The times demanded more

There have been a number of critiques of Kelly's text and its key heuristic, the Australian Settlement.[37] These go some way toward unsettling the inevitability that his claims generate. It is my contention, though, that the characterology, in both its crucial introductory pages and throughout Kelly's history, where he narrates and explains his Australian Settlement thesis, rests on a set of *Bildungsroman* conventions. Primarily Kelly is characterising Australian political culture as being forced to face a realistic vision of its prospects and in having its former Fortress both dismantled and torn down, opens itself to and integrates with the world. In arguing that the inevitable collapse of the pillars of the Australian Settlement produced such new foundations as a "deeper sense of national self-reliance, [. . .] an emphasis on individual responsibility [where] Australia's economic orientation was more outward-looking and its aspiration was to become an efficient and confident nation" Kelly is presenting a *Bildungsroman* of nation: one through which key rationalities of Neoliberalism are embedded into Australian political culture (150). This form enables a narrativising of Neoliberal rationalities through the narrative technique of generating a forceful historical future. As Bakhtin argues, in the *Bildungsroman* the hero "is forced to become a new, unprecedented type of human being. What is happening here is precisely the emergence of a new man. The organizing force held by the future is therefore extremely great here – and this is not, of course, the private biographical future, but the historical future" (1986: 23-4). Thus the twinned emergence of the hero and history, which is in a transitional or interregnum period, generates a powerful forward momentum which when tied to the organic development of the hero's transition from youth to maturity makes the *Bildungsroman* an ideal form for

providing symbolic pathways through periods of modernisation. And indeed, as Moretti argues, the *Bildungsroman* is ready-made for eighteenth-century European modernity, which chooses youth as its central form through which this fusion of historical and biographical time will occur (2000a: 5).

Kelly's young nation with geriatric arteries, coming into maturity after the collapse of the Australian Settlement, is in a similar position to the symbolic youth that Moretti analyses as being a form with which the uncertainty and motility of European post-Revolution modernity can be represented. Kelly's Australia, finally standing on its own and leaving the Fortress of tradition, is also in an interregnum: between the Labourist-Social-liberal armature and the ascendance of the Neoliberal forms of government. Indeed, in constructing such a distant and monolithic edifice as the five pillars of the Australian Settlement Kelly generates a level of modernising momentum which can barely be contained by the characterology through which this *Bildungsroman* of nation is presented. Yet as Joseph Slaughter argues "[t]he tautological-teleological complex of inherency in becoming articulates the impossibly anticipatory and retrospective (proleptic and analeptic) temporality of the story of the modern citizen-subjectivation shared by human rights and the *Bildungsroman*" (1415). This is the paradox, in the classic *Bildungsroman* structure, of a narrative in which the story of becoming is issued from a present in which the becoming has been achieved: the past that is presented as open is closed from the perspective of the narrator who can narrate the story of a becoming because they have seen its final shape.

A similar narrative technique exists in *The End of Certainty* where Kelly's authorial persona disappears to be replaced by the evaluating voice of a historical future which is that of the valuations of the international markets:

> [t]he 'banana republic' was a dose of shock therapy for the nation which for a while left a legacy of crisis which Labor could have utilised to impose far tougher policies on the nation. [. . .]Labor felt it was heroic enough – its decisions were draconian by orthodox standards and its advisers were pleased. Labor was also frightened by the demons of revolt from its base and a community backlash. Hawke and Keating depicted themselves as bold warriors. But history will record that the times demanded more and would have given more. (227).

Here we have a clear example of the "tautological-teleological complex". Kelly here slips away and it is the "future historical" that speaks. The "times" are personified as making demands that were not met. What Kelly means here is that the dramatic fall in the Australian dollar that precipitated Keating's "Banana Republic [. . .] shock therapy" treatment, history will show, should have been cause for a deep wage cut (208). The *Bildungsroman* form generates this tautological-teleology but on whose authority is this judgement made: who are the times? One clue is provided in the same chapter where Kelly writes: "In late 1985 the jury – the financial markets – voted against Keating by forcing another major depreciation of the $A" (208). Another clue is when Kelly, weighing into a dispute between ALP Industry Minister Senator John Button and Chicago economist David Hale over how to determine the rate of micro-economic reform, argues that while they are both correct,

> the difference is the test of measurement: it is whether Australia is judged by its own historical standard or by an international standard. There is no dispute that Australia has made advances; but those advances are not sufficient unless they are advances in relation to Australia's trading partners, all of whom have their own micro-economic reform programs. (389)

Later Kelly writes, "Labor's failure at the 'micro' level was to use the historical standard of comparison, not an international standard of 'first-best' practice" (397). It can be argued, then, that the historical future in *The End of Certainty* is what the international financial and other markets decide: they are the times. This seems like common sense, but as a temporalization of time, achieved in part through the *Bildungsroman* form and supported by the anthropomorphism of "the times," the positioning of the international markets as the judges of political decisions narrativises Neoliberal self-government as a technique of Australian political culture that effectively grants the international finance markets authorship of the history of our times. To be part of history a nation, a political culture, a self needs to anticipate what the markets will demand. More.

To come-of-age as a nation, as a self, during the end of certainty is thus to enter the formative pressures of Neoliberal temporality. As Morris argues, the fusion of what were formerly considered discrete, because non-economic, spaces in Chicago

School economic theory, results "in a generalized economic tabulation where human time would be the primary element'" (1998: 184). In Kelly's *Bildungsroman* of nation we can see how the historical future too is subject to Neoliberalism. The loss that these Neoliberal governmentalities arrive to replace, however, is the armature not of an Australian Settlement forged in the Federation period, but of an assemblage of Labourist and Social-liberal practices and cultural forms energised by the booming economy of the post-war period and regulated by the Keynesian tools of demand management. This armature was more than an historic compromise, or settlement; more also than a framework on which the national house was built, as the bedrock crumbled.[38] Its loss is still being mourned and as such it comes to us, even in sociological and historical terms, as the Real that is available only via "its prior textualisation, its narrativisation in the political unconscious" (Jameson, 2003: 20).

*

This chapter has come to terms with the historical sociology, and presented three readings in the textuality, of the long Labor decade. Beilharz's historical sociology and hermeneutics of the writing of the period were used as the bases on which to analyse the political forms at stake during the long decade, and to extend the readings of Labor tradition, the role of Keating and Kelly's narrative of Australian modernity, into an area where questions of the political unconscious, and symbolic and literary form were addressed.

Key to the readings and analysis in this chapter is the heuristic of the Labourist-Social-liberal armature. In choosing this polysemic figure I have tried to move away from the trope of consensus or settlement, with its economically liberal connotations of a contract between equals. The notion of an armature is not meant to be universal. It is developed out of the readings of the textuality of the long Labor decade: it is a figure that makes limited intertextual sense. It is a figure that also makes meaning available when reading the fiction of the long Labor decade. This thesis takes its periodising and structuring cue here from Beilharz and thus

the next chapter will focus on the literary *oeuvres* of Australian writers Frank Moorhouse and Amanda Lohrey as both publish works of mourning in 1988, prefiguring the works of mourning in the field of political history discussed above. Their synchronous works of mourning and their literary trajectories through the long Labor decade provide the means for presenting synchronic and diachronic perspectives on Australian literary history. The ambit of chapter two is to provide a limited pre-history to Grunge fiction, focussing especially on the pre-Grunge works *The Reading Group* and *Forty-Seventeen*, and to analyse how the loss of the Labourist-Social-liberal armature is felt and responded to in the *oeuvres* of the these two authors.

Chapter Two.

Mourning, Emergence and Governmentality in the works of

Frank Moorhouse and Amanda Lohrey

1. Left-literary Trajectories: Approaching 1988

> Insofar as the fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis (such as
> transference, repression, denial, resistance, acting out, and working
> through) are not restricted to the individual psyche of the one-on-one
> clinical situation but recognized as undercutting the opposition between
> individual and society and linked with the notion of subject-position,
> they provide a way of rethinking the problem of reading and
> interpretation in history. (LaCapra 71)

Liberalism, according to Davis, "is in a state of deep crisis, having begun to lose its
status as the epistemological axis of western civic discourse" (2007: 8). This crisis,
precipitated by the "new political force [of] neoliberalism", has brought about a
drastic waning in the forcefield of "Australian post-Leavisite liberalism", a key
component in the "literary paradigm" (8). "[T]heory" – comprising the post-1960s
"[n]ew critical practices derived from Marxism, feminism, psychoanalysis, queer
theory and postcolonialism" – has "decreasing relevance", Davis argues, because
the object of its critical energy has itself attenuated, due to the attacks of
Neoconservatives and Neoliberals on those who practise aspects of Social-
liberalism like Robert Manne (7-8, 24, 17-8).[39] The Leavisite high "moral
seriousness" of Manne and Helen Garner's non-fiction is, for Davis, a form of
literary-liberalism that is both increasingly self-critical about its white patrician-
liberal traditions, and an exemplary practice of "the idea of "felt experience""
which uses "the logic of affect [. . .] to resonate with broader audiences" (16-7, 27).
As I argued in chapter one, using Beilharz's historical sociology of the long
Labor decade as an initial orientation upon which to read primary aspects of the
period's textuality, the crisis of Liberalism is better understood, in the first
instance, as the loss of the Labourist-Social-liberal armature. Indeed, the
emergence of what Davis calls the "new conservatism and the increasing
entrenchment of neo-liberalism, since the early 1970s, at the centre of most
national public spheres, and its growing reach into institutional centres of power
and everyday social meanings" can only be seen as a frontal assault on
Liberalism alone if you elide its significant differences from Australian

Labourism (8). To do so is to disavow a major strand of Australian literary history: writing which makes little sense unless it is articulated to Labourism, and the post-war armature.

My argument here is not with Davis' central argument concerning the need for adepts of "theory" to learn from the "felt experience" literary techniques of Manne and Garner and to form a rapprochement with Australian literary-Liberals, but with the lack of an alternative archive of literature to draw on which is critical of both Liberalism and Neoliberalism. If "Australian literary-critical theorists, having failed to notice the changing contexts in which they operate, have failed, even, to mount a critique of the new conservatism and its cultures, literary, critical, political, and institutional", then one way of redeeming such failure is to produce an archival set of those literary works which when read in this new historical light appear as symptomatic or even critical of Neoliberalism (22).

Such a set would be able to be read horizontally and affiliate with those key components of the textuality of the long Labor decade that I have grouped in chapter one under two political figures and an influential text: Labor tradition and the Ghosts of Whitlam; Stories of Keating; and the Neoliberal *Bildungsroman* of *The End of Certainty*. While chapter three will see the thesis return to Grunge fiction its emergence near the end of the long Labor decade leaves a gap in this period's literary archive: 1983 to 1992. To produce a literary history of that decade with which to make sense of Grunge, and of the loss of the post-war armature, requires an analysis of literary works that instead span the period. Chapter Two, then, presents three types of readings of the literary works of Frank Moorhouse and Amanda Lohrey. Firstly, I will situate their literary careers, social origins and contemporary histories of political culture against their key fictional texts up to the 1988 publications of *Forty-Seventeen* and *The Reading Group*. Secondly, I will draw back from this biographical-contextual-literary history and detail Foucault's theory of governmentality. After explicating this concept I will then, in this section, move into a mid-range

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reading of the career of governmentality and its interplay with the structuring motifs of mourning and emergence in both Moorhouse and Lohrey's *oeuvres*. The purpose of this section is to gain a mid-range perspective on these movements in the two *oeuvres* and to place these in dialogue with the textuality of Labor tradition of Whitlam's ghosts analysed in chapter one. Finally, I will move back to a close-reading of *The Reading Group* and *Forty-Seventeen*, reading these two novels of the long Labor decade as works of mourning. Armed with the mid-range reading of their fictional *oeuvres* I will argue that what is being mourned is the loss of the Labourist-Social-liberal armature and the libidinal investments in hope that Whitlam elicited from many Australians. Having read these *oeuvres* and the two works of mourning in particular, we will then be ready to reappraise three key texts of Grunge fiction against the textuality of the stories of Keating analysed in chapter three, with an understanding of the profoundly unsettling consequences for Australian political and literary culture of the loss of the post-war armature and the rise of Neoliberalism.

Frank Moorhouse's Left-literary libertarianism

> Politics is narrative, a fiction, in the technical sense, a way of describing and ordering data. It is clumsy and usually simplistic. I think that imaginative writing – as a supplementary or even competing narrative – is at its best, ahead of formulated politics. I do not think that an awareness of political and social questions is necessary for good imaginative work of all kinds. Only for my kind. (Moorhouse, 1981: 222.)

Novelist, essayist, journalist, editor and memoirist Frank Moorhouse underwent a shift in his political allegiances in the 1970s. Not so much from the Liberal-Country Party Coalition (the Coalition) to the ALP, although the destination remains, but from what could be called Left-Libertarianism toward the liberalising and cultural nationalist policies and practices Gough Whitlam's social democratic programme partly enacted and sought to establish.

Moorhouse was part of the later days of the Sydney Libertarian movement that grew out of philosopher John Anderson's Freethought Society (Coombs, 1996: 123-

24, 8). According to McKenzie Wark, "[t]he Libertarian break was a refusal of the increasingly dogmatic side of Andersonianism, but one which depended for its confidence on precisely the kind of critical unmasking of dogma the putative libertarians gleaned from Anderson himself" (1997: 68). Keys to the Libertarian ethos were sexual experiment, especially for the male members, and a profound distrust of Government authority and political parties: any project or plan to improve collective life was seen as merely a claim to inhabit the oligarchy of elite power, against which Libertarians sought to remain a "resistant minority" (Coombs 179; Docker, 1974: 150). All authority was to be resisted and freedom sought in all relationships, and against all institutions in pursuit of an "anarchism without ends" (Docker 151). There was amongst some Libertarians, however, sympathy with those aspects of Marxism which stressed "social struggle and [the] association of ideologies with social groups," although the Left-Libertarians were so named because they broke with Anderson over his Cold War conservative anti-communism, and retreat into academia (146-47). This split in Sydney Libertarianism – effectively between an anti-communist often socially conservative version (which would link into the anti-communist *Quadrant* journal) and a more Left-based bohemian Libertarianism – happened before Moorhouse's arrival in Sydney from Nowra when he gravitated toward the sexually and intellectually experimental Left-Libertarian Push (Coombs 91-2).

These experiences are refracted through and come to life in Moorhouse's early discontinuous narratives: *Futility and Other Animals* (1996b) and *The Americans, Baby* (1992). [40] But Moorhouse also wrote as a journalist and his writings from the 1960s and 1970s are collected, along with those of others, in *Days of Wine and Rage* (1980). Looking back on an article first published in December 1972, "I say Whitlam Doesn't Matter", Moorhouse sets out his Left-Libertarian stance on Whitlam and the ALP:

> Fighting police in the streets, publishing underground magazines and drinking and partying with the Push had narrowed our vision. In 1972 Sydney libertarians and bohemians had no idea that there was a change in the national mood. We still felt embattled, that we belonged to a permanent enclave in a hostile society.

> We had no contacts with the Labor Party, which we considered just as alien to our values as any other political party.
>
> I was awakened to the forthcoming federal election of 1972 by an approach from *Digger* magazine in Melbourne asking me to write about the election. I was also dimly aware that people who normally didn't were taking this election very seriously.
>
> But I decided that the election of a Labor government wouldn't change a thing. (1980: 77-8)

Yet, in the aftermath of the Governor General's dismissal of the Whitlam Government on Remembrance Day 1975, Moorhouse's Left-Libertarianist anti-statist indifference was transformed into full-throated support for the politics of Whitlamism. Indeed, the *Rage* in the title of Moorhouse's collection refers to the anger that many on the Left felt at the loss of the Whitlam government and the manner of its despatch. Of course, these feelings were not shared across the political spectrum.

In 2007 the Neoliberal think-tank, the Centre for Independent Studies (CIS), held a tribute to the Chicago School economist Milton Friedman. While commemorating Friedman's CIS-sponsored 1975 speaking-tour to Australia, the dismissal of Whitlam's government was treated by a number of speakers as an inevitability that Friedman's visit only gave succour to and vindicated (Centre for Independent Studies). While amongst these Neoliberals the demise of Whitlam and the ascension of Friedman's monetarist and market-based nostrums were cause to celebrate, the dismissal of his Government was felt as a profound loss on the Left; a loss which drew Moorhouse into campaigning against it and for Whitlam's re-election. In a speech on the steps of Sydney Opera House not long after the dismissal, Moorhouse's Left-Libertarian refusal of Government had all but evaporated:

> I see my gesture here today as a way of paying tribute to a Labor government for its contribution to personal freedom in this country: in particular, its releasing of conscientious objectors from the jail within days of taking office, the ending of conscription, the legalising of homosexuality within the territories, and its abolition of censorship.
>
> Naturally, as a writer, I am supporting Labor too for its cultural policies – the Labor Party's superphosphate for culture. They have let the arts get on with their work, everywhere I discussed them in the USA and UK, these policies on the arts were envied. It has to be pointed out that they are not

simply grants to creative people: they are subsidies to readers and to those who value good books, good films, good paintings, good music and good drama. The freer the creative people to get on with their work, the more those who value the arts as consumers can also benefit.

The Labor government has proved to me, in a way that I honestly did not expect, that it is concerned with civilised values in a way that the Liberal Party is not. And it has shown concretely an interest in personal freedom.

For me, civilised values and personal freedom are as much issues in this election as inflation. (1980: 101-2).

Moorhouse's political trajectory over the period from the late 1960s to 1975 moves from an anti-Government Left-Libertarianism toward one which is intensely engaged with the Government of the state. The "civilised values and personal freedom" which once were considered only obtainable in opposition to the state, are in late-1975 seen by Moorhouse as vouchsafed by Whitlamism's social-democratic project.

This shift in his political affiliations and practices is mirrored in the increasing importance that the state plays in his fiction. In his second discontinuous narrative *The Americans, Baby* Moorhouse presents social reality as disillusioning. The young rural and sub-urban men and women moving into the Sydney metropolis of the late 1960s, who are attempting to join in a political-cultural landscape of activist movements and liberating sexuality, are presented in the stories as monochromatic: slogans that are simplistically binary in their affirmations and negations, structure their psychological and social trajectories. The stories in *The Americans, Baby* often move these young subjects into an encounter with an inner-urban sensibility, a situation, a sophisticated or confronting person who fragments such youthful binary positioning. The distance and sophistication of the narrator's irony is the main formal technique used in these short stories. For example, in "Dell Goes into Politics," the young Dell returns from Sydney to her rural home town, initially sure she has received a political education, but as she tries out her new knowledge away from Sydney "realised that she'd been mouthing a few of the things she'd heard with Kim and the others at meetings she'd been dragged along to and those parties where they'd talked about [the Vietnam war] for hours while she stood drinking and wanting to dance" (1992: 6). This slow realisation

that her certainties are superficial has the effect of discrediting the judgements themselves, so that Dell's attempts to position herself to the Left of the ALP are presented as empty gestures toward political sophistication that are always slogans:

> [S]he gestured at Fuller, "The Labor party are bloody right-wing social democrats." She spat the words the way she'd heard them in the city, carried away, wondering if that was what the Labor Party was, and why they were dirty words or did she have it all wrong? Of one thing she was sure: Harry wouldn't have the faintest.
> "You've changed," was all he would say.
> She sighed. "Not really," dropping into a little girl's voice, giving away playing the game, "not really at all—I'm all mixed up, Harry," she said, meaning it, patting his hand. Why didn't she just marry him?
> "You sort of sound it," he said. (7)

In both his earlier discontinuous narrative *Futility and Other Animals* and in *The Americans, Baby* Moorhouse positions the reader outside these young, confused characters who are attempting modes of activist and Libertarian practice. As Rowse argues, Moorhouse's social pluralism is rendered through the literary technique of discontinuous focalisations: there is no central narrating perspective or continuous point of view from which evaluations can be measured (1982: 262-63). Instead, the variance of an ironic narratorial distance combined with passages of free indirect discourse have the effect of creating an elastic space of freedom in the narratives that is achieved by presenting sexuality as an irrationally eruptive force, capable of turning all political discourse into symptoms of the drive to sexual power and pleasure.

In "The American, Paul Johnson" the fervently anti-American university student Carl, finds that in the contest between politics and sexuality, it is through a series of bewildering homosexual encounters that he learns most about the complexities of politics, emblematised in this short story when he accepts the gift of a book from "the American" – "*The Voice of the People—Readings in Public Opinion and Propaganda*" – replying "it's the sort of subject I want to read more about" (1992: 25-6).

This unsettling of 1960s anti-Americanism is given a fictional pre-history in *The Electrical Experience: a Discontinuous Narrative* (1974). The central figure of this collection of stories is the New South Wales south coast soft-drink manufacturer and avowed Rotarian, T. George McDowell, a character that Moorhouse models on his own father (Kinross Smith 413). These stories and epigrammatic fragments of creeds and advice are focalised on this entrepreneur of the period from the 1920s to the 1960s and the discontinuous narrative is shaped by McDowell's efforts to form himself and his town in the image of the enterprise and civic culture of American Rotarianism, which he believes "could be bigger than governments" (1974: 80). McDowell's techniques of self, his "Rules of Conduct" are imbued with modernist and economically Liberal rationalities (119). He tells Jim Tutman, the formerly respected entrepreneur of an ice business which is faltering under the advance of refrigeration and who has come to McDowell for a bridging loan, that "It's time to modernize the mind" (52). The inevitability of technological and capitalist modernisation divides people into the "Self-mover[s]" and the rest: "We are but the engine-drivers of progress—we do not make the timetable" (40, 58).

McDowell's modernism is combined with a philosophy of self that figures the self as human capital: "Man's know-how was his personal capital. The bank inside the head. It was once said that it was wise to invest in knowledge because no man could steal it from you. No longer true" (52). One such investment finds McDowell changing his name, by using his first name's initial "T", which "has more oomph" and "makes you stand out from the herd. [. . .] In business [. . .] it pays to have something which catches the eye—makes them remember you next time" (28-9).

In *The Electrical Experience* McDowell's worship of the Rotarian ethos comes at the expense of a calculated hardening of his emotional life and a disavowal of opportunities for sexual pleasure. Moorhouse presents the inevitable dissolution of McDowell's business empire in the face of the same forces of American capitalist modernity that he had shaped himself with, as a bewildering mental fragmentation. McDowell's loss of self and business is mirrored in the final story of the collection in which one of his former employees is subjected to a

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documentary film crew's violently deconstructive provocations, which aim to break the subject down in ways similar to McDowell's breakdown. The loss of this older masculine world, Moorhouse suggests in *The Electrical Experience*, is cause for neither celebration nor the means through which to unearth an older set of lost traditions that were shunted aside in the race to modernise. McDowell's modernism and treatment of his self as an enterprise, are, however, laid out by Moorhouse as an alternative fictional pre-history of the present (1974). Indeed, the coming of Friedman and his Neoliberal ideas can be seen to build on seeds planted by earlier waves of American enterprise culture. In McDowell's peak period, from the 1930s to 1960s, the idea of personal capital is no match in Australian political culture for the rationalities generated by the Labourist-Social-liberal armature. The Friedman-esque aspects of McDowell's philosophy will have to wait till the armature begins to burn-out and unwind in the 1970s before gaining ascendancy in Australian political culture.

While anti-Americanism is a dominant theme in much of Moorhouse's early work, in the short story "The Everlasting Secret Family" from the collection of the same name, he returns to the nexus between politics and sex. This "erotic memoir in six parts" is the story of an elite, politically conservative "family" in which young teenage boys are procured by powerful men to be traded and used for sex (165). The story of this paedophile-ring is told by the masochistic slave of a powerful federal Government minister, who has lost his youthful sexual power over the minister and becomes his increasingly defiled and abjected sexual slave. The narrator revels in the identity-obliterating *jouissance* of abject sex (183, 191). But these liberations occur within modes of the conduct of a male power elite – a formation of Australian aristocracy – and its reproduction (Kinross Smith 418). The place of political power in the "everlasting" cycle of inducting young boys into this "secret family" is made apparent when the relationship between the narrator and the minister's pubescent son shifts as the son's youthful innocence and sexual power begin to give way to his dawning sense of political dominance over the narrator:

> I looked at his wilful face and the finger around the trigger of his rifle. Knowing that, being who he was, and at that age, he could get away with it. Oh yes, he didn't care.
>
> I told him, anyhow, not to point firearms.
>
> He said he would if he wanted to, and anyhow the rules didn't apply to him any more. (Moorhouse, 1980: 210-11)

Unlike the portrayal of politics and sexuality in *The Americans, Baby* sexual acts are played out in "The Everlasting Secret Family" within a master-slave dynamic, where the potential for liberation is tied to submission and abjection. The minister – a sadistic, secret decadent who continues his homosexual relationship with his aging boy-lover – is also a confidant of the prime minister and a leading member of "the conservative parties of this country" (189, 165). The juxtaposition of the near-pinnacle of political power with "The liberation through obeisance" achieved by "obliterating the personality" brings the body politic and the political body together through acts of domination and identity dis-integration. Sexuality is no longer an eruptive force, capable of dissolving the barriers between people, but is rather enacted as a series of defilements that corrupt and deform a coming-of-age. The nexus here between the state and sexuality is a game where the innocence and beauty of youth is a form of power dominating the desire of the seducer which is slowly ceded as knowledge replaces innocence, and the youth becomes the seducer. As the flow of knowledge and desire reconfigures, the adult's power becomes the basis of the sexual relationship, and other areas of innocence are progressively corrupted. Politics here is the source of this corrupting adult knowledge and power and the body politic looms as the vessel for defilement. The sexuality that for Moorhouse was a source of liberation that could unseat politics in his earlier stories has by "The Everlasting Secret Family" become deeply entwined with the politics of domination.

The sexual-political nexus in Moorhouse's early fiction is thereby shifting and turning by 1980. John Docker argues that in his early fictions Moorhouse opposes sexuality to politics, as "sexuality and personality are realms of freedom inevitably superior to political involvement. The stories never create a sense of a viable political world" (1974: 161-63). This freedom, however, is produced at the expense

of presenting political decision and judgement as contingent and relative practices. Such contingency is suitable for a Left-Libertarianism that promotes an "anarchism without ends" and eschews "servility, solidarism, meliorism and voluntarism" as these techniques of governing the self in relation to political parties, social movements and the state are to be resisted and refused as a practice of Libertarianism's negative freedom (Docker, 1974: 150-51; Janoski, 1998: 20-1). What happens, however, when the techniques and rationalities, the forms of government of the state starts to shift? For when the rationalities and techniques of government that traverse the state, the social sphere and the self start to alter, pluralism in perspective as a technique of literary form no longer has a stable and monolithic state against which it can claim freedom. Such pluralism becomes a type of liquid mobility: a Heraclitean flux that in choosing contingency, irony and distance offers no resources from which to build social movements, historic blocs, and political majorities. Yet, as was noted above, Moorhouse's use of literary techniques to produce "distancing and ambivalence, scepticism and belief, [and] inherent irreconcilabilities as impediments to freedom," doesn't prevent him from aligning with Whitlam and the ALP (Horne, 1980: 38-9). With the Dismissal of Whitlam in 1975 the stakes of the governmentality of the state are suddenly raised for Moorhouse, and are deemed worth defending and intervening into. As we will see below, this realignment for Moorhouse alters the trajectory of his literary fiction, through the long Labor decade.

Amanda Lohrey's Left-literary Labourism

Amanda Lohrey was born into a 1940s working-class Labourist family, including "union officials [. . .] in the Waterside Workers' Federation [. . .] and [former] members of the Communist Party" at Battery Point, near Hobart in Tasmania (Lohrey, 2004b: 193). She was Vice President of the Tasmanian branch of Labor Youth and married a Labor politician, who was a state member from 1972-1986 ("Amanda Lohrey" par. 4; Lohrey, 2004b: 194). Her formation in Labor politics "gave her privileged access to state politics at a crucial time in the history of [. . .] the ALP" ("Amanda Lohrey" par. 4). Lohrey's trajectory as a writer was also

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influenced by her encounters with Marxist aesthetics and social theory, including the aesthetic politics of Bertold Brecht and Georg Lukács (Lohrey, 2004b: 196-97).

Her debut novel, *The Morality of Gentlemen*, was published in 1984, although its period of production belongs more to the 1970s. It is an historical novel working on two narrative temporalities: one time-frame concerns the dramatic story of an industrial conflict on the Hobart Docks in the mid 1950s, which is based on the Hursey case, while the other frames a set of interviews conducted in the 1970s by a Labor historian of witnesses reflecting on the events surrounding the case. The central plot turns on the Waterside Workers' Union and its majority decision to demand a political levy payable to the Labor Party, who, it is hoped, will remove the anti-unionist Menzies Government. Three members refuse to pay the levy, arguing that union membership should not cancel out the liberal political right to exercise their individual consciences. The leading unionists argue that solidarity is a greater value.

The plot moves through a sequence of dramatic escalations in this conflict, which widen into a battle between the Communist Party union organizers active on the Waterfront, in league with more Labourist unionists, a State governing Labor Party hoping that the escalating conflict will go away, and an historic bloc struck between Liberal Party parliamentarians, the dissenting unionists, the Catholic Church hierarchy, the anti-communist Movement within the wider set of Unions, and the shipping company which employs the waterside workers. The drama heightens with a union picket line at the docks, preventing the dissenters from signing on for work, which sees small outbreaks of violence before moving into a court case where the dissenters' rights are upheld. The last event in this plot is the High Court's decision to overturn the Tasmanian judge's ruling, affirming the industrial right of Unions to determine who political levies can be paid to.

Unlike its use in Moorhouse's early fiction, where it is deployed in order to naturalise social and sexual pluralism and openness, Lohrey's use of irony is structured by the Brechtian alienation effect the novel seeks to achieve: to engage

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the reader with the ideas driving the dramatic structure of the narrative rather than to identify with the characters (Lohrey, 2004b: 197). The multiplying of points of view in *The Morality of Gentlemen* is also a temporal multiplication: the Labor historian-narrator, in the novel's 'present,' reflects on the veracity of the witness-based history she is both receiving and creating, alongside the third-person present tense narration of the events in the time of the dispute. There are two presents in the novel, along with the multiple voices and perspectives that weave the novel's 'history' into its present. Meeting one of the key Union players in the dispute the sceptical narrator-historian is confronted with a politics of historiography:

> 'What did you say this was for?'
> 'I'm writing a history.'
> 'Whose version, yours or ours?'
> 'A combination of both,' I say ingenuously. 'I'm here to be objective.'
> 'He laughs. 'It's not possible,' he says. 'Pick a side and stick to it.'
> I'm insulted, both by the abruptness of the dismissal and the crudity of the sentiment. That's the sort of remark I'd have expected from one of the roughnecks, but not from Eyenon, a man who, from all accounts, has read enough history to know that it's not that simple. (Lohrey, 1984: 75)

Central techniques and rationalities of Labourism, that were discussed in chapter one, are present in *The Morality of Gentlemen*: a strong Union and support for the ALP into Government (Hagan 14). While Lohrey remembers from her own childhood that "women quite often went down to the waterfront when there was a picket and would support the men", the novel's title and its dominance by men point also to the Labourist culture that dominated sections of Australia during the twentieth century and which elevated the industrial citizen as its normalised citizen-subject (2004b: 194). But Lohrey's work here is not to affirm Australian Labourism as a form of governmentality, rather it is, in part, to interpose a more radically Left politics of literary form into an event suited to a social realist narrative. Lohrey's early work is able to pitch its critical politics of literary form against the Labourist-Social-liberal armature with the hope of turning it over, revolving it, from a Marxist-based philosophy of history because of the solid hold this armature had on the techniques of government. Moorhouse too, in his earlier fictions, is able to present a critical Left-Libertarian form of literary politics,

through his mimetic representations of the putatively politically progressive and sexually experimental inner-urban denizens of the late 1960s, because the Australian political culture contemporary with these works had a consensual assemblage of Labourist-Social-liberal governmentalities in place against which pluralistic freedom could be sought. While Moorhouse's early trajectory travels on the belief that the state is perennially captured by different versions of an elite oligarchy that is always authoritarian, Lohrey's early trajectory moves on a Left-Labourism that appears to be based on a belief that the state is the aim of politics and that it can be reformed or revolved so as to expand the social and industrial gains made through the labour movement and Labor Party (Docker: 150).[41]

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

The literary trajectories of Moorhouse and Lohrey both start against the backdrop of the Labourist-Social-liberal armature, but pass through the collapse of this post-war assemblage and forcefield, emblematised in the loss of Whitlam and Whitlamism that haunts the long Labor decade. Ghosts and loss also haunt the 1988 fictions of Moorhouse and Lohrey. Indeed, in both *Forty-Seventeen* and *The Reading Group* temporality ceases to be progressive, or in Walter Benjamin's terms, historicist (2007: 262-63). Instead it becomes a polyrhythm of times which are in a state of disharmony or crisis. Like the ghost of Hamlet's father than returns in Shakespeare's play, the future that the ghost of Whitlam haunts the long Labor decade with points to a breakdown in the harmonised order of times which are instead experienced as ""out of joint," dis-jointed, disadjusted, disharmonic, discorded, or un-just" (Derrida, 1995: 20-2).

In *Forty-Seventeen* this arrhythmia is presented through the pluralising of historical moments and traces that the central character, Ian – through whom the narrative is focalised – is placed into and reflects on.[42] Caught mid-life without a clear direction, the failed-writer diplomat, Ian, is surrounded by and pierced with mounting losses: his much younger girlfriend has left him, his first and former wife is terminally ill with cancer, his own youth has departed, and an older

diplomat with whom he strikes a flirtatious friendship dies while they are visiting Lebanon. The narrative leaps from that time when he first moved to Sydney and his ex-wife sent him letters as a high-school girl, to a potential reconciliation with his young girlfriend who had been working as a prostitute in London. Ian is also haunted by the ghosts of two of his grandparents: his grandmother also worked as a prostitute around the caves near Katoomba, and his grandfather who suicided in a mysterious manner. Apart then from the multiple temporalities in the times narrated there is also a haunting of the present by Ian's ancestors. Furthermore, Ian becomes increasingly drawn to the interregnum of the two twentieth-century world wars. The novel begins with a detective-like hunt for information about the Barcelonian Spanish Civil War Anarchist Buenaventura Durruti (1-14). It ends with Ian wanting "to insinuate himself into the intimacy of another generation and another time. He wanted to live among the obsolete and the quaint. To get away from his times, not because he disliked his times, but because of some genetic calling" (172).

In *The Reading Group* temporal disharmony, or arrhythmia, is presented in three ways. Firstly, there is a collapse of a collective hope which had provided the *telos* towards which the former Left radical reading group members had synchronised and directed their libidinal drives. As their collective sense of purposive time empties, and retreats from its focus on re-forming the state, the times become open and plural, dangerous and full of crises. These crises are symbolised by the roaming gangs of "plague bearers" and constant fires that ring the city but are never quite extinguished or controlled (Lohrey, 1988: 163, 41). Secondly, the novel is set in the near-future. As Stephen Knight argues, "Lohrey adopts the intense seriousness that was the convergence of ideas of time and politics in the surge of futurism in the late nineteenth century. Her stance makes impossible both the easy outrage and the sentimental nostalgia that interweave so compatibly in many a novel of the past" (1989: 203).

The novel's dystopian futurism thus unsettles progressive time's constantly back-announced measuring of improvement, throwing the contemporary reader

onto a dis-articulation between the present and future. The novel's near-futurism produces "the starkly allegorical character of the contextual events. Allegory suggests the absence of realism, whether this mode is personified or symbolic. [. . .] The austerely symbolic element of *The Reading Group* interrogates its expressive realist aspects, as well as the characters who move in that world" (204-5).The present and future are thus dis-jointed through the allegorical presentation of crisis which, although futurist, is portrayed alongside identifiably realist settings, characters and events. The effect is one of the present being haunted by a future.[43]

Thirdly, there is a constant expectation expressed that the tension produced by the mounting crises will be resolved, either through a revolutionary event or reactionary authoritarian measures (20, 221, 249). The novel's crises are not only left unresolved, but as the narrative ends, they further atomise the former reading group members from any sense of collectivity or community as they pull away from the crisis-ridden public and state-based events. The novel ends by tightly focalising: the private-domestic sphere minutiae of Claire Vickers's newfound minimalist, noise-free interior design vocation; Robbie Eyenon's self-disgusted intoxication; and the narcissist Lyndon Hughes's final philosophical reflections on the utopia of his own present-focussed sexual pleasure (257-69). The retreat into these private worlds signals a precarious narrative closure that is haunted by the continuing ecological and political crises that now occur 'off-page'.

Both novels are scarred by loss and an unsettling of temporalities. The focus on an interregnum in both novels is accompanied by spectres of the fascist reaction to the First World War's precarious settlement, the aftershocks of the Russian Revolution and to the 1929 financial collapse: the Spanish Civil War in *Forty-Seventeen* and the near-state of emergency and reactionary nationalism in *The Reading Group*. The writings of Gramsci – Italian Marxist of this between-the-wars interregnum – plays a minor though strategic role in *The Reading Group*, as one member of the former reading group, Robbie Eyenon, keeps returning to "[t]he old book [. . .] open on his

knee. His old friend, Antonio G" (Lohrey, 1988: 189). Also of this period of interregnum is the aged Australian diplomat that Ian spends time with who had worked with the first attempt at world government in between the wars: the League of Nations (Moorhouse, 1988: 142).

Both novels are clearly works of mourning. Whether the lost object is another person, or a political project, in the worlds of the two novels "reality testing has revealed that the beloved object no longer exists, and demands that the libido as a whole sever its bonds with the object" (Freud, 2005: 204-5). But in what sense are *Forty-Seventeen* and *The Reading Group* works of mourning of the long Labor decade? What is being mourned and what might be the new loves that such works of mourning are cathecting? In order to address these questions this chapter will now move into a different method of reading: a mid-range reading.

2. Governmentality across the Long Labor Decade

> [G]overnment refers to a continuum, which extends from political government right through to forms of self-regulation—namely, "technologies of the self". (Lemke, 2002: 59)

> The analysis of governmentality reminds us that political economy relies on a political anatomy of the body. (60)

One of the more interesting recent developments in literary history is Franco Moretti's techniques of 'distant reading'. Opposed to the New Critical practices of single-text based, decontextualised and intensive close-reading, distant reading "provides a type of data which is ideally independent of interpretations" on the basis of quantifying elements of literary history and presenting these as "abstract models" (Moretti, 2007a: 9, 1-2). Where then does a consideration of two *oeuvres* lie on a continuum of close to distant reading? The reading in this section of chapter two is too small a data set to qualify for a distant reading and ranges over too long a period to be classed as a close-reading. The reading of the Left-literary trajectories of Moorhouse and Lohrey initiated in the preceding section that will be

extended in this section is, rather, a mid-range reading. Neither close nor distant, neither geared too high nor too low, neither top nor bottom shelf.

The focus on literary-libertarianism and literary-Labourism in the preceding section will now be tightened through the concept of governmentality which will be the basis on which the trajectories of Moorhouse and Lohrey will be tracked, at mid-range. The purpose of this mid-range reading of the careers of Moorhouse and Lohrey and of governmentality through their fictional texts is to present a version of the literary history of the long Labor decade from which to generate questions and some answers concerning shifts in the forces impelling Left-literary production over the period. The secondary purpose of this mid-range reading is to generate explanations of these forces which can then be fed into and guide the interpretation of *The Reading Group* and *Forty-Seventeen* in the final section of this chapter.

*

What Foucault calls governmentality has an ambivalent place in Moorhouse's *Forty-Seventeen* and in Lohrey's *The Reading Group*. This ambivalence can be more clearly understood if we stand back from a close-reading of these two works of mourning and instead place these novels into the trajectories of governmentality throughout the *oeuvres* of these writers of the Left. Reading from mid-range we see the Left-Libertarian formation and focus of Moorhouse's earlier works undergoes a shift towards statism from 1988 onwards. The Labourist-Marxist formation and focus of Lohrey's novels undergoes a cross-trajectory toward 1988 which moves in an opposite direction toward a focus on the personal body, the domestic-intimate sphere and technologies of the self. I am not arguing that either trajectory is more political than the other, or that there is any punctual significance in the year in which their trajectories cross-over. Rather, what I argue is that forces in both the Australian literary field and in an Australian political culture – that both novelists have a reputation for being keen fictional chroniclers of and respondents to – are

being lost and are emergent during the period of literary production for *Forty-Seventeen* and *The Reading Group*.

So, rather than merely arguing that each novel of 1988 tells stories through which the perceptive reader can track these changes in governmentality, I argue that what is most social and historical in these two works are their formal constitutions: each are elegies and each employ the technique of discontinuous narrative. Considering the movement of formal techniques as well as the biases of governmentality over time, what becomes visible in Moorhouse's case is how the shift in his fiction towards the governmentality of (inter-)states is concomitant with a movement into continuous historical fiction which is also imbued with a sustained work of mourning (the two-volume Edith Berry-League of Nations novels).[44] Alternately, Lohrey's fiction shifts focus from the governmentality of the state (legal, political, administrative, educational) to that of the self (domestic, intimate, somatic, sexual, nurturing, gastronomical, reproductive) and from historical fiction and works with an elegiac purpose, to fiction concerned with social and physical emergence and the positivity of desire.

My interest in these two novelist's trajectories lies in a number of factors. They are both fundamentally interested in party-politics (as their non-fiction and indeed fictional work makes clear) and each have written on the Whitlam period of government: on what this social-democratic experiment meant and how to come to terms with its loss.

Moorhouse's early fiction is influenced by his Left-Libertarian refusal of state-based politics which is presented through the literary technique of a discontinuous narrative by way of which a contingent, relativist and pluralistic narrator's perspective operates to satirise the attempted formation of party-political and state-focussed activism. The politics of the young inner urban tribe, and even of T. George McDowell in *The Electrical Experience*, that inhabit his earlier stories are presented as "technologies of the self" (Foucault, 1997: 225). For Foucault, these practices and techniques

permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, of immortality. (225)

Lohrey, conversely, begins her novel-length fictional trajectory with an historical fiction, *The Morality of Gentlemen*, which while also concerned in a minor way with technologies of self, is firmly focussed on institutions of power, and the techniques of government that apparatuses of the state practice. In Foucault's terms Lohrey's debut novel thematizes "technologies of power, which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivising of the subject" (225).

Governmentality

For Foucault, the "encounter between the technologies of domination of others [power] and those of the self I call "governmentality"" (225). Drawing on a sixteenth-century Western European discourse of 'government' Foucault seeks to reactivate these older meanings of the term so as to break up the fusion that government and state have in current discourse (2001: 341). These older meanings of government

> designated the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed—the government of children, of souls, of communities, of families, of the sick. It covered not only the legitimately constituted forms of political or economic subjection but also modes of action, more or less considered and calculated, that were destined to act upon the possibilities of action of other people. To govern, in this sense, is to structure the possible field of action of others. The relationship proper to power would therefore be sought not on the side of violence or of struggle, nor on that of voluntary contracts (all of which can, at best, only be the instruments of power) but, rather, in the area of that singular mode of action, neither warlike nor juridical, which is government. (341)

Thus for Foucault the state is not synonymous with government so much as subjected to

> the tactics of government which make possible the continual definition and redefinition of what is within the competence of the state and what is not, the public versus the private, and so on. Thus the state can only be understood in

its survival and its limits on the basis of the general tactics of governmentality. (Foucault, 2001: 221)

Wendy Brown observes that "as is often the case with Foucault's ideas [. . .] the notion of governmentality is both extremely theoretically fecund and woefully underspecified" and it is from the scholars of governmentality that much of the fleshing out and application of Foucault's fecund concept has emerged (Brown, 2005: 142). Indeed, Thomas Lemke's work on governmentality provides the conceptual basis for thinking it as a continuum of rationalities and techniques which stretches from the self to the state:

> While many forms of contemporary critique still rely on the dualism of freedom and constraint, consensus and violence, from the perspective of governmentality the polarity of subjectivity and power ceases to be plausible: government refers to a continuum, which extends from political government right through to forms of self-regulation – namely, "technologies of the self." (Lemke, 2002: 59)[45]

By taking governmentality as a continuum on which self and state both range, a re-conceptualisation is enabled for the reversible New Left and second wave Feminist tenet: the personal is the political and the political is the personal. Yet such a re-conceptualisation must itself be historicised if we are to move beyond the period of the heyday of the New Left in the 1950s and 1960s when Neoliberal forms of governmentality began to emerge and be codified by Chicago University figures like Gary Becker. For Foucault

> the interest of [Becker's] theory of human capital is that it represents two processes, one that we could call the extension of economic analysis into a previously unexplored domain, and second, on the basis of this, the possibility of giving a strictly economic interpretation of a whole domain previously thought to be non-economic. (219)

Foucault's argument is that in these theories of human capital the proper theoretical consideration that capital and land have been given in economic theory has yet to be applied to labour. While for Marx it is capitalism that produces abstract labour, for Neoliberals like Becker the category of abstract labour is a false one that results from the limitations of classical economic theory and its concerns with mechanisms and processes of production and of exchange (221-22). Rather

than see the self as the seller of labour, Neoliberals see the self as "an entrepreneur, an entrepreneur of himself" (226).

The enterprising and entrepreneurial self is a fixture of everyday life now. But where does Libertarianism fit into these practices of American Neoliberalism? If Neoliberalism is, in part, a textual practice then how does it happen in text, in specifically local ways, in Australia? In order to explore these questions I will look below at Left-libertarian writer Moorhouse's shifting positions on governmentality around the time of the breakdown of the post-war boom and the financial system that had enabled it. What is of particular interest is how a Left-Libertarian practises literary politics before, during and after a shift in their own conception of governmentality and before, during and after what is arguably the emergence and dominance of the Neoliberal modes of governmentality. Lohrey's Left-Labourist literary trajectory passes through the long Labor decade and hence Neoliberal governmentality at a later point. Yet, her initial orientation propels her focus away from technologies of the state towards those of the self. This is a curious cross-trajectory. Why would ostensibly Left novelists respond to the same phenomena in inverted ways? Before addressing this question I will move into the mid-range reading.

Reading at mid-range

Lohrey's literary trajectory begins with *The Morality of Gentlemen*, a novel that itself begins with a speech by prime minster Robert Menzies (7-8). Its focus is on an industrial conflict that traverses parliamentary and political institutions. Its politics are very public, although sections of the novel are centred around an illicit sexual relationship and domestic-family conflict. The politics of *Camille's Bread* (1995) are, conversely, intimate, domestic and largely focused on the right way to feed and treat the individual body. The politics of Moorhouse's *The Americans, Baby* are concerned with Libertarian sexuality. Its Labor and anti-American politics form some of the focus, but these are satirized as confused and naive: the drive of party-politics to seize the state is here presented as a sexual will-to-power; another form

of authoritarianism to be resisted. Moorhouse's first instalment in his League of Nations trilogy, 1993's *Grand Days*, is fundamentally focused on the emergence of the international legal and diplomatic apparatus of the League's attempts at an inter-state. His heroine's *Bildung* is a forming of cosmopolitan sexuality and cultural education that emerges alongside the hopeful, idealistic, and diplomatic internationalism of the League.

The 1988 novels oscillate their focus between state-based government and self-government. Both are also works of mourning: *The Reading Group* an elegy for the post-Whitlam left intelligentsia; *Forty-Seventeen* for the character that will become the heroine of *Grand Days*, Edith Campbell Berry, who, in her 70s, dies in Lebanon. *Forty-Seventeen's* work of mourning extends also to the narrator's loss of his first wife, who dies of cancer, and loss of his youthfulness, which dies when his seventeen year-old girlfriend leaves him.

What then might the trajectories of these works of mourning have to tell us about the lost objects of Whitlam's government? Why was *The Reading Group* preceded by a novel of state-governmentality and proceeded by one of subject-governmentality? Why is *Forty-Seventeen* preceded by novels focussed on techniques of the self – government of the self – and proceeded by narratives of the governmentality of the first inter-nation-state?

Lohrey's Labourism propels her through the narrative work of mourning to the emerging techniques of self found in East-Asian medicine and food preparation, and propels her also to the classical and cyclic time of the Demeter-Persephone myth: the Mother-daughter plot. To take Lohrey's trajectory further, her 2004 novel, *The Philosopher's Doll*, indicates that literal birth – as the prime instance of physical human emergence – has become a contested discourse around which problems of control, timing and the reading of biological signals clash with professional careers, routines, and putative freedoms. If the long Labor decade saw the decline of the industrial citizen – previously valorised because productive as a wage-earner – Lohrey's trajectory indicates that the loss of Whitlamism has

been replaced by a reproductive politics of giving birth, nurturing, and re-making the political body from the inside-out.

Conversely, Moorhouse's trajectory is from a Left-Libertarianism that initially disavows the positive role of state-governmentality and that performs its narrative politics in a formal pluralism mirrored in micronarratives of the problems of sexual freedom. This trajectory then tracks through the 1980s toward a sustained work of mourning: the League of Nations trilogy. The third novel in this trilogy, Moorhouse has indicated, is set after the World War Two, and the heroine returns to Canberra to help build the city during its ascendance as a civil-service capital under the Long Menzies hegemony.

The loss of youthful hopes invested in Whitlam are less significant for Moorhouse than the ghosts of a cosmopolitan and internationalist history that are buried. Much more of a loss than the cultural modernity, the cosmopolitan and internationalist sophistication, that Whitlam offered, the demise of the League of Nations and the destruction brought by the Second World War places a high premium on international diplomacy, international relations, the work of committees – a mix of internationalism and cosmopolitanism.

Taking a longer view – indeed with the sorts of benefits that a mid-range reading of Moorhouse's fiction can bring – we can see that Moorhouse's last two novels no longer employ either technique of discontinuous narrative: multiplying points of view or multi-temporality. In Grand Days and Dark Palace (2001) there is a conventionally realist temporal continuity, a firm third-person focalisation on the central character, heroine Edith Campbell Berry, and the narrator's irony is progressively matched by the heroine's as she 'comes-of-age', diplomatically and sexually.

While Lohrey's trajectory has almost elided the early focus on technologies of power – preferring instead to increasingly channel her attention toward the political anatomy of the body rather than the body politic – Moorhouse has sought to join the different polarities of the continuum of governmentality through a

constantly mobile practice of governmentality; one that is willing to fashion and shift according to the institutional demands and possibilities for pleasure presented. For Moorhouse the work of building cosmopolitan connections across the gaps that lie between states and other bodies is a form of creative opposition that disavows – in his present – the narrow Neoliberal drive to form states as managerial enterprises. In these literary attempts to join the continuum of governmentality, freedom is drawn as a condition *and* result of active international inter-state building, and the peace that is the aim of international diplomacy is presented not as the outcome of trade liberalisation, the globalisation of finance, or the flattening of the earth by digital media technologies, but the condition of a limited freedom *and* product of collective self-governing.

Rather than the long Labor decade being a loss of just Labourism in Australia, as Lohrey's trajectory indicates, Moorhouse's signals that Liberalism itself underwent a significant crisis in the 1980s. The year 1988 thereby becomes a marker of significance in the chronology of the long Labor decade's textuality when viewed, from mid-range, through the heuristic of the career of governmentality in the fictions of these two writers.

*

Two decades later this year sometimes appears as a periodizing marker in histories, not least literary histories like Ken Gelder and Paul Salzman's *The New Diversity: Australian Fiction 1970-1988* (1989), or as that moment when a critical revision of White Australia forced its way into the mainstream public sphere. Rather than just adopt a critical response to the Bicentennial year and its 'celebrations,' Graeme Turner asserts: "I think it is time someone argued that the Bicentenary – admittedly somewhat in spite of itself – played a significant role in provoking a 'serious and continuing analysis' of the way in which we think of Australian nationhood" (1994: 67).

Meaghan Morris has written, that

> for all the homogenizing activities aimed at an international tourist market,
> the Bicentennial celebrations pluralized, or rather multiplied, historical
> consciousness in Australian cultural life. It gave a new legitimacy to critical
> accounts of the colonial past [. . .] and to sophisticated public attacks (most
> obviously, by Aborigines) on the idea of progress. (1998: 12)

Further Morris argues that because of the scale of the enterprise as a state-

sponsored undertaking which was

> dedicated to the power of positive thinking and conflict resolution [. . .] the
> Bicentenary welcomed constructive feminist, migrant, working-class, local,
> family, and above all, Aboriginal historical experiments with financially open
> arms, and endowed them, for a time, with a respectability that flowed on to
> other kinds of news and entertainment. (12)

This pluralizing and multiplying of histories around and in the wake of the

Bicentennial made visible and indeed audible those minor and marginalized social

formations Morris lists, whose

> visible fluency in this debate of "special interest groups," including feminists,
> also began to foster resentment among rural and white working-class people
> who felt excluded or attacked by the revisionary mood of all this talk about
> the past, while coping with economic reforms that seemed most obviously to
> suit big business, on the one hand, and tertiary-educated, media-smart,
> middle-class lobbyists for "minority" interests on the other. While I thought
> that the Bicentenary inflected rather than initiated conflicts about the politics
> of development, the time-released complexity of its impact led me to consider
> more closely how those conflicts in turn were being shaped by media images
> *of* economic policy and social activism. (12)

While Morris is concerned with "media images *of* economic policy and social

activism" my concern is with how those forces impelling these media images are

being 'played' in literary form by two of Australia's most political novelists. Each

novelist is as engaged and informed a critic as Morris, but in choosing literary

fiction as their preferred medium their critiques and textual politics are less direct

than Morris's: aimed more at achieving their effects and affects through form and

feeling. So, while Morris writes "it is not surprising that the [Keating] era ended

with a devastating defeat for Labor at the federal election of March 1996. For

historians, it will be long time before this period can seriously be evaluated" a

similar structure of feeling can be seen in Lohrey's character Marita near the end of *Camille's Bread* when she writes to her ex-lover Stephen and tells him:

> Things are kind of settling down here. I have almost come to agreement with Adrian. I told him and his lawyer that I will accept only the legal minimum both in terms of access terms and in child support – that should discourage him from believing that he can control the world through money. At least he's accepted that he has to be patient. I'm not sure how I'm going to bring him and Camille together for the first time.
>
> *After you left I became demoralised and depressed* and Mother took over and negotiated the final terms. She never cared for Adrian, though funnily enough she continues to approve of you. I told her you'd been to gaol and she said: 'I'm not at all surprised' and didn't even ask why or how you got there. But that's Mother. She believes in essences. She makes up her mind and that's that. (1995: 275 emphasis added)

At a similar point in Moorhouse's *Grand Days* (2000), the heroine, Edith Campbell Berry is poised between, as Freud painted the dichotomy of mourning's 'objects', loss and love:

> As she walked to the tram stop, she heard the fluttering of the unruly and unseen things going on in mysterious dangerous ways about her. Robert [her journalist husband] knew how to calm the beating of her heart and the discord and clatter of her mind. One of the ethics of her upbringing had been the stewardship and care of her domain but she had tried to make the whole world into her domain. In this domain she was doomed to choose one direction and to turn away from other directions with full awareness that *every choice could entail irreparable loss*. She felt the terror of having again turned away from the more primordial womanly course. But it was just for now. Just for now.
>
> The tramcar, 'Terminus Palais de Nations,' came along, stopped, and Edith, with her files and paper got on board. (674 emphasis added)

But if we travel back to the 1988 novels of each author we see a more unalloyed mourning. Indeed, we first meet a much older Berry in Paris and on a trip to Beirut where her life ends. The narrator feels little for her death: "I seem though to have such a small reaction to her death. Sad, but not dramatically sad", although in his immediate recollections there is more than a hint of an individual life lost: closer to the hopes invested in a diplomat's life (Moorhouse, 1988: 147). As we know, Berry is the heroine of *Grand Days* and *Dark Palace*, and the muted minimal reaction to her death in this chapter of *Forty-Seventeen* could be seen as the shock and denial stages of the work of mourning for internationalist and cosmopolitan political and

social forms not only as Moorhouse writes them between the World Wars, but also over the cosmopolitan and internationalist hopes and desires that Whitlam and Whitlamism enabled and embodied.

3. *The Reading Group* and *Forty-Seventeen*: Works of Mourning

> It's just that I live for a utopia of the present. (Lohrey, 1988: 268)
>
> I feel we are falling backwards into history. (Moorhouse, 1988: 145)

If Lindsay Barrett is right when he suggests Whitlam was "a *political* modernist[:] he spoke the social language of modernity, the discourses of social progress, cohesion and unity, which for him were far more than rhetoric", then the loss of the Labor Whitlam Government after only 3 years in office (following 23 years of Coalition Government) was a lost object that had held libidinal, ideational and emotional investments much larger than Whitlam's social democratic reform programme ostensibly contained (2001: 9). Left-wing responses to this loss ranged from nostalgia to mania, from melancholy to mourning. The textuality of the long Labor decade evinces these mixed responses, but it is those works of mourning that are of greatest interest to this thesis, as these best enable new loves, new political projects, new forms of governmentality to emerge (Brown, 1999: 22).

Unlike the political texts analysed in chapter one, literary fiction is less able to explicitly analyse and explain political projects. It is, however, better equipped to present the emotional and intimate life of its fictionalised human subjects and, through narrative techniques and symbolic forms, also better able to imagine new ways of linking private and public worlds. These capacities of the novel form are due its hybridity, which permits the presentation of a very private self addressed to a public, making this form well-suited to tracking changes in the shifts in private-public configurations. As complementary modes of textuality, political and literary discourses provide useful resources for interpreting and explaining the sense of loss that pervades the long Labor decade. Having established the presence

of this loss through a consideration of the ghosts of Whitlam in political discourse, this section seeks to explain Moorhouse's *Forty-Seventeen* and Lohrey's *The Reading Group* through the spectral traces of these ghosts.

The mid-range reading presented above claimed that these novels are centrally concerned with a fundamental break in the continuum of governmentality. That they are also works of mourning suggests that innovative Left-literary techniques were needed to attempt to form a new continuum between techniques of the self and techniques of the state. Of course, the power of novelists to influence a political culture is no match for those historic blocs in search of forms of government to articulate to stages of capitalism and geopolitical strategies. The economic and political rationalities and techniques of Neoliberalism, while present in the work of Moorhouse and Lohrey, are an emerging assemblage and consensus in the 1980s. The mid-range reading presented above pointed toward a greater engagement in Moorhouse and Lohrey's post-1988 fictions with these emerging governmentalities: Lohrey toward new technologies of the body and Moorhouse toward an imagined counter-history of cosmopolitan and international governmentalities. But in their 1988 works of mourning this tear in the continuum of governmentalities – those rationalities and techniques that functioned in relation to the Labourist-Social-liberal armature – is the primary object of the two novels. For Lohrey, the technologies of power, through which it was hoped the state would be socialised, have lost to new techniques and rationalities of government, leaving the "practices of ethical self-formation" that previously articulated to Labourism homeless (Dean, 1995: 563). For Moorhouse, the break is between those Libertarian technologies of the self that no longer find a forcefield against which to claim a liberty worth practising. How each novel deals with the loss of the armature and ascendance of Neoliberalism is what the next section analyses.

> Some of us were young at a time when there was a great Utopian vision
> and didn't want to grow up to be Yuppies. What a let down. There was
> this great flare in Australia. This brief flare in the 70s. Whatever you
> think of Whitlam and his extraordinary Government, there was this
> great flare of, "Goodness it's all possible! Let's change the National
> Anthem, let's perhaps think about republicanism. Let's get out of
> Vietnam. Let's recognise China. Let's do all these things and see what
> happens!" You know, it was almost like a fictional process. Let's shuffle
> the deck. And people got very excited and felt the sense of possibility, of
> trying out the new. And then it all imploded. It all deflated for various
> reasons and we'd all have our own stories to tell about that, depending
> on our experience. [. . .]
>   [I]n the process of having abandoned that fiction, I think a kind of
> melancholy has overtaken us. The melancholy of pragmatism. What can
> we afford? (Lohrey, 1990: 210-11)

The Reading Group tracks, through a series of discontinuous tableaux, the lives of

eight former members of a reading group who have lost the utopian and

revolutionary hopes that they had previously invested in the socialist side of the

Australian labour movement. The times are in crisis in the novel: retreats into

privatised utopias; drought and permanent bush fires; menacing plague-bearers;

and a new patriotism that is fiercely marketed, all intensify an atmosphere of

political, social and environmental crisis (Lohrey, 1988: 268-69, 41, 63, 45-6, 54).

Liberalism is condemned as indecisive and weak by a conservative poet in late-

night television monologues, and the state vacillates over whether or not to declare

a state of emergency (248-54). Meanwhile, the former reading group members

continue on, channelling their revolutionary desires into Don Juan-like conquests;

restoring a home to an idealised Victorian-era period purity; seeking the moment

of an transcendental political-poetic-sexual conversion; a knightly crusade to save

just one of the underclass; and attaining political power through being an

indispensably coherent ministerial advisor (26-8, 10-1, 221-28, 89-92, 42-3). The

novel ends with the fires still burning, urgent security decisions of state deferred,

bombs exploding. No character develops, comes to any transforming decisions or

experiences an epiphany of self-knowledge. The aporias and contradictions of

their utopias are presented in the narrative but never explicitly evaluated by the

third-person narrator. The air of impending cataclysm and menace remains. The novel's final word goes to the potential pederast – high school teacher Lyndon Hughes – who tells us that, although he rejects the political utopias of his formerly politically radical friends:

> I don't sneer at utopia. I'd never be that crass. It's just that I live for the utopia of the present. It's a utopia of space, not of time. It's a life lived with an intense awareness of its own space. Of where my body is now. Who's the philosopher here? I'm the philosopher. (268)

A spatial utopia makes literal sense as utopia is a "'good place' [or] 'no place'" rather than a condition of temporality (Roberts, 2000: 107). Yet utopias are usually before or behind us: their perfection haunts the present from the past as much as from the future. In Western modernity utopia is usually in the future and its promise, in Left utopias, is generally cast in terms of what lies after the revolution, rather than from evolution or reform (Jameson, 1971: 91, 146; Dubiel, 1990: 246).

That the novel ends on this manifesto of a privatised bodily utopia, voiced by its most reprehensible character, is symptomatic of Lohrey's techniques in *The Reading Group*. The privatisation of the utopic and revolutionary thinking that had once bound the reading group together is presented as the displacement of those utopic impulses that had been directed toward a post-revolutionary society. By giving voice to this emblematic statement of one of the novel's key themes Lohrey is enacting her modified version of the Brechtian alienation technique, where the reader is confronted by a character's practice and rationality which are not supported by the narrative structure nor by the narrator's positive evaluation of the character (Lohrey, 2004b: 196-99; Hawthorn 9-10). In ending the novel, Hughes's private-utopia manifesto also functions against the lack of the novel's plot closure: there is thus a structural function for this ending where the private utopia of technologies of the self is less a cause for condemning the lack of political commitment from the reading group members than a symbolic form of the means through which the tear in the continuum of governmentality might be re-formed. The Brechtian alienation technique used throughout *The Reading Group* and at the novel's end performs the work of mourning by de-coupling utopian thought from moralities tied into forms of governmentality extant in the lost political project

which had been enacted through the Labourist-Social-liberal armature. As Helmut Dubiel writes, in his Western Marxist post-1989 work of mourning:

> [t]he catastrophic deficiencies of state socialist systems with regard to technical planning and democracy, and the vanished operational conditions of Keynesian regulation, have led to the dilemma that the classical carriers of socialist politics in western Europe are unable to oppose, either on the technical or on the normative-utopian level, a comprehensive and consistent alternative to the neo-conservative project of a "self-cleansing" of capitalism. (1990: 245)

While Dubiel seeks to work through the loss of even the Social-liberal techniques of government that go under the name of Keynes, like Lohrey he is sensitive to the "authoritarian univeralism that many leftists, knowingly or not, have internalized" (246). For Dubiel these techniques of governing the self have been

> blind to the complex motivational economy of actual individuals, in whom particularistic, that is egotistical and traditional, impulses are often so opaquely mixed with universal ones that any test of rationality administered from an abstract point of view gets nowhere. (246)

Renata in *The Reading Group* puts the same point succinctly: "What they really needed was a Minister for Fun, for Having a Good Time. All other politics were, when you thought about it, subsumed by that. What else was revolution for, in the end?" (20)

The collapse of Left utopian projects in *The Reading Group* is presented alongside a breakdown in the reading group itself: "[t]hey used to have a reading group. It had been a waste of time really, an old fashioned idea that no seriously active person would ever bother with" (29). In the time of the reading group they are all still members of the ALP, although their participation is experienced as a laborious, frustrating grind (32). The novel hints at what Beilharz calls the labour movement's mania for policy in this interregnum period between Whitlam and Hawke: the disciplined factional machinery of the party preparing it for government; the discourse of economic rationalism filtering down into the branch level; the Accord and the deregulation of finance are just around the corner (Beilharz, 1994: 102-30). Before the disintegration of the reading group they attempt to read political philosophy, mainly, so as to work out the rationale

underlying the Labor party machine (Lohrey, 1998: 33-4). The political organiser and academic Sam argues that such collective reading will help them to learn the dance-steps of politics; to anticipate and perhaps lead:

> Sam [said] that politics was a form of dancing: you had to know the steps. And the steps changed all the time; so that just when you'd learnt one set the formation would change, or the formation would stay the same but the tempo would alter [. . .]
>
> Renata had asked the obvious question: she didn't see how reading could improve your dancing. Listening, maybe, but to what?
>
> Well, said Sam, you had to know how to listen, you had to know how to interpret the code, and since all concepts came back to words, reading could help you to anticipate. And in any form of dancing, any *structured* form of dancing, he'd corrected himself, every step has a name.
>
> So, you could teach yourself dancing from a book?
>
> Sam didn't see why not; after all, you could teach yourself yoga from a book.
>
> Yes, said Renata, but yoga isn't done to a beat, except that of your breathing. In music there was a rhythm that the body had to experience for itself.
>
> True, but you didn't have to hear it played; all you had to do was to learn how to read music.
>
> Renata had given up at this point. There was something wrong with this argument of Sam's, she knew, but she couldn't pinpoint it, not towards the end of a meal with a head hazy from Andrew's Beaujolais. (29-30)

Although Renata's doubts are temporarily cast aside this scene is particularly acute in tying a number of techniques of self together with those of the government of the state. Effectively, the dialogue between the academic Labor Party member Sam and literary agent Renata reduces down to an incommensurability over their respective approaches to government. For Sam, politics is a set of moves, or techniques, to be learned from a script. Via the dance-step analogy, the dance of politics can be anticipated by learning the steps from the script, thus being ahead in the game. For Renata, if performing politics is like a dance then it is not script but rhythms that must be first felt in the body before the dance of politics can be part of meaningful experience.

This scene is a *mise-en-abyme*: a model for reading the novel (Macris, 2003: 51-2). The decoupling of the techniques of power – Sam's politics as scripted moves – from techniques of self – Renata's politics as techniques of the embodied self – is a tear in the continuum of Left governmentality, which is metonymic of that in Australian political culture. This tear is also of three rhythms no longer in

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harmony: the rhythms of techniques of power, of techniques of the self and the rhythms of the Labourist-Social-liberal armature are in arrhythmia. For Henri Lefebvre "to grasp a rhythm it is necessary to have been *grasped* by it; one must *let oneself go*, give oneself over, abandon oneself to its duration" (2004: 27). In *The Reading Group* the work of mourning is aimed at working through the melancholy and mania so that this arrhythmia can be experienced in the body, as Renata seeks to do. Whether or not this rhythmic tear in the continuum of Left governmentality can be repaired is not what *The Reading Group* answers. Its work is to clearly ask questions of a Left still nostalgic for Whitlam and Whitlamism, still mourning the loss of the Labourist-Social-liberal armature.

*

Part of the literary work of the long Labor decade is working-through Whitlamism with as little nostalgia, melancholy or mania as can be spared before a new political object is cathected. Walter Benjamin, in a short essay published in 1931, spoke of a Left-wing melancholy, a concept that American political theorist Wendy Brown has more recently taken up (Benjamin, 1999; Brown, 1999). Left melancholy applies to the response of those no longer attached libidinal investments and commitments that are made in Left political utopias and formations, especially to those socialist projects of the twentieth century that were given their (premature) death notices by Francis Fukuyama, among others, with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dismantling of the Soviet Union (Fukuyama, 1989). If, for Freud "[m]ourning is commonly the reaction to the loss of a beloved person or an abstraction taking the place of the person, such as fatherland, freedom, an ideal and so on, [i]n some people, whom we for this reason suspect of having a pathological disposition, melancholia appears in the place of mourning" (2005: 203). If the loss of an 'object' is worked-though in mourning, a working-through whereby "the libido as a whole severs its bonds with the object,"

> [m]elancholia is mentally characterized by a profoundly painful depression, a
> loss of interest in the outside world, the loss of the ability to love, the
> inhibition of any kind of performance and a reduction in the sense of self,

expressed in self-recrimination and self-directed insults, intensifying into the delusory expectation of punishment. We have a better understanding of this when we bear in mind that mourning displays the same traits, apart from one: the disorder of self-esteem is absent. (204)

In *The Reading Group* it is the representation of arrhythmic temporalities, where the body politic and the political body are out of time, which marks the loss of the harmonising force that the Labourist-Social-liberal armature held. That the most unalloyed working through of this loss belongs to the most objectionable character in Lohrey's novel, Lyndon Hughes, points to the Brechtian-based use of the structural irony through which the narrator's perspective is presented. Such a healthy irony cannot but announce the presence of an authorial self-esteem which seeks to confront the reader with characters yet to work through their and, indeed, our loss. *The Reading Group*'s work of mourning is made in the reading itself which is offered the utopian impulse in Hughes' techniques of self (Jameson, 2003: 278). Lohrey seems to be inviting us to accept the utopian drive in Hughes with our self-esteem intact: to locate a new politics that doesn't "*squander* [. . .] *the now in a dubious rehearsal for the future*" through the trope of an illegitimate sexual desire for youth (Lohrey, 1988: 268). To read this form of governmentality as progressive requires that 'youth' itself be seen as symbolic: a cultural form. *The Reading Group* thus presages the forcefield that will surround sexualised young bodies in the generationalism of the 1990s culture wars, and in Grunge fiction itself. Its work of mourning requires a reading that fuses acidic formalism with critical theory's psycho-politics. Its demands seek to avoid the lures of melancholy, nostalgia and mania: challenges that will be taken up in the readings in chapters three and four, and in the reading of the synchronic work of mourning, Moorhouse's *Forty-Seventeen*.

Forty-Seventeen

> I think the dissolving of certain left-humanist policies, which comes
> through in my early work, has not been tapped yet here, but that also
> has been a serious social change. When I entered my teens and early
> twenties there was a socialist division, with socialist policies, and some
> evidence that certain socialist objectives would be achieved which would

bring about changes in the quality of life. All of that seems to have
collapsed, or dissolved into a very pale and uncertain sort of vision.
(Moorhouse cited in Baker, 1989: 216-17)

I'm interested in the way we are governed by forums other than
recognisable political forums. We are governed by the dead. Maybe the
dead are the strongest polity. I've moved economics down the list.
(Moorhouse, 1988: 104)

Writing about Moorhouse's fiction, Tim Rowse argues that "[h]is early preference

for the discontinuous narrative [. . .] can be understood as the rendering, within

fiction, of his sociological argument that society is a plurality of subcultures

without a single, authoritative and subsuming cultural centre" (1982: 265). More

pointedly, Rowse observes that in Moorhouse's earlier short-story collections,

a chain of events involving loosely connected characters was narrated from
different points of view, sometime in the first person, sometimes in the third.
There was discontinuity in narrative time, but more importantly,
discontinuity in point of view. It seemed a deliberate strategy to pre-empt the
impression of a world organically composed, explored from a single
perspective. (1982: 261)

What Rowse then notices in Moorhouse's 1976 collection *Conference-ville* (1996a) is

that the technique of "discontinuous narrative is abandoned, and replaced by the

privileged point of view of that self-doubting ego" (262). The trajectory Rowse is

detecting here is one moving from a technique of temporal and focalised

discontinuity, away also from social-collective discontinuity, toward singular

discontinuity.

McKenzie Wark sees this movement, in Moorhouse's technique, toward the use of

temporal and focalised discontinuity in narrative, as enabling the representation of

maps of multiplicity [where] one finds both an aesthetic and ethical
preference for pluralism, one wary of 'the Americans', but fascinated by the
possibility of locating a place where intellectuals might install themselves in
an ironic relation to the pullulating whole, comprehend it and embrace it.
(1997: 72)

Leaving aside the Arnoldian connotations Wark invokes, both he and Rowse

detect two aspects in the trajectory of Moorhouse's literary techniques: that

narrator is becoming unified and increasingly focussed on a set of techniques

applying to one self, while narrative times are increasingly pluralized. As Wark's note on Moorhouse is a brief one and Rowse's analysis was published before *Forty-Seventeen* was, it is hardly surprising that this novel is left unattended. Yet its intensification of temporal pluralism is less a means by which to comprehend and embrace the flux of a pullulating whole – less also, it seems, the formal instantiation of a sociological argument about mediatized cultural pluralism – than an overdetermined response to a loss.

In *Forty-Seventeen* the profoundly self-doubting ego that Rowse observes in *Conference-ville* is presented through a focalised third-person voice complemented by a temporal multiplicity. This array disorders chronological time and places the past in relation to the protagonist's sexuality in ways that breach a number of taboos. Moorhouse has always written graphically on male-male and male-female sex, and in *Forty-Seventeen* Ian's sexual encounters include depictions of bodily abjections, which prefigure those found in Grunge fiction, and are presented as attempts to be proximate to his ancestors; to make his genealogy corporeal.

In "The Great-Grandmother Replica" Ian visits his casual sexual partner Belle in the Blue Mountains. During their visit she lectures him on the types and conduct of being a slut. These observations and generalisations on the techniques of the 'slut'-self are also entwined with Ian's search for his great-grandmother. This is a 'physical' search doubled in the narrative through Belle's invitation to "'embody that metaphor'" of "the vandalised guest house" that stands in "'for this great-grandmother that so bewitched you'" by having sex "amid the urine and excreta smells" (18). [46] This search is a genealogical one, attempting to trace his sexuality back to a progenitor, and to articulate it to a cosmopolitan ethics:

> "Your seeking of your great-grandmother, your seeking of psychic traces is a sluttish thing to do too. What I can't understand is why you just can't have a whore mother fixation, why do you have to have a whore grandmother?"
> Among her many theories, Belle believed that we are parcel of our ancestors and that our friends and lovers are the projections of long dead ancestors. (22)

The final act in this sequence is his and Belle's copulation on the gravesite of his great-grandmother, "'who at seventeen whored in this old resort town'" (22). The

story ends with the revelation that this search and trip were held on the occasion of Ian's fortieth birthday. This revelation sets in train a disjointedness in the temporality of the novel, centred initially around the symbol of the 'forty-seventeen' relationship. Ian's girlfriend is seventeen when they first meet and he turns forty as his historical interests and libidinal drive fuses into a focus on his great-grandmother with whom he virtually has intercourse in the guise of Belle.

The desire for historical continuity and genealogical proximity is embodied in a similar way to which the desire for a libidinised politics is embodied for key characters in Lohrey's *The Reading Group*, like Renata. The time is out of joint in *Forty-Seventeen* and this hauntology is represented through temporalities that are pluralising and turning in the novel: the present is pointing toward different moments of the past and different possibilities in the novel's future.

This multiplying of temporalities is emblematised by a *mise-en-abyme* in "Delegate". While in Vienna, as a delegate to the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency), Ian virtually time-travels via two images emanating from the mirror-like surface of a glass showcase:

> It was at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna that he first glimpsed the face of his seventeen-year-old girlfriend in the face of his seventy-year-old co-delegate, Edith.
>   The face of his seventeen year-old [estranged girlfriend] appeared through the distortion of the double glass of a showcase there in the museum. The distortion came from seeing through both sides of the glass case, the angle of vision too maybe – and maybe the aura of the liturgical objects or whatever, who knows? – this together with his yearning for his girlfriend, all went to create her face, perfectly but fleetingly. Edith then moved and came around the other side of the showcase and her face returned to being that of the seventy-year-old and the girl was gone. (77)

Like his attempts to connect sexually with his great-grandmother through the "Great-Grandmother Replica" Belle, this haunting of Ian by his estranged girlfriend's visage is presented as a pivot on which his politicised sexuality and his sexual politics turns (22). The seventy-year-old Edith, his co-delegate at an international conference, is also the object of his sexual desire:

Then. For an instant. Their eyes met in a weak glow of sought desire – like a torch with failing batteries – but this was extinguished instantly as he recoiled with the physical incompatibility of it. The utter unfeasibility of it [. . .]

He'd wanted, he realised then, to glimpse the girl, moved by a foggy concupiscence, a dim, unformed intention of somehow lurchingly imposing his erotic exigence on her aged body, but even in the dim night lights of the hotel corridor the girl was not there. (80)

Ian's desire to reach into Edith's political history is fused with this ambivalent and possibly displaced sexual desire. Like his sexual fascination with his great-grandmother, Ian's political knowledge and practices are always initially a matter of sexuality: it's his libido that leads his political interests. Seeing his estranged girlfriend's face in Edith's directs his desire toward "Edith and her youth as a technical officer for the League of Nations in Beirut, living in the hotel district on the Avenue de Paris [. . .] Dancing at night clubs. Was she wild?" (144).

Ian's reaction to the death of Edith during a dangerous sightseeing car trip through Lebanon, coming on top of the recent news of "the death of his former wife from cancer" is minimal (147). He has "a small reaction to her death. Sad, but not dramatically sad" (147). Juxtaposed with his reaction to a phone conversation with his ex-girlfriend which ends with her firm rejection of him – "an emotional devastation, objectively, although the expected emotional concussion had not arrived" – these deaths and losses converge into a traumatic shock that overwhelms Ian, stunning him into denial (96). While the novel ends with some hope of reconciliation with his young girlfriend, Ian is back at the Blue Mountains seeking proximity to his great-grandmother: "He wanted to insinuate himself into the intimacy of another generation and another time. He wanted to live among the obsolete and the quaint. To go away from his times, not because he disliked his times, but because of some genetic calling" (172).

*

The work of mourning in *Forty-Seventeen* has its beginnings in the presentation of loss itself. Moorhouse's fictional *oeuvre* is almost one long discontinuous narrative, where characters re-appear and stories are told from alternate perspectives. The

loss that suffuses *Forty-Seventeen* is therefore, in some ways, worked through by writing the fragments of Edith Campbell Berry into a character of continuity. As was argued above, like Edith – who moments before her death, surveying the devastation of Lebanon pronounces, "'I feel we are falling backwards into history'" – Moorhouse's career moves through the hinge that is her fictional character into his League of Nations novels; his own fiction falling back into history as a way of attempting to rejoin the continuum of governmentalities (145).

Moorhouse is in many ways a novelist of internationalism. The ghosts of Whitlam that haunt the textuality of the long Labor decade are spectrally present in *Forty-Seventeen* as an exhausted cosmopolitanism and internationalism that must first be mourned before being re-libidinized. As Barrett argues "Whitlam saw himself as a cosmopolitan Statesman" who "was responding to the fragmentation of the international order with the only tools available to him, tools which were to prove inadequate in dealing with the break-up of the old world and all its certainties" (2001: 157, 165). The collapse of the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates for world currencies, the ongoing crises fostered by the Vietnam war, and the collapse in efficacy of Keynesian governmental techniques and rationalities, combined in the figure of Whitlam and in the rationalities of Whitlamism as a failed leader and project inadequate to the challenges these shifts in international government posed.

As works of mourning of the long Labor decade *The Reading Group* and *Forty-Seventeen* present two different fictions for working-through these losses and living with these ghosts. While the spectres of Whitlam leave complex traces on the long Labor decade, these two novels can be read as works of Left mourning that attempt to provide the resources for rejoining the continuum of governmentality wrought by the burning out of the Australian Labourist-Social-liberal armature. Neoliberal governmentality is barely on the horizon of these texts. Youthful emerging bodies are, however, the objects of intense sexual energy in both *The Reading Group* and *Forty-Seventeen*. Lyndon Hughes' utopia of sex with his young female high-school students, and Ian's sexual relationship with a high-school age

girl, are directed at emerging bodies that symbolise youth in the worlds of these two novels. If the armature and Whitlamism is a lost project and hope in 1988, then what is emerging in this corner of the Australian literary field is at least the object of intense sexual interest for older men. How young sexual bodies emerge, however, is of secondary interest to these two works of mourning, which resonate less with the emergence of Keating then with the ghosts of Whitlam that Keating comes to dispel and dispatch. The loss of Whitlamism makes room for the coming of Keating-ism and the embedding of Neoliberal governmentalities through his stories. The ghosts of Whitlam are not put to rest, but it is to the Grunge fiction literary reaction to the textuality of Neoliberalism in the long Labor decade that this thesis now turns.

Chapter Three.

Grunge Fiction: Figures of Youth, Illness and Mobility in the Literary Field

Time, time betrays me. (Tsiolkas, 1998: 58)

Financially it was a disaster then. (McGahan, 1995b: 79)

Grunge fiction presents a world in which the hero's coming-of-age does not occur. The citizen-subject narrators of Andrew McGahan's *Praise* and *1988*, and Christos Tsiolkas's *Loaded* are not the healthy, flexible, productive, open, entrepreneurial subjects of Neoliberal governmentality. Their bodies and temporal trajectories are instead proximate to waste, antigens, drug-deranged hallucinatory consciousness, crashes, illness, and violence. Grunge abjects the formation *telos* of a coming-of-age and in so doing presents a world in which other more troubling and unsettling becomings, presences and, indeed, unbecomings are brought to the surface and foreground of the narratives.

Keating's national story of an increasingly competitive, entrepreneurial and therefore healthy culture, as analysed in chapter one, embedded Neoliberal techniques of governmentality in Australian political culture. Grunge represents the negative of these chronotopes through the figure of the unemployed, sick, young male body. [47] Where Keating narrated an Australia moving faster and more productively, with more flexibility and efficiency, Grunge characters live in a variety of tempos, which are induced through taking different drugs, producing lives that are wasted, inefficient or subject to speed-bursts of hyper-mobility.

The opening up of the Australian economy which Keating describes as a process of gaining confidence and trust in the nation's entrepreneurial abilities, are negatively homologized in *Praise, 1988* and *Loaded* through those representations of abjection where bodily fluids emerge through the skin and other openings as semen, menstrual blood, faeces and urine pass from one character to another. These instances of the abject are also given expression in *1988* where Gordon and Wayne – denizens of Brisbane with artistic aspirations – travel to the Northern Territory Cape Don weather station in the year of the Australian Bicentennial, to work as meteorologists and to become a writer and visual artist, respectively. In

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McGahan's prequel to *Praise*, the bodily abject is doubled through the porous boundaries that the two young men are placed on: at the rim of the territorial nation; at the periphery of White-Black civilisations; and at the edge of the nature-culture boundary transcribing the materiality of changing weather patterns into data.

Keating's language practices embedded Neoliberal rationalities and techniques of self-formation into Australian political culture through the symbolization of Australia as youthful, coming to maturity and independence, and as finally leaving home and entering the world after a long protective seclusion brought about by fear. Keating's national coming-of-age narrative effectively took the white, male wage-earning industrial citizen – the primary citizen-subject form of the Labourist-Social-liberal armature – and emplotted this national character into a story of necessary modernisation: the industrial citizen would come-of-age by becoming the Neoliberal citizen. This "great tale of Australian economic change", however, has a diseased appendix: Grunge fiction (Keating, 1995: 8).

1. *Praise* and Atopic Illness: the Sick Machines of Grunge Fiction

> I was beaten, I was tired of questions. I *did* know what I was doing. The problem was that the knowledge was deeply unconscious, it was a premonition, it was a gut-level instinct. I knew I had to stick it out with this life for *some* reason, some important reason. (McGahan, 1995a: 258)

McGahan's 1992 novel *Praise* is generally considered to be the first example of Australian Grunge fiction, and while dismissively reviewed and critiqued as "not writing, typing [. . .] all action, no consequences" and a "novel of the bored, middle-class university dropout" it garnered McGahan a number of awards including the *Australian*-Vogel Award in 1991 (Grutzner, 1992: 20-1; Smith, 1992: 88). Told through the first person lens of 23-year-old asthmatic Gordon Buchanan, *Praise* reads like a sequence of realist journal entries which describe, in quite flat, yet wry and very graphic prose, Gordon's life on the dole in Brisbane and the torrid sexual affair he enters into with recovering heroin addict Cynthia Lamonde.

The passage of the novel is structured by a romantic triangle which also involves the lust-object of Gordon's teenage dreams, Rachel. Gordon fails to successfully negotiate this triangle by making neither a choice between the two nor by finding a new lover that is the synthesis of a dialectic between Cynthia's hyper-sexualised violence and Rachel's communicative-rationality. This failure leaves the narrative unclosed and thereby open to the critical charge that Gordon's refusal to negotiate a heterosexual partnership is a failure of maturation. To read *Praise* through its lack of romantic narrative closure is, however, to impose a specific temporality of development onto a narrative that is fundamentally concerned with what occurs outside orthodox time. To read *Praise* horizontally and promiscuously with the textuality of the long Labor decade and affiliated, in particular, with the stories of Keating, requires that Gordon's failure to resolve his romantic coming-of-age is bracketed. To reappraise Grunge, the powerful tropes of generational reproduction need to be held in abeyance, so that we might read it on the boundary it makes with the textuality of the long Labor decade.

Sex and drugs and the rock'n'roll[48]

Before the central relationship between Gordon and Cynthia begins to intensify, we discover that while Gordon aspires to be a writer, having already written a novel and short stories, he has little ambition for anything but depressing poetry about sex and violence:

> I had been writing poetry for three or four years by then. And short stories. And a novel, when I was nineteen. But after the novel, poetry was the only thing I had much interest in. It was quick and easy and satisfying. I wrote mostly about sex and my deep disappointment with it. I didn't know much about sex. (McGahan, 1995a: 10)

He had moved to Brisbane from his family home in Dalby, a rural town on the Darling Downs in South-East Queensland, to attend high school then university, from which he drops out (117, 10). Along with the old HZ Holden Kingswood that he has inherited from his parents, he also brings to Brisbane a torch for his teenage love Rachel who lived on a property near his family's and now lives in Brisbane (30, 90-93). She is part of his circle of friends, largely from his time at university,

that drink and take drugs together, at pubs and parties and nightclubs in Brisbane (117-18).

Cynthia, who is also 23, suffers from atopic dermatitis – "'a skin condition. Eczema. It's fucked up my face,'"– which is related to asthma and is from the southern metropole of Sydney, where she'd spent "'a year on heroin'" (8-9). She has come to Brisbane with her parents to escape the sex and drug addictions of her life in Sydney and worked at the same pub as Gordon did, the Capital Hotel, before a dispute between staff and management leads to a mass walk-out by the staff (4-7).

These two protagonists embark on a squalid, passionate romance set mainly in an old boarding house in New Farm and surrounding parts of Brisbane in the late-1980s: after the Brisbane Expo and the 1988 Bicentenary of white settlement. Their decadent affair lasts less than nine months and is driven by Cynthia's large sexual drive, Gordon's desire for self-abasement and their shared predilection for drugs, legal and illegal. While their sexual affair eventually generates mutual praise and even love, Gordon eventually retracts from Cynthia's sexual dominance and appetite, feeling that "[t]he possession and the hatred. The love and the manipulation" had de-generated into a possessive violence that no longer holds a libidinal charge for Gordon (190). Their relationship begins to end with the return of the emotionally rational Rachel into Gordon's life. Yet, even after separating from Cynthia, Gordon's taste for "[s]elf-abasement [and] impulses [that] were all diseased, rooted in darkness" are too irrational for Rachel: "I was empty-handed. I had no life to spare. I had nothing to offer but endless spare time and a cruel, mindless devotion. Some women might've considered that, but not Rachel" (253, 258). Rachel instead wants Gordon to be transparent to her; to *"offer"* her something, but Gordon's life throughout the novel is built on the practice of an ineffable rationality centred on a refusal of work (257-58).

Indeed, *Praise* begins with the thematization of unemployment. Cynthia quits while Gordon – after discovering that he is expected to cover the shortfall by working extra shifts – quits as well, telling us that: "Work wasn't the answer to

anything" (2). The run-down New Farm boarding house where he lives is populated with the detritus of unemployed older men, who are "[s]ingle. Out of work. Living out their days on the pension," and the most prominent of this group, the emphysemic Vass, is figured as a possible future for Gordon, who when talking to Vass remarks, "I was looking into my own future again" (2, 18, 179).

Living on unemployment benefits subjects Gordon to a variety of state-based Neoliberal techniques of government. At the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) Gordon finds that although there were "[b]ad times in the economic world [. . .] and being young and single and male [meant that s]ociety was constructed for the likes of me [e]very form I'd ever filled out had told me that [. . .] I didn't have the right desires"(26-7). In *Praise* Neoliberal techniques for conducting the behaviour of the unemployed include ascetic practices which induce forms of knowledge and desire from the citizen-subject which are then acted upon:

> I'd spent most of my life avoiding going on the dole just to stay out of their [the CES and the Department of Social Security] grasp. They needed to know things. They needed to limit and define. They created motives where motives didn't exist. They assumed guilt, they searched for it, rooted it out and pinned it down. And I *was* guilty. (27).

For Mitchell Dean, Neoliberal government of the unemployed seeks to guide conduct by forming the unemployed self through a hybrid practice of governmental and ethical techniques of self-formation (1995: 562). Gordon's response to the pressures of these hybrid practices of self-formation is to equate the negative freedom of employment with death, as the only means by which to be at liberty from these techniques of government: "[t]he only safe course was employment. No one bothered you if you were employed. But then no one bothered you if you were dead either. Employment was death. Safety was death. These things had to be understood" (McGahan, 1995a: 27). Thus the conditions for the novel are established: Gordon eschews both the living-death of employment and the desires and motivations that the residual welfare state seeks to govern him through as an unemployed subject. Into the time-space vacated by these refusals *Praise* places Gordon and Cynthia's romantic and sexual relationship. A

relationship conducted through their sick bodies, the contours and symbolic forms
of which constitute the novel's critique of Neoliberal governmentalities.

Atopia I

> When I look back on those thirteen years of Labor government I think of
> the period after the summit as the intensive care ward. (Keating, 1999:
> pars. 10 and 11)

The beginnings of Gordon and Cynthia's affair are based on a set of frank
exchanges mutually divulging their personal sexual histories and proclivities.
They reveal details about their diseases: how they both fail to avoid allergic
substances, how Cynthia's use of cortisone to treat her eczema symptoms has
severe side effects, and how they both exacerbate their conditions by smoking and
drinking (8-11, 13-4). The keynote for their relationship is established the morning
after their first night spent together when Gordon awakens with an asthma attack
which he medicates with Ventolin and cigarettes, while Cynthia's "face and [. . .]
skin was livid red [and] bleeding" (13-4). They rise, eat breakfast then take a drug
called Catovits, an amphetamine prescription drug for Cynthia's depression and
then go back to drinking beer (14-5). Although their sexual relationship is yet to
begin, this pattern of illness and intoxication constitutes a fundamental structure
of the novel, with the levels of dangerous drug abuse matched by the exacerbated
symptoms of their illnesses.

Their literally warts-and-all affair begins when Cynthia moves into Gordon's
boarding-house flat surrounded by the older men who drink all day, steal each
other's belongings and occasionally beat up the weaker amongst them. The
communal bathroom in the boarding house is never cleaned, and in an early scene
Gordon and Cynthia sit in its filthy bathtub for hours, and then have sex in one of
the dirty cubicles after injecting heroin:

> There was something deeply sexual about the syringe and the blood and the
> rush, about having someone else *stick it in* [. . .] She was a succubus. I was
> doomed. She injected the heroin. It came flooding up my arm – who would've

thought blood moved so fast – into my chest, streaming into my brain like molten gold. I lay back and let it go. (66)

Praise fashions a kind of literary bohemia, but one without the poetic epiphanies and moments of transforming transcendence normally associated with an artistic underground. Gordon and Cynthia move through the marginal and liminal zones of both inner-urban Brisbane and their bodies, experimenting with desires, sex and drugs (Brooks 92-3). But there is no romantic transportation in *Praise*. Their derangement of the senses leads to less, rather than more, insight; more danger, more disease. There are momentary glimpses of utopia in *Praise*, but these are narcotic and hallucinogenic experiences which fail to transcend the dangers to and diseases of their bodies which grow and accelerate.

Gordon eventually pulls out of the relationship by refusing Cynthia sex (McGahan, 1995a: 196). He wants to stop the increasingly unregulated derangements and desires within which he oscillates in widening, less balanced and more violent arcs and cycles. He finds that he swings from being a passive masochist to an active sadist, becoming more depressed, more diseased, more prone to asthmatic attacks; more consumed and violent, out of control (114-15). The penultimate scene is set at a bacchanalian party after which Gordon's body crashes. His body is choked by a near terminal asthma attack. His luck runs out. Someone had put dishwashing liquid in the cocktails: "There was no air [. . .] Nothing went in. I was over the edge, I was going [. . .] I became deeply annoyed. My body was letting me down. I wasn't going to make it on my own. I was going to have to seek *medical help*" (269). The shutdown of Gordon's body is felt as a kind of surrender: "I still couldn't breathe, but I wasn't worried about that now. It was out of my hands. The system was taking over and for once I was glad" (270).

Sick machines

> [G]et the economy ticking over like it should with the new motor Labor had given it. (Keating cited in Watson 333)

Gordon's bodily crash has an homology in the figure of his car – an old Holden HZ Kingswood from the 1970s. Handed down to him through his large rural family, the car is his family inheritance and a link with the Old Australia: the national car from the era of protection and tariffs, nation-building and Keynesian demand management – from the period of the armature. The Holden carries two very different meanings in Australian culture. On the one hand, it is symbol of a successful Australian manufacturing industry, aligned with Ben Chifley, the ALP prime minister who spoke of the "Light on the Hill" and also tried to nationalise the banks (Griffiths, 1993: 21-39). On the other hand, it symbolizes a set of more troubling myths of Australian identity: masculine, aggressive, pragmatic, and white. Such Holden-ism is, in some ways, the Australian equivalent of Fordism: a metonym of the American system of production and consumption in which the war-time Labor Government brought together American General Motors with the domestic Holden company to mass-produce "a small family care for Australian conditions" ("Holden").

In *Praise*, Gordon's Kingswood becomes a metaphor for his body: "I knew nothing about my car. I neglected it. I drove it badly. I let drunken fools do what they wanted with it. And yet it kept on going for me, mile after mile. Year after year" (175). His car is perhaps "[t]he only thing [. . .] that I truly loved without question — and there it lay, dying in the cul de sac" (171). The Kingswood acts as a genealogical link or tradition that Gordon both takes for granted and uses as a means for generating abject events. The simultaneous danger and thrill of treating his car in such a manner is emblematised when Gordon and Cynthia go on a joy ride while hallucinating on LSD. Cynthia is driving, as they head out of Brisbane, and her drug-deranged un-control of Gordon's car is metonymic of their sexual relationship, where Cynthia's violently instinctual drives both thrill and horrify Gordon: "Cynthia picked up speed. Eighty, a hundred, a hundred and twenty, a hundred and forty – it was as fast as the old Kingswood could go. We were on a road that rolled up and down the hills. We bounced along. I stuck my head out the window. Sucked in the air" (128).

The car-ride soon spins out of control, with the Kingswood eventually flipping over twice:

> Cynthia was laughing, shrieking. 'Did you see that, did you *see* that!'
> I let go of the door.
> 'You crazy bitch. You fucking crazy bitch.'
> 'Oh shut up, we're all right.
> 'All right?!'
> She turned the ignition, hit the accelerator. (129)

On another joyride Gordon's car eventually crashes: "We crawled home. By the time we hit Brisbane it was almost dawn. The engine was overheating and the wine was all gone. We drove to Frank and Maree's house and parked [. . .] I looked at the Kingswood. It was depressing" (171). Yet, even after the Kingswood being stolen, its body "'[f]ine. A few dents'", the sick machine, like the old men of the boarding house, and like Gordon himself, still ticks over (182).

The damaged Kingswood is symbolic of not only Gordon's damaged masculinity but of the persistence of the old motor, the old armature, that survives into the long Labor decade, however residual a force. The armature that generated industrial Holden-ist, rather than Fordist, citizen-subjects is still turning in Gordon's world. That he relies on it as a vehicle for his trips into abjection points to both the persistence of the tradition and the drive to get outside it. Gordon is part *bricoleur*: he takes the fragments of his abjected bodies – the sick machine of his own body or of the Kingswood – and attempts to rejoin them without succumbing to the logics of the new motor: "what I was doing — wandering around this way, month after month, wasting my time, my health, my money, going nowhere, seeing nothing — somehow it had a purpose. My life as a whole felt right, as much as all the individual pieces of it looked wrong" (258).

Atopia II

> The choice of the human body, and the various conditions of health and sickness, strength and weakness, working and sedentary, that often go along with it is not incidental. The body is used in political theory to represent [. . .] both the ideal polity and to critique its actual manifestations. (Rasmussen and Brown 470)

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> I mean, what was Labor, really in economic terms, before 1983? As a
> party, it believed in regulation. It believed in regulation of the banking
> system. It believed in regulation of the exchange rate. It believed in
> tariffs. We had abysmal rates of productivity, of labour productivity and
> factor productivity. We had low profits, therefore low investments. We
> had high unemployment. I mean, what did we abandon? It's like losing
> an eczema. (Keating cited in Kelly, 2001: 88)

As part of the diseased appendix of Keating's narratives of the long Labor decade *Praise* can be read not so much as a dystopian footnote to Keating's utopian stories of the grand adventure in economic reform but more as an atopian one; like the diseases asthma and eczema. As Susan Sontag observes: "[t]raditional disease metaphors are principally a way of being vehement; they are, compared with the modern metaphors, relatively contentless" (73). When Keating equated Whitlam-era Government regulation with eczema there is something more being communicated here than just a disease that is grown out of. As was argued in chapter one, the tropes of Keating's language are not entirely within his intentional control. And if Keynesian techniques of governing the economy are like an eczema then how might this metaphor be embodied as governmentality and what rationalities and techniques of government would produce an economic suffering asthma?

When Gordon tells us that "I was allergic to all the things I liked – nicotine, alcohol, dope, dust, wool, cheese, tomatoes, Chinese food" we can understand something of the complexity of asthma (248). Atopic conditions, like asthma and eczema, effectively displace and defer the acute events of suffocation and skin disease: diseases of the lungs and the skin (WHO, 2008; ASCIA: 1-3). In other words the allergic response which antigens, or allergens, cause becomes an acute medical event at a later point in time and through a part of the body distant from that point at which the antigen made initial contact. Atopy – "[a] form of hypersensitivity in which acute reactions occur, on exposure to the antigen, in some special organ or tissue" – as a medical term leans for its meaning on the Greek etymological root denoting an out of place-ness ("Atopy"). An atopic condition is not degenerative, but threatening; something carried around like a

ghost that can strike. It is an in-between condition: neither terminal nor ephemerally acute, but chronic, with acute episodes (WHO, 2000: par. 10). Its liminality comes also from the uncertain direction of the illness's cause: is it the foreign body, or invasive antigen, that enters the subject's body, or the allergic response itself that constitutes the illness? (WHO, 2003a: 2)

Atopic conditions are quite singular. They are neither terminal nor acute and temporary. They can be mostly conditions of infancy and childhood but also increasingly in the developed world, conditions of adults (WHO, 2007: 3). There is mystery surrounding these atopic conditions: sometimes they are genetic hypersensitivities to antigens that others have no trouble accepting into the body; sometimes it is the antigens themselves that trigger the attack (WHO, 2000: par. 6-9). Atopic conditions are so named because the symptomatic events – such as the rash and sores, the asthmatic inflammation and suffocating, the choking of lung deflation – are not caused by direct contact with the antigen. Rather, the cause is from nowhere or no place; the cause and the effect is displaced and sometimes deferred ("Atopy"). Stress and psychological factors, can exacerbate the conditions; as can the conventional treatments: Ventolin and cortisone (Curnow).

Asthma and eczema are more prominent in childhood hence Keating's allusion to repudiation of Whitlam-era Labourist-Social-liberalism as "losing an eczema," suggesting that these characteristics of a previous form of governmentality were adolescent, if not childish (WHO, 2003b). But contrary to Keating's eczema metaphor, in which his ALP engineers a developed, mature, grown-up economy, eczema and asthma are diseases on the increase in the developed world, especially America (WHO, 2007: 3). Reading Keating's metaphor against medical demographic literature produces a dissonance: losing an eczema is mature deregulation but the putatively developed world that such deregulation opens·Australia to is in actuality increasingly presenting with eczema.

A horizontal and promiscuous reading of Praise places it on the boundary with Keating's body-politic tropes. The next section of the thesis is a short experiment in reading across this boundary, threading the two major reforms of the ALP

Government over the long Labor decade through Cynthia and Gordon's atopic bodies; to read Cynthia and Gordon's bodies' illnesses as though their bodies are each a version of the national economy during the long Labor decade.

Cynthia's eczema

> I think we can also say that in opening Australia up, in peeling the tariff wall away and removing exchange rate controls and giving the country some real breath and life inside it, we have turned Australia to our neighbourhood, reoriented it to the world. (Keating cited in Watson: 535)

> Her skin was red and scraped and tough [. . .] She said it wasn't tough. She said that in fact it was quite delicate. Just a touch could make it bleed. The problem was allergic reactions. She was allergic to things like wool, dust, soap, various foods, alcohol. (McGahan, 1995a: 9)

Cynthia: the peeling of the skin. Cynthia is the subject of the opening up of the economy. The borders are opened to goods and services, the pores are opened up; they are bleeding. Cynthia is the affirmation of desire. She consumes and possesses Gordon, she dominates him. She introduces him to injecting heroin, the most powerful narcotic. She is out of control as indexed by her external accounts, the broken, bleeding indices of her protective dermis, measured in the BOP (Balance of Payments), the foreign debt, and CAD (Current Account Deficit). She spends her energy, she honours her libidinal flows, she is open to the world. Cynthia uses the world to penetrate her and is addicted and addictive:

> 'I think it wants to fuck me,' she said.
> 'I think I know what my own penis wants.'
> 'Bullshit. I'm the only one that knows.'
> She came climbing back up, lifted herself and descended." (24)

Cynthia's eczema is the post-1983 skin of the economy, reacting to the ingestion of antigenic matter: "her face was oozing blood. The bleeding woman" (22).

Gordon's asthma

> [I]nflation remains Australia's number one economic disease. (Keating cited in Edwards 349).

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> This was it, I'd gone too far, my lungs had had enough. I couldn't
> breathe. The asthma had me. There was no air. Every time I tried to
> inhale all that came was pain. I sucked at the Ventolin. I coughed and
> shuddered. Nothing went in. I was over the edge, I was going.
> (McGahan, 1995a: 269)

Gordon on the other hand, is passive. He has low energy and low motivation. He is not so much closed in on himself, but is very much the pre-1983 Keating model of the terminal, unhealthy economy. He refuses work, lives with relics, the detritus of those who did not make the translation to the new economy: Labourist industrial citizens. He abuses the welfare state. Gordon does not like efficiency, rationality, clarity, reciprocal exchange, but instead prefers violence, debasement, degradation, entropy. Gordon is un-masculine. He regulates his life passively and on occasion actively negates it.

To some extent his disease is a symbol of the major technique for the regulation of finance capital: the RBA's (Reserve Bank of Australia) manipulation of interest rates. His lungs, the organs of his body where the symptom strikes, can be seen as emblematising the key mechanism through which this arm of Government targets inflation: the price of credit through which it inflates and deflates key market values. While in the Keynesian model the RBA focussed primarily on unemployment this shifted in the long Labor decade from exchange rate interventions to CAD monitoring, then to inflation control: effectively controlling the lungs of the economy by choking and releasing them (Bell, 2004: 31-57). This movement can be read as a response to the shaping of the world economy by the needs and demands of finance capital: requirements which atopically displace and defer costs in pursuit of increasing returns on capital investment, thereby insulating itself from risk, but not moral hazard (Jennings). Gordon's asthma attacks are a negative homology of the acute failure of the lungs of the economic body to deflate in a regular oscillation with inflation. The asthma attack is the abject state of finance capital: when toxic assets and loans cannot be expelled from the body economic: "My body was letting me down. I wasn't going to make it on my own. I was going to have to seek *medical help*" (McGahan, 1995a: 269).

Praise can be read through the atopic bodies of Gordon and Cynthia, whereby their bodies are figured as a national economy. This reading takes the tropes and rationalities of Keating's stories and language and uses these as interpretive models through which to read the diseased bodies of *Praise's* protagonists. My argument here is that both literary and political discourses are using bodies and a set of tropes – youth, mobility and illness – within narratives and are drawing on the same set of rationalities for different purposes. This is a reading method that works on what might be seen as a tenuous and precarious boundary. Tenuous and precarious because the reading effectively collapses the complex social, material, institutional and semiotic differences between the political and literary fields. And yet the precision and power with which Keating deployed metaphors of the relation between economy and Government carried Neoliberal governmentalities forcefully into public discourse in the long Labor decade. Indeed, the concept of governmentality breaks down the boundaries between fields and discursive formations. Foucault writes: "in neo-liberalism—and it does not hide this; it proclaims it—there is also a theory of *homo œconomicus*, but he is not at all a partner of exchange. *Homo œconomicus* is an entrepreneur, an entrepreneur of himself" (2008: 226). The entrepreneur-of-self is, for Foucault, the key Neoliberal technique where the ostensible boundary between object and subject of: investment; niche-marketing; product-placement; efficiency-drives; and branding, collapses: the self is both employer and employee of its own enterprise. The self is thereby subject to modes of market rationalities and techniques which it shares with small businesses, church groups, and states. Under Neoliberalism the boundary between a sick economy and sick body is already dissolved. A reading method that feeds complex and negative tropes and symbolic forms back into the circuitry of political discourse is a minor gesture in the work of negation.

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The extent to which the self, and especially the self being formed, is conducted by Neoliberal techniques saturated with thought, is a problem that Morris is lead to consider in her essay on Keating "Ecstasy and Economics". For Morris the ecstatic affect of Keating and his economic discourse on Australians was caused by the unbounded movement of market rationalities into previously protected areas. She draws out the implications of Gary Becker's mode of economic analysis, and the techniques it gives rise to, as ones by way of which

> [t]he boundary between market and non-market spaces [which] is traditionally conceptualized by the Left as the dividing line between "necessity and freedom," and thus as "the prerequisite of a nonmarket and pluralistic socialization" [is subject to the] new Right's effort to annihilate any type of boundary to the market. (1998: 184)

Furthermore, this effort to unbind market rationalities from the protected zones of "freedom", implies "that both spaces can '*fuse* in a generalized economic tabulation where human time would be the primary element'" (184). The embedding of Neoliberal governmentalities into previously protected spheres and zones is not a project seeking to dominate space so much as one aimed at "the conquest of (non-market) *time*" (184). The psychic charge of market and entrepreneurial techniques travelling outside their prior containment lines into the domestic private-intimate sphere and into areas of culture, education, health and public administration produced an ecstasy which was based on a fantasy of control over human time. But what other times are abjected in the application of this fantasy?

While Kirkby, Muller and Brooks have drawn attention to the remarkable similarities between the depiction of bodily fluids and piercing of skin in Grunge fiction, like *Praise*, and Kristeva's concept, their use of the term abject confines it to a spatial application rather than also a temporal process. The chronically ill, sexually perverse, drug-deranged hetero-temporalities of *Praise*'s protagonists bring these abjected temporalities to the foreground of this dirty realist narrative. Gordon and Cynthia's unbecoming enacts *Praise*'s resistance to the Neoliberal conquest of their time. Gordon's failure to articulate the abjected fragments of his resistant life into a whole is less a mimetic failure of maturity than a literary

instantiation of structures of feeling being demolished and reconfigured into new becomings. *Praise* doesn't say what these new becomings are but Gordon feels his life "somehow [. . .] had a purpose. My life as a whole felt right, as much as all the individual pieces of it looked wrong" (258). As we will see in the next section Gordon's problem of articulating, the fragments of a self, in both the joining and expressing senses, is shared by Ari, the narrator-protagonist of *Loaded*.

2. *Loaded*: Dancing the Arrhythmia

> Peter Beilharz identifies something crucial [. . .] when he argues that we are living through the decline of the model of "industrial citizenship" that laborism put in place in the 1950s. What we need now, he says, is a reinvention of citizenship in the context of a "republicanism beyond laborism." But if this is easier said than done, more readily defined than desired, part of the problem may be that in Australia [. . .] the "not so 'new'" social movements, with their "'race, class, gender' mantra," have not only developed in conflict with laborism but also created positive programs by a practical engagement *with* it. (Morris, 1998: 202)

Loaded is, on the surface, a typical debut novel. Tsiolkas is a gay Greek-Australian, who lives in Melbourne, and so is his narrator Ari Voulis (Tsiolkas, June 2008). The myth of first novels is that they are thinly disguised, if not explicitly, autobiography and often a type of *Bildungsroman*. *Loaded* effects a confessional tone, but apart from Ari's coming-out as gay – to the reader, through the narrative itself – there is no successful socialisation or autonomy achieved in the narrative: the two 'tasks' of the classic *Bildungsroman* (Moretti, 2000a: 15). Like Joyce's *Ulysses*, *Loaded* is temporally and spatially compressed with the novel's events occurring over twenty-four hours and its structure presented through a Quartet of parts that are marked with the basic compass points of metropolitan Melbourne: North, South, West and East. Ari's life is at a crisis point: he is 19 and a disappointment to his Greek-Australian migrant parents and some of his friends. He is not at university, he refuses work, he smokes and snorts and drinks and dances and fucks to excess. He is gay, but hates faggots, and fears coming-out to

his parents, worried at how he will be perceived by the Greek-Australian community that he is trying to break away from (Tsiolkas, 1998: 129).

This day in the life of Ari represented in *Loaded* is partly a social and psychological journey through the suburban and urban areas of Melbourne, tracking him as he moves through various sites and spaces, from his family home, to his friend's engagement party, to a Greek club, a gay nightclub and a few back lanes and beats for quick anonymous sex. Along the way, he fights and rages against any attempt to fix his identity, whether it be political, ethnic, or sexual. He also ingests and smokes drugs including speed, nicotine and alcohol, along with ecstasy and acid, marijuana and amyl nitrate which he uses to control the tempo of his movements, especially for dancing. Each of the Quartets is headed with an epigraph from a pop song, including *Smells Like Teen Spirit*: the paradigmatic Grunge song. Ari's world is saturated with music.

Loaded is concerned with the consequences and aftermath of the displacement of industrial citizenship in Australian political culture; a topic that few non-fiction writers of the long Labor decade have given much attention to. This is understandable as industrial citizenship in Australia privileged the so-called productive, white, male wage-earner, marginalising other forms of citizen-subjectivity and their entitlement to make claims on the state. With its foregrounding and thematising of structures of feeling and use of symbolic forms, the dirty realism of those novels of Australian Grunge fiction which present the failed self-formations of unemployed young men, are texts well-suited to analysis seeking to understand the aftermath of the unwinding of the Labourist-Social-liberal armature. Grunge sharpens those moments when a residual industrial citizenship vaporizes and those traditional, Labourist practices of Australian male self-formation and those practices of self not deemed flexible, mobile, healthy, clean or enterprising enough are presented as the discarded by-products of the new Neoliberal techniques of government. One way of dealing with this waste – this stubbornly resisting sludge – is to get wasted, or loaded, on drugs and sex. In Tsiolkas' novel this is what the narrator-protagonist Ari does. But as a reader-

critic, to get stuck in the morass of waste in *Loaded* is to get caught at the edge of the boundary between Tsiolkas' literary textuality and the textuality of long Labor decade. The waste of *Loaded* is not an undifferentiated sludge, but fragments and forms of self seeking wholeness or harmony. Yet, unlike Gordon's in *Praise*, Ari's quest for an integrated identity is based on being neither heterosexual, white anglo-celtic Australian, nor middle-class. Consequently, Ari's identities are more socially-marginal than Gordon's, impelling him to move more quickly and with greater social skill than Gordon does as Ari's triply marginal status places him in more danger than Gordon feels.

Ari's world is dynamic and intense; reflected in the twenty-four hour span of the novel and the urgently open present-tense narration. This dynamism is also tied into the centrality of music and dancing in Ari's life. Indeed, Ari attempts to dance these abjected fragments of his wasted identities into a layering of rhythms. Like Renata in Lohrey's *The Reading Group* Ari feels the rhythms of politics first in his body. How he attempts to dance these diverse and conflicting forms of governmentality together is what makes *Loaded* such a promiscuous literary text to affiliate with components of the textuality of the long Labor decade.

Conducting identities

In Tsiolkas's *Loaded* an assemblage of identity forms and investments in political projects focused through Ari, do not so much fail to reconcile each to each, or to spatially harmonize, as fail to form a temporal harmony, or eurhythmia. *Loaded* is a post-industrial citizenship novel: a novel that presents multiple citizen-subjects as forms of governmentality all vying within and through Ari without the baseline forms that the Labourist-Social-liberal armature underwrote and directed through industrial citizenship. This armature generated a forcefield, as Morris suggests, against which other social and intellectual movements and formations were able to work alongside and, importantly, in contest with. Thus the unwinding of this armature, its weakening as *the* primary forcefield in Australian political culture,

had consequences for Australian society, and especially for the formation of male citizen-subjects, that are still felt.

The collapse of the centrality of the industrial citizen has not led to its replacement with more socially expansive forms of citizenship – such as those forms of identity which base their claims around sex, race and gender politics – but has rather left a vacuum filled by the forcefield of market-based forms of governmentality. In the long decade Labor sought to shape "working class identities that were compatible with the new spirit of entrepreneurial co-operative capitalism" (Johnson, 2000: 30). Keating, in particular, constructed a "historical narrative" in which Australian society was "multicultural, diverse, celebrating difference, benefitting everyone" to the extent that such difference could be subsumed by and turned toward "entrepreneurial economic self-interest" (30-1). Johnson observes that

> the ALP's natural constituency moved from being the white, blue collar male industrial worker, co-operating with white, male employees in manufacturing industry, to being a member of any class, sex, sexuality, race or ethnicity working in cutting-edge manufacturing, a new information economy, or in the service industries, and all working together to make Australia internationally competitive. (2000: 30)

She goes on to argue that Keating "tended to privilege social issues that were compatible with his construction of economic issues and not recognise others. Furthermore, he was trying to reshape constructions of the social in ways that fitted his particular economic vision" (31). Keating's privileging of certain social issues was not merely an act of recognising that the forces of post-industrialism had changed the Australian social landscape, so much as a technique and rationality of government which sought to conduct and "actively shape citizen diversities in ways that were aligned with a particular economic project and particular set of government policies. What [Keating] claimed to be a story about diversity was really a story about another form of narrative closure" (34).
The embedding of Neoliberal governmentality in the long Labor decade worked on the pre-existing discourses of cultural difference and diversity that were already extant in the so-called "benevolent state [. . .] management of demographic diversity" that was practised in "official" multiculturalism

(Gunew 230). While "the multicultural nation might conceive of itself as a unified plurality" or a "harmonious cultural mosaic" the *doxas* of official multiculturalism operated through a set of limited tolerances that placed strict boundaries around what differences were acceptable, and indeed encouraged, and what were not (Authers 143; Papastergiadis 174).

In *Loaded* Ari attempts to push through these boundaries, keeping his identity plural and fluid enough to keep him moving through the recognitions that interpellate him in ways that attempt to fix and dominate him. He struggles against the institutions and structures of official multiculturalism and racism, attempts to maintain working-class solidarity and fidelity to a belief in a socialist future while unemployed, and resists the threat to his sense of masculinity that being gay poses. Indeed, his self-identification as "queer" is ambivalently treated by eliminating homosexuality from the conduct of real men: "[e]very time I look at a gay man, even if I think he's attractive, I can't forget he's a faggot. I get off on real men, masculinity is what causes my cock to get hard, makes me feel the sweat and danger of sex" (91). His ambivalence about the primary components of his identity, such as being queer, is a hinge on which he can turn and pivot, according to the contingent situation he is in.

One technique of resistance he uses is an identity politics that inverts the pejorative slang by which he is interpellated, defusing the power of such interpellations by appropriating them:

> Fucking faggot rings in my ear. Faggot I don't mind. I like the word. I like queer. I like the Greek word *pousti*. I hate the word gay. Hate the word homosexual. I like the word wog, can't stand dago, ethnic, Greek-Australian. You're either Greek or Australian, you have to make a choice. Me, I'm neither. It's not that I can't decide; I don't like definitions.
>
> If I was black I'd call myself nigger. It's strong, scary, loud. I like it for the same reason I like the words cocksucker and wog. If I was Asian I'd call myself a gook, but I'd use it loudly and ferociously so it scares whitey. Use it to show whitey that it's not all yes-sir-no-sir-we-Asians-work-hard-good-capitalist-do-anything-the-white-man-says-sir. Wog, nigger, gook. Cocksucker. Use them right, the words have guts. (114-15)

Ari's explanation of his code for appropriating the language of domination hinges on two practices. He refuses and negates the interpellation of names such as "gay" or "homosexual" as these words are too tolerant and polite. As Ari puts it he prefers to self-identify using a name that "scares whitey" and words "that have guts". Yet Ari contradicts his code when it comes to using either the national categories of Greek or Australian, or the hyphenated Greek-Australian eschewing both as he does not "like definitions". Underneath this dislike of definitions is Ari's ambivalence about his Greek cultural and family connections and traditions. There are moments when he feels deeply at home within an aspect of the Greek diaspora, particularly when dancing, yet at other times he sees the Greek-Australian community as fundamentally divided along moral and class lines: "The fortresses of the rich wogs on the hill are there not to keep the *Australezo* out, but to refuse entry to the uneducated-long-haired-bleached-blonde-no money wog" (45). Central to his code of identity is his desire to unsettle white Australia. If Ari is ambivalent about his Greek heritage and the Greek diaspora in Australia, he is more certain about "whitey" and the power that white Australia has to constitute conduct. Part of this power is the official discourse of multiculturalism, which attempts to conceal a class division that tears the ostensible unity of the Greek-Australian community. Official multiculturalism in the long Labor decade is seen as abjecting forms of difference that are not compatible with the enterprise culture embedded in Australian political culture. Such abjections are foregrounded in the narrative of *Loaded*, de-forming the shape of Ari's coming-of-age. The basis of his identity politics are out of time.

Arrhythmic identity politics

> [W]hen the institutions on which the three elements of citizenship depended parted company, it became possible for each to go its separate way, travelling at its own speed under direction of its own peculiar principles. Before long they were spread far out along the course, and it is only within the last few months, that the three runners have come abreast of each other. (Marshall, 1950: 13)

> What I am is a runner. Running away from a thousand and one things that people say you have to be or should want to be. (Tsiolkas, 1995: 149)

In *Loaded* time is depicted as cyclic. Just as *Praise*'s Gordon begins and ends unemployed, with a death-wish and alone; Ari begins and ends with a drug-hangover, in a bed, stimulating his genitals. This structuring of time as cyclic and therefore non-developmental opens the novels to other temporalities. In *Loaded* Ari's plural identities have different rhythms, each running on three main tracks: his homosexuality, his Greek family, culture and community and his working-class beliefs. His runner's mobility functions through practices of violence and pleasure to break the hold of any one track which becomes too dominant thus limiting his movement. Ari is the *bricoleur* as DJ, mixing the different tracks of his identity and life, moving from one rhythm to another, or layering rhythms according to the demands and possibilities of the conjunctural moment in which he finds himself.

Marshall's analogy of the three runners of civil, political and social citizenship, figures them as formerly arrhythmic, out of time, but moving into synchronised cycles in the 1950s during the period of the Labourist-Social-liberal armature. Ari's three tracks of self are also seeking to move in time. Yet, as the armature has unwound, its powerful forcefield no longer exerts a formative pressure on Ari's world. Those tracks of his identity that he struggles to integrate no longer have the spinning armature's rhythmic forcefield against and with which they once would have been assembled. They fall instead into an arrhythmia: a disharmony of rhythms.

This arrhythmia of identity politics can be seen at the Greek nightclub – The Retreat – when a discussion about Left politics has an intoxicated Ari focussing on pleasure and drug-consciousness:

> I'm happy to sit here, intoxicated by the drugs, the drink, and the beauty of the faces around me.
> –Marxism is dead. Kristin tells Stephen. He bangs his fist on the table and stands over us.
> –Communism, the degenerate state of the Soviet Union may be dead, but not Marxism. He looks around at me and Spiro for support. I avert my eyes. He's talking politics and I'm thinking how hot he looks.

> Marxism, he continues, is not dead, it can't be dead. It's the only theory that makes sense of alienation.
>
> I pour myself another drink. I'm not following the conversation which matters shit to me. I'm on edge. (61)

Ari is too intoxicated to participate in this discussion about the salience and life of Marxism, but the juxtaposition of Ari's politics of pleasure against this Left discourse, layers two temporalities that are arrhythmic: the utopian eschatology of Marxism over the immediate electricity of bodily pleasure.

Ari's conducting of his conduct is a complicated struggle where there appears no simple single or harmonious set of identities from which he can form as an adult citizen-subject in ways that he desires, or that permit him the mix of freedom, pleasure and solidarity he wants and is driven toward (Dean and Hindess 2). In one subchapter called "Five transcendental moments" he presents a list of, largely, negative commandments that are his creed: "Thou shall not give a shit what people think. [. . .] Thou art not responsible for thy parents' failure. [. . .] Thou can have a man and be a man. [. . .] Thou shalt despise all humanity, regardless of race, creed or religion. [. . .] Thou shalt never steal from the poor or the old but fuck the rich for all it's worth" (100-1). That he largely defines his identity through negation is emblematised in his self-image as a runner, "Running away from a thousand and one things that people say you have to be or should want to be" (13). Yet at the same time, as seen by his creed, Ari is seeking to join the disjunctions of his life: to be homosexual *and* a real man; to be indifferent to humanity but never to the poor.

In another of his staccato creeds the accumulating negations are tempered only by Ari's positive sexual drive, indicating that his body is his greatest source of pleasure and identity, and that he is profoundly ambivalent about his Greek-Australian and working-class status:

> There is no way out of this boring life unless you have lots of money. Unless you are born with lots of money it takes a lifetime to make lots of money. Hard work bores me. I ain't no worker.
>
> I'm ruled by my cock. I see someone I think is attractive and I want to be with them, taste them, put my cock in their face or up their arse or through their cunt. I can't imagine any of this ever changing. Marriage is out.

I'm not Australian, I'm not Greek, I'm not anything. I'm not a worker, I'm
not a student, I'm not an artist, I'm not a junkie, I'm not a conversationalist,
I'm not an Australian, not a wog, not anything. I'm not left wing, right wing,
centre, left of centre, right of Genghis Kahn. I don't vote. I don't demonstrate.
I don't do charity. (148-49)

Ari's coming-of-age is, then, not a simple matter of coming-out as a homosexual,
nor of reconciling with his Greek heritage, nor is it to be achieved through being
politically engaged as a Left-wing activist. If he is to "grow up" then some way of
harmonising these three tracks will be needed (66).

Dancing abjections into a eurhythmia

The disjunctive tear of governmentality that we saw in Lohrey and Moorhouse's
works of mourning is depicted in *Loaded* through a series of urban and inner-urban
tableaux in which Ari's increasingly drug-fuelled practices of self strive for a
fullness of time: a time in which multiple times are brought together. As Elizabeth
McMahon argues, Ari is attempting to perform a new practice of moving through
Melbourne: a choreography which "transform[s] the grid of the city into personal
space by dance" (2000: 166). For McMahon "Ari's walking [and dancing]
knowledge of Melbourne produces an alternative map of the city according to
ethnicity, particularly the map of second-generation Greeks; and of sexuality,
specifically male homosexuality" (169). While this is a productive way of
interpreting and explaining Ari's movements I want to extend McMahon's notion
of Ari's movements as de Certeau-based spatial practices, into a more temporal
dimension by focusing on the "beat, tempo and dynamics" of the forms of
governmentality that the novel depicts (169, 172).

Ari's movements through Melbourne – his choreography, or dancing-writing – are
practices of self, enacting forms of citizenship in relation to those forms circulating
in his milieu as social, cultural and political movements like "new left" anti-racism
and Marxism (Tsiolkas, 1998: 71, 61-2).These minority forms of governmentality
are, however, faced with the ascendance of Neoliberalism. In the figure of Ari we
have an attempt to choreograph, improvise and compose a way out of the forms of

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the armature while avoiding Neoliberalism through rhythmic practices. If, as Morris argues, Neoliberalism attempts to conduct time, then a way to resist its forms of thought and technique is to practise the self as proximate to what Neoliberalism abjects: diseased, dangerous, and revolutionary temporalities. Ari is, in a different way to *Praise*'s Gordon, a *bricoleur* of a number of rhythmic bodies: of male homosexuality; of a young unemployed working-class Melbourne male; and of a first generation post-war Greek-Australian.

Much like the characters in Lohrey's *The Reading Group*, and Ian in *Forty-Seventeen*, Ari is searching for a continuum of technologies of the self and technologies of power: techniques for conducting the self that can join with those used to conduct the state. What is different in *Loaded*, and indeed *Praise*, is that unlike Lohrey and Moorhouse's works of mourning, young unemployed males are the narrator-heroes. Like Wilhelm Meister in Goethe's classic *Bildungsroman, Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, Ari and Gordon are both seeking to 'become' outside the world of work and, like Goethe's hero, are symbolic forms of 'youth' through which chronotopes of, in the case of Grunge, illness and mobility are presented (Goethe; Moretti, 2000a: 29-32). Moretti argues that the *Bildungsroman* narrative genre aims, through the symbolic form of youth, to effect "a compromise in the contradictory forms of modernity to be presented – freedom and happiness, identity and change, security and metamorphoses" (Moretti, 2000a: 9). In *Loaded*, like *Praise*, and as we shall see, in *1988* also, compromise between these terms is never a possibility.

In *Loaded* what is significant for a reading of the novel as a text of the long Labor decade is less the person that Ari is or refuses to be than the novel's use of literary techniques that contest the tropes of Neoliberalism that were considered earlier. In other words, I want to shift the focus of this chapter from a sociological and psychological reading to one of an historical sociology of literary form, because, following Georg Lukács, "in literature what is truly social is form" (Lukács cited in Moretti, 2005a: 10). Indeed, for Lukács "[f]orm is sociological not only as a mediating element, as a principle which connects author and receiver, making literature a social fact, but also in its relationship with the material to be formed"

(10). The formal qualities of *"times, rhythms and fluctuations*, [. . .] densities and fluidities, [. . .] hardnesses and softnesses" are what "the life given to [literary form] as subject matter" is represented as (10, emphasis added). As Benjamin argued literary form, as a subset of cultural form, is also historical in the sense that its uses are dependent on the historical moment in which it is used, and historical also in the sense that it is through cultural forms that we grasp historical times (Osborne, 1995: 156, 200-1).

My argument in regard to the form of *Loaded* is that as a figure of youth in a time when Neoliberalism is redefining 'the social,' in part through figures of youth, we can grasp the sexualised, intoxicated, mobile psych-soma of Ari as the multi-form attempt to bring together those *"times, rhythms and fluctuations"* that are abjected by Neoliberal governmentalities. Wark argues that the forms of identity politics 1960s social liberation movements promoted, which were in turn articulated to Labor in the long Labor decade, "did not take as their premise the differences between people, they took as their premise one founding difference apiece — gender, race, ethnicity, sexual preference, and made this one difference the foundation for an essence of sameness" (1999: 306). *Loaded*, on the other hand, represents a postmodern pluralism of differences "with its dense and noisy mix of ethnic, sexual and class differences" (307). Yet, rather than 'hear' *Loaded* as dissonance, atonality, or "Nirvana"-esque Grunge we can also look at those moments when different tempos and rhythms are overlaid. Such a rhythmanalysis analyses how and with what qualities of tempo and measure "rhythm enters into a general construction of time, of movement and becoming" (Lefebvre, 2004: 79). While Renata in *The Reading Group* "had given up" at the point of probing further into the link between bodily rhythm and political discourse, Ari uses his body to attempt to form a new rhythmic continuum of governmentality that is neither derived from the armature nor choreographed and conducted by Neoliberal techniques (Lohrey, 1988: 30). He provides a model for such rhythmanalysis when near the end of the novel his rhythmic bodies begin to layer and multiply.

It is close to the end of Ari's odyssey through Melbourne and he is loaded with drugs. He is at a nightclub in the city's north and having just procured and snorted some speed, he starts to feel the onrush of the ecstasy that he had taken. Sitting in a toilet cubicle where the "smell is pungent" and he feels "slightly nauseous" he is drawn toward the dance floor as "the nausea leaves, to be replaced by a sensation of joy which starts at my gut and envelops my body" (94). The first rhythm to note is that of the rise and fall of nausea, replaced by a radiating visceral joy. Next, "the music from the club crashes into the cubicle and a soulful woman's voice rides the patterns of the drum machine" which introduces a layering of rhythms: a polyrhythmia, whereby the growing radiation of visceral "pleasure emanating from my gut" "connects with" "[h]er voice, her delight in making music" (94). Two rhythms then, to which is added a third in the form of "the pulsating crowd" into which he runs and begins to dance with. A fourth rhythm is the "sweet joy of chemical death" he experiences on the dance floor as he inhales some "amyl nitrate" (95). A fifth is the lift-off crescendo of the "Chic" song *Lost in Music* whose "bass beats lift me into the stratosphere" (95). A sixth rhythm is a look of shy desire he receives and rejects from a "Filipino boy" whose "slim body does not attract me" (95).

Clearly, these rhythms are representations of dance and music experience. But as a layering of polyrhythms that are in harmony, that are experienced as pleasurable, regardless of the mimetic depiction of drug use that enable this experience, this scene, surrounded as it is by abjections, foregrounds transgressive techniques of self through a symbolic youth that offer a way of putting torn and dissonant abjected temporalities together. As "[t]he LSD, the ecstasy, the speed, the dope, the alcohol rush around my body" either side of this eurhythmic scene is a confrontation with an abject identity: "A slut, I [Ari] agree. Let's go" and "We call him [Ari] Persephone. You know the story don't you, she spends half her time in hell, the other half in the real world"(94, 96).

A slut who lives in the underworld is not meant to be a description of a young Australian male coming-of-age in the long Labor decade. Hypermobile, having

dangerous beat sex in alleyways, refusing employment. This is not the type of "flexibility within and between sectors" that Neoliberalism asks of youth (Keating, 1999: par.13). In contesting the formation of identities under Neoliberal rationalities by first negating them, and secondly by seeking to take the abjected parts of them and dancing them into harmony of rhythms, *Loaded* acts as a powerful critique of, and a creative response to, the embedding of these forms of governmentality in Australian political culture.

Without the protective framework and generative power of the armature such a dance is conducted and choreographed not against a stable forcefield but stolen in moments of contingent intensities. From one perspective these are wasted moments of un-becoming. From another they are eurhythmic becomings: figures for the possibility of aligning the body politic with the political body through a choreographed pleasure. They are an attempt to join minority identities without resorting to Neoliberal practices of self; to replace the armature with the rhythmic body; to feel the "rumblings of a structure of feeling that is being demolished at its deepest levels" as the "crescendo of bass beats [that] lifts me into the stratosphere" (Syson 26; Tsiolkas, 1998: 95).

3. *1988*: Refusing Australia's Coming-of-Age

> I had nothing else to do. I sat there thinking about time. It was 1988. Australia's Bicentennial year. The country was two hundred years old. I was twenty-one. (McGahan, 1995b: 42)
>
> I was a *writer*, not an economist. (144)

For his next major literary work after *Praise* Andrew McGahan somewhat oddly authored not the next instalment in the life *Praise*'s hero, Gordon Buchanan, but the story of the episodes prior to *Praise*, taking the epic year of 1988 as the focus for his second novel. On the surface this decision to present a prequel leads to an expectation that some explanation for Gordon's lethargy and fatalism would be revealed. *1988* is, however, a novel like *Praise* where generic expectations are

refused not simply as acts of literary rebellion but so that other elements of the narrative can come to the foreground. If *Praise* is like a sequence of episodes in a larger failed *Bildungsroman* then *1988* holds the promise of placing this failed fragmentary unbecoming-of-age novel into a longer chronological chain by way of which a pattern of development emerges. Indeed, hints in *Praise* about Gordon's literary past are given fuller exposition in *1988* as Gordon's attempts at writing are a central part of this prequel's plot.

1988 is generically a *Künstlerroman*: an artist-formation novel (Cuddon 446-47). It is also a negation of the genre, as using *Praise* we can read *1988* through its historical future when Gordon's writerly ambitions have been left behind. *1988* is thus formally a double refusal: of the artist and the man. These refusals direct our attention toward those discourses surrounding the Bicentennial year that themselves lean on temporalizations of completed formation and organic development. The politics of form in *1988*, taken together with those of *Praise*, focus our attention toward what lies at the edges and limits of the dominant narratives of the Bicentennial year: what times, spaces, bodies, elements and stories lie in the liminal zones of this year of national coming-of-age. If *Praise* is a de-formation novel, a highly compressed failed *Bildung* then McGahan's prequel, *1988*, is a failed *Künstlerroman*: a failed artist-formation novel that uses this failure to satirise the limits of those literary conventions which have been used to narrate the nation.

Like *Praise*, *1988* takes a narrative form, and uses an un-becoming temporal structure through which to bring forth a series of liminal and problematic cultural themes and concerns. Illness again is a central trope of the narrative, but here mobility is thematised alongside the freedom that Gordon and his weather station co-worker Wayne attempt to attain. Their road trip style journey to the lighthouse is an inversion of settlement. The domestic Asian invasion at the novel's opening and the violent farce of their encounters with the Aboriginal settlement near Cape Don are both parodic emblems of 1788 and 1988 taking two key narrative themes of Australian European settlement and bringing them into the ambit of Grunge

fiction. McGahan uses conventional narrative structures, which set up expectations – of a successful formation, or becoming an artist – only to negate them. But his purpose is not nihilist. Into the negation, rather, is placed Gordon's techniques of self – Gordon's attempts at avoiding normalised ways of becoming an adult white Australian male – the industrial citizen, or the Bush type – requiring him to unsettle these modes of formation. In *1988* we are presented with Australia's and Gordon's history.

A young nation with geriatric arteries: the advantages of history

If the long Labor decade was in Keating and Kelly's narratives of nation the time when Australia came-of-age, the two-hundred-year anniversary of the physical settlement of British Australia in Sydney in 1988 was an event and year potent with similar meaning. 1988 is a significant year in Australian history. There was a mass media and government-directed set of celebrations, focussed on 26 January (Australia Day) commemorating the Bicentennial of British settlement (Bolton 1990: 282-86; Turner 1994: 66-92). These celebrations were met with protests against the legacies of what has become known, since 1988, as Invasion Day ("Invasion"). In cultural studies and critical analyses, the Bicentennial year has been framed in terms of its representations and elisions of the violent legacies of colonial settlement and changes to the technology of national broadcast media and political economy that are present in the *Australia Live: Celebration of a Nation* television spectacular (Turner 83-8; Morris, 1993).

These events and the investments made in them by Government prompted the selection of the year as a periodisation end-marker in a variety of histories. The fifth volume of the *Oxford History of Australia, The Middle Way: 1942-1988*, first published in 1990, terminates with the Bicentennial year, which Geoffrey Bolton presents as both a moment for reflection on the ambivalences of Australian modernity, and affirmation of a wary optimism: "there might in time arise a decent self-confidence in national identity" (291). *The Penguin New Literary History of Australia* (1988) was "assisted by The Australian Bicentennial Authority to

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celebrate Australia's Bicentenary", its 'New-ness' having to do with methods of literary history based on a "consciousness that it is written out of the present, and that the needs of the present must cause us to reassess ways of looking at the past" (Hergenhan: ii, xii). Thus in the theory of history to be practised in this collection we can see a need and desire to revise Australian literary history on the basis of challenges that recent, new cultural forces pose. These new forces are also present in Gelder and Salzman's *The New Diversity: Australian Fiction 1970-88* (1989). The Bicentennial year is inscribed into the title alongside a description of the period that is reflected in its heterogeneous eleven chapters. Here a diverse assemblage of themes and forms results in some novels reappearing through different guises when placed under another interpretive rubric. The effect of this technique of literary history is to multiply interpretations; to pluralize any monologic narrative of literary progress. Instead the progress of Australian fiction is itself toward pluralism.

These three 'Bicentennial year' histories share an optimism concerning the prospects for an Australian future that is pluralised: ethnically, culturally and textually. This optimism was tied into the sense that the nation was modernising in ways intensified by the reconsideration of white beginnings and Aboriginal endings two hundred years prior. Ken Gelder writes, "200 years on, every white Australian must confront this [Aboriginal] other, recognize it, listen to it and [as represented in Aboriginal writing] read it" (1989: 205).

This optimism in a pluralising Australia, however, sat atop an ambivalence over the social and cultural implications of the changes in economic government of the federal state under the Australian Labor Party from 1983 as "the uncertainties of the world economy since the early 1970s [meant] that Australia could no longer afford the redistributive policies which created greater equity: the less well-off must practice restraint in order that the powerful might succeed better in their attempts to create wealth" (Bolton, 1988: 290).

This then was a pluralizing also of structures of feeling. Specifically there was an optimism signalled by 1988 as the period marker of an ending for Australian

colonialism, and thereby beginning of post-coloniality, that was articulated to a manic manifestation of that 'ecstasy' released by the enacting of Neoliberal political rationalities that Morris explicates.[49] A more pessimistic and melancholic structure of feeling centred around losses ranging from that of the political and cultural centrality of white working class men, to the hopes invested in Labor by a bloc of social formations which carried a nostalgia for the previous Labor Government and especially its leader, Gough Whitlam.

1988 is then also the year when the 1987 radical reforms that Michael Pusey speaks of became embedded in bureaucratic cultures. In 1987 "a minor revolution" occurred with "Prime Minister Hawke's Bastille Day announcement of sweeping structural changes to the administration of government" which reformed the structure of the federal Treasury and Finance departments (1991: 146-53). These changes centralised decision-making power within key financial departments and thereby enforced leaner and more efficient budgetary controls on what were seen as plump ministerial portfolio areas, such as the Higher Education sector, and increasingly inflicted codes of managerial practice on the administration of government (146-53). In late 1987 the Efficiency Scrutiny Unit, set up to report to Prime Minster Hawke on the status of the Public Service Board (that body that had for generations functioned to select and train all public service appointments), began its report with a preamble that rehearses the now familiar terms of the Neoliberal critique of government: "the concepts and principles employed by successful private sector companies in becoming more competitive by becoming leaner, reducing excessive layers of management and decentralising decision making should be applied to the public sector" (cited in Pusey, 1991: 152).

For Pusey's respondents those changes in the style of Federal bureaucracy administration around 1985 that seemed "mainly cosmetic" had by 1988 become "fundamental shifts in the normative and structural foundations of public administration" (153). Even in this monumental year, Neoliberalism continued its march through the state as well as through the citizen-subjects comprising the population it governed and secured. The national body was coaxed into taking on

some histories and abjecting others. Yet as we saw in chapter two, Moorhouse and Lohrey's literary texts of 1988 are complex works of mourning, seeking to represent a loss in forms of governing the self and the state; a disjointed-ness and tear in the continuum of conduct. In the history of the literary fiction of this year, aspects of its textuality are closer in form to the critical historical sociology of 1988 that Pusey presents. The body of Australian writing centred on 1988 is a complex archive that is still being written and McGahan's *1988* is Grunge's key contribution to this archive.

Boundaries of the national body

In the earlier section of this chapter I read Gordon and Cynthia as symbolic of the national economy. *1988* parodies and probes at the limits of the territorial nation, its white history and textual archetypes. It is a novel concerned with the textuality of white Australian modernity: invasion and settlement; Aboriginal communities; fears of Asian invasion; the bush myth; industrial citizenship; and the land itself, subject to weather that has complex temporalities. Again, the limits of the bodily self are placed alongside those of the territorial nation. Importantly there is a failed artist formation, or *Künstlerroman* narrative in this novel, inviting us to read Gordon's six months at Cape Don, including the trip there, as an allegory of a failed novel of nation: as a failure to write the novel of nation as a story by a formed artist. And yet metafictionally the fact of the novel *1988* itself is an argument for reading less as a failure than as a critique of the orthodox narrative of nation that circulated in and pass through 1988.

As a Grunge novel *1988* rehearses the familiar representations of a failed formation of youth, here presented in the form of a failed artist-formation, as well as graphically depicted sex scenes, and sick bodies, with Gordon smote with boils alongside his asthma condition. The grunge tropes and chronotopes have a similarly unsettling effect on the narrative to those in *Praise* and, in part, in *Loaded*. As I argued in regard to *Praise*, a particularly productive way of reading the bodies in McGahan's fiction is to read them as allegories of the national economy. Here I

will argue that McGahan's primary concern is metatextual: he is interested in the body of writing that constitutes the narratives of nation.

McGahan parodies key events in the national story. These parodies proliferate throughout the novel, making us question the narrative conventions through which official and unofficial orthodox histories are told. The novel begins with a domestic Asian Invasion where two Chinese students moving into a small apartment Gordon shares in Brisbane grow such that "[i]n the end we had nine Chinese students living there" (10). On arrival at their Cape Don house Gordon and Wayne survey their new vista, and Gordon invokes the failed Bush free-settler myth: "[t]here was no sea breeze, no taste of sea air, no sound of surf or seagulls. It didn't feel like we were anywhere near the ocean. It felt like we were on some back lot scrub block. One that was going broke" (99).

In an inverted parodic scene of the Invasion Gordon is witness to the coming of members of the Gurig people:

> At length a black dot appeared. It was a small boat, hugging the coastline. As it closed in I could see that it was an aluminium dinghy with an outboard motor. It was making heavy going in the swell, chopping awkwardly from crest to crest. Five people were in it, all Aboriginal. Standing upright, riding the waves. (135)

By subverting the *Künstlerroman* through Gordon's failure to complete, or even substantially write, his planned novel, this structuring plot-line is cut loose and other temporalities emerge. One temporality usually given minor status in narratives of the Australian nation is that of the weather surrounding Cape Don, which Gordon and Wayne are employed to textualise: to encode cloud and other weather patterns. Writing the weather during an approaching cyclone presents a narrative of nation that is opened to more than flows of trade: "The first thing I did was check the wind meter. Maximum gust, 91kph. What would 180 be like? 220? Then it was to the barometer. I peered at it, blinking drops of water out of my eyes. 976. Four points in three hours. That was about as fast as a barometer could drop. That was plummeting" (139).

If James Ley is right when he suggests that McGahan's "novels can be seen as attempt to break down Australia's recent history into its basic structuring narratives" and that he consistently "symbolizes [. . .] guilt [. . .] as a kind of disease" then we can see that Gordon's duplicating boils are a type of emotional displacement and sometimes release for his failure to write at the same time as they symbolize blots on the body of the National text: "something huge inside me. Something dark and tight and swollen. A giant boil. Pus-ridden with denial. Pain was the only way to burst it, get rid of it forever" (Ley 36; McGahan, 1995b: 298).

Boils on the body of Australian writing

Gordon's aim of writing a novel while at Cape Don is not realized. What is produced, however, is a reflection of his body. *1988* uses a *mise-en-abyme* to symbolise the figure of Gordon's diseased body as his form of writing the bicentennial year. This *mise-en-abyme* is his writing desk, comprising a "mirror facing upwards as the writing surface" (114). Gordon's belief is that his writing is not something consciously planned, but is a reflection of his "spirit":

> I sat down at the mirror and thought about writing. I already had the ideas. I'd had them for months. Still, knowing where to begin was the problem. I tried planning chapters, narrative. I gave up. Planning was an odious thing. I was a *writer*, not an economist. I went with the spirit, leapt into it. Things got confused. I didn't know what I was doing. After two or three days I stopped. (144)

Thus for Gordon, writing comes out of his body, his unconscious. His failure to produce a print-text, however, is compensated by the eruption of his body onto this writing surface, tying Gordon's failure to write and his development of boils to the legacies of colonialism and late twentieth century problems in Aboriginal modernities. This connection is established in chapter twenty eight when Gordon says,

> [w]e were in our own limbo, stagnating under the dry season's sun. Wayne wasn't painting very much, I wasn't writing at all. I slept and read and smoked. The smoking was my only form of progress. I'd mastered over ten cigarettes a day, and I was only enjoying them a little now. I'd acquired some style. My only worry was the asthma. I kept waiting for the attack, the deathgrip, but it never came.

Instead I developed a boil. It was on the back of my knee. (193)

Here the recent decision to begin smoking, brought about by frustration over his lack of writing and shame at having masturbated and fantasised about Eve, the partner of the Aboriginal ranger couple also living in the compound, is itself a displaced symptom of the failure to write and shame over his sexually violent and debasing fantasies. The development of the boil on his body is thus a symbol and symptom of a diseased body of writing. The boil is a trope representing part of the political unconscious.

Late in the novel after Gordon's attempts to write have failed, he ends a long day of intoxication, drinking beer and smoking joints, by entering the ranger Vince's house, one of the three houses within the Cape Don Lighthouse and weather station compound, and with some self-loathing and envy begins to direct his hatred at the books on the shelf: "I suddenly felt an utter hatred for every writer who had held on long enough to finish something. I never would. The hatred was physical, it was a sickness" (238). Due to the "five active boils" that made "[t]he sheets of my bed [. . .] spotted with blood" Gordon has stripped for comfort, and after unsuccessfully attempting to masturbate himself to climax, catches sight of his body in that writing surface of the bathroom mirror:

> I was hideous. Huge and round and white. Streaked with grime. My erection poked out from under my belly. It was tiny. Ludicrous. There was a bandaid tangled in the pubic hair. And there were boils everywhere. Red pus oozed from their heads. My eyes were pink, my face covered with a dirty, ginger fuzz. It was disgusting. I was a monster. (239-40)

Terrified of the monster he's become, and full of self-disgust, Gordon returns to the run-down house he shares with Wayne and tries to sleep. In the morning he awakes to some noise and goes to the veranda: "I stood there, naked, boil-ridden lost. I realised who it was. Allan Price. Chairman of the Board of the Gurig National Park. 'Excuse me,' I said. Then I went back inside to get some clothes" (241). In this scene familiar tropes from Grunge fiction are present: the sick body in an abject state, porous and open, and excreting pus, intoxication mixed with sex, albeit of the solo kind. Also located on the territorial edge of Northern Australia Gordon is both on the border and in the abject zone. And it is here that Gordon at

his most abject is naked and diseased before the effective ruler of the Gurig National Park: Allan Price. The novel's textual encounter between the white, young male narrator and Aboriginal statesman is presented through Gordon's boil-ridden body: the body that gets written rather than the novel. If Gordon's body is symbolic of the body of Australian writing then its boils are that illness caused by his failure to textualise the Gurig Aboriginals and caused by the violence of his sexual fantasies.[50]

To some extent this reading of Gordon's boils complements the sentiment and main ideas behind Keating's "Redfern Park" speech. A key section of the speech, which was given on 10 December 1992 to launch the Year of the World's Indigenous People, is this passage:

> It begins, I think with an act of recognition. Recognition that it was we who did the dispossessing. We took the traditional lands and smashed the traditional way of life. We brought the diseases. The alcohol. We committed the murders. We took the children from their mothers. We practised discrimination and exclusion. It was our ignorance and our prejudice. And our failure to imagine these things being done to us. With some noble exceptions, we failed to make the most basic human response and enter into their hearts and minds. We failed to ask, how would I feel if this were done to me? As a consequence, we failed to see that what we were doing degraded all of us. (cited in Watson, 2002: 288-89)

Although not an apology and delivered four years after 1988, Keating's speech was, in the words of its primary author, based on the principle "that the problem could only be solved by an act of imagination" (289). For Watson, "[t]he speech did not say that our history was a story of unutterable shame" as some took it to mean (290). Nor did it imply "that the modern generation does or should feel guilt about what had happened" (291). Like Gordon's boils, Keating's Redfern Park speech put the problem of the invasion and its long aftermath into the body of Australian writing in an indirect and ambivalent fashion.

Arriving back in Brisbane after his six-month stay at Cape Don, Gordon is unsettled by the development in Brisbane, especially on the Expo site, and around New Farm which is beginning to be gentrified. The novel ends with Gordon

working at the Capitol Hotel as he meets Cynthia working at the bar. The prequel

has formed a continuum with *Praise*. But we know how that ends.

*

To hear Keating's voice is to hear one tonally certain, commanding and seductive.

The voices of Gordon Buchannan and Ari Voulis are honest and holding to a

structure of feeling expressed in their tone but never presented as a positive

programme for their futures. In the case of *Praise* Gordon's voice presents a

structure of feeling that seeks to hold steady while the waves of Neoliberal

practices of self-formation roll into his life. In *Loaded* Ari's voice is held together by

his refusals and angers, and by the passions of his sexual desires. Drug intake in

Loaded is thematized, being the means by which rhythm and tempo are

manipulated towards the end of an interlocked layering of mind-body, or psychic-

somatic, speeds and beats. The voice remains constant, not as in the *Bildungsroman*

where the narrator, in the past tense, tells the story of the successful formation and

development of their self from the temporal perspective of the completed

formation (Slaughter, 2006: 1415). Rather, in these Grunge novels, there is no

certainty of voice that comes by way of being issued from a historical present in

which the past that the narrative is recounting has already been settled in the

favour of the present narrator (Bakhtin, 1986: 23). This is the advantage and

disadvantage of the fusion of the organic passage between youth and maturity,

with the twin tasks of achieving autonomy and socialisation, in the *Bildungsroman*

form. The disadvantage, or rather the danger of using this technique, lies in the

reader's conflation of a *Bildung* with a failed novel. As was discussed in the thesis

introduction, this is a common criticism of Grunge fiction. It is an advantage to use

these narrative techniques because the telling of the story of an achieved human

development – from its beginnings to its maturation through autonomy and

socialisation – gives a powerful teleological force to the narrative and a

commanding sense of certainty and authority to the narrator. As Joseph Slaughter

argues, this is a teleological tautology: a technique for narrativising forms of

governmentalities, forms of the conduct of conduct, through the organic symbolism of human maturation fused to those governmentalities prescribed as, tautologically, mature (1415). We will come to a more extensive analysis and set of explanations for the use of the *Bildungsroman* form in embedding and contesting Neoliberalism below in chapter four.

Grunge fiction is too temporally compressed to be considered as *Bildungsromane*. Ari's story in *Loaded* occurs over the period of twenty-four hours, while Gordon's stories occur within the period of a year in each novel. Compared to the durations in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, and even in David Malouf's *Johnno*, Grunge fiction is closer in form to a three-minute pop song than the epic and symphonic duration of the coming-of-age novel. At the point of transition between youth and maturity the developmental temporality pluralises; its abjections no longer flung out of mind. Temporalities are de-compressed in Grunge and those treated as waste in the Neoliberal narrative of nation are kept in proximity to the young male narrator citizen-subjects of Grunge. These un-becoming and wasted lives are potent contestations of the symbolic forms that are being narratively embedded into Australian political culture.

Chapter Four.

After Grunge: the Long Labor Decade as

National *Bildungsroman*

> Paul Keating's/ bottom lip trembles then recovers,/ like the exchange rate under pressure/ buoyed up as the words come out. (Forbes cited in Morris, 1998: 158)

> Australia is a paradox—a young nation with geriatric arteries. (Kelly,1994: 13)

The reappraisal of Grunge fiction presented in the previous chapter affiliated the textuality of McGahan's first two novels and Tsiolkas' *Loaded* with the textuality of the long Labor decade that was performed in the stories about and by treasurer, then prime minister, Paul Keating. In these three fictions of youth bodies of illness, arrhythmia and writing were read across three boundaries: the atopically sick machines of *Praise* were placed in dialogue with the metaphors of illness and mechanical revitalisation with which Keating figured the national economic body; Ari's attempts to dance the abjections of his fragmented identity into a eurhythmia were counterpointed with the loss of the Labourist-Social-liberal armature and those Neoliberal rationalities that Keating sought to replace it with; and Gordon's abject and sick body of writing in the Bicentennial year was read as symptomatic of disavowals and repressions in the putatively mature national text, especially of those that can be traced in white Australia's textualisation of Aboriginal modernity.

While these Grunge novels enact an un-becoming-of-age, their slicing into rather than encompassing of the long Labor decade gives us little sense of how Grunge can be read across the boundary that fiction forms with a political history like Paul Kelly's *The End of Certainty*. As we saw in chapter one, Kelly's master-work holds the place of "a major event" in Beilharz's hermeneutics of the historical sociology of the period (1994: 7). Kelly narrates the coming-of-age of Australian political culture, its title paradoxically suggests, as the entry into a permanent state of uncertainty. The forming of the new mature national self is thereby precarious: an un-protection that raises the spectre of un-becoming and the social body's exposure to the material forces of capitalism.

This thesis has argued that Neoliberalism is best considered as political rationalities and techniques of self and state, households and small businesses; practices that are saturated with forms of knowing and calculation, languages and vocabularies of rule, and regimes of truth (Dean, 1995: 560). These forms of conducting conduct – of governmentality – are practised through the twinned processes of a technique and a form of thought which endows the technique with a method, an aim, and an object (564). These Neoliberal political rationalities work to conduct a range of selves, groups, institutions, corporations, states and inter-state bodies in ways that form the self, for example, as an enterprise or entrepreneur, or the self as risk-management agent. Yet in considering both Kelly's *Bildungsroman* of the long Labor decade, and in anticipation of analysing the three fictional texts below, the historical materiality of capitalism demands a more sustained explication as a fundamental force shaping those aspects of the textuality of the long Labor decade that this thesis has so far analysed.

The mourned for tears and disjunctions in the Labourist-Social-liberal armature of governmentality that were explored and interpreted in chapter two and the atopic, arrhythmic, and abject eruptions of bodies presented in chapter three point to a fundamental discontinuity in the forms of governmentality that reside in the texts of the long Labor decade. In chapter one the analysis of Kelly's influential political history of the long Labor decade moved into a consideration of its use of the *Bildungsroman* narrative form to explain, and seek consent for, the necessity of discarding the institutions and practices of government which were central to the Labourist-Social-liberal armature. I argued that Kelly's tome narrativises – in a manner homologous to the narrator's authority in the pre-destined life-script that Wilhelm receives from the Society of the Tower in *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* – the evaluative judgements of the international financial markets as the minute-by-minute writers of the life-script of Australian political culture. Indeed, the defining political act of the long Labor decade was the decision to clean float the currency (Kelly, 1994: 76; Bell, 2004: 25-30; Capling 1998: 47). If Australia was to become more youthful, experience healthy growth, pick up the pace and open itself up, then the floating of the currency released forces into the continent that

forms of governmentality had both prepared the way for, and could only respond and react to, rather than act on.

Articulated to Keynesian forms of governing national economies, the forces of global financial capitalism burnt-out the Labourist-Social-liberal armature in 1973-4 as the price of oil quadrupled and simultaneous high unemployment and inflation opened the political field to new forms of government, such as Friedman's monetary targeting (Bell, 2004: 32-7). The emergence then of innovative forms of finance capital and Neoliberal governmentality through the 1970s and into the 1980s presented puzzles for textual representation generally, and posed acute problems for fictions that attempted to depict this sweep of historical time. Kelly's story of the long Labor decade depicts it as the time in which the crises of the 1970s were understood as the response of a redundant political-cultural-economic settlement to changed international economic and geopolitical conditions. But for writers working on the Left in the literary field such a triumphal narrative of Neoliberal modernisation could not be accepted.

How then to present a resistant counter-narrative to Kelly's? Of course, no Australian novelist read *The End of Certainty* and consequently set about 'writing back' to Kelly's text. That is not the level of argument being pursued here. Instead, what I am arguing for is a historical sociology of Australian political culture in which symbolic cultural, and indeed literary, forms like the *Bildungsroman* can be understood as being drawn upon and put to work in the culture in order to use the form's resources for a specific project of modernisation. Keating's marshalling of tropes of youth, health and mobility were organised by *Bildungsroman* techniques and the readings of Grunge in chapter three saw these fictions as contestations of the organically developmental and mechanically productive, modernising logic of Keating's story of the long Labor decade. Kelly's story of the period, about which Keating said "I am inclined to almost entirely agree with", also has its fictional contestations, though unlike the Grunge fiction considered above these contestations rally on terrain closer to the duration of the classical *Bildungsroman* (Keating, 1996: 3). In McCann's *Subtopia*, Perlman's *Three Dollars* and Macris'

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Capital, volume one the morphologies of Grunge are enlisted in diverse ways. Yet each novel seeks to depict an alternative story of the long Labor decade. Reading these three novels on the boundary with Kelly's *The End of Certainty* provides the means for a reappraisal of the after-life of Grunge fiction. In this chapter I will read these fictions as post-Grunge novels, making affiliations back to the novels in chapter three and to the textuality of the long Labor decade analysed in chapter one. As Grunge fiction heads toward its twenty-first year it is getting towards time when its reappraisal begins to focus on those post-1995 novels that share its concerns and formal techniques. What follows is a contribution to this reappraisal.

1. *Subtopia* as Grunge *Bildungsroman*

> I knew I wanted to cross the line, the border between me and the delirious renunciation of that small, constricted self that was always threatened by Martin's nihilistic presence. (McCann, 2005: 97-8)

> But then, any story that matters here is a success story. The others are just literature. (Malouf, 1976: 169)

Reading over the body

At the close of *Johnno*, David Malouf's debut novel, the narrator Dante comes to the end of sorting through his recently dead father's belongings, and locates his father's "only two books" (166). One book is a biography of confectionary entrepreneur James MacRobertson and the other comprises a ledger of business transactions and a graph, inserted into the book, recording his father's fortunes, stretching from 1913 into the projected future of 1994 (166). Dante remembers how his father had "believed in this sheet of flimsy, yellow [graph] paper as he believed in the Holy Ghost" and from handling the graph Dante "felt as close as I ever would feel to the force that had guided my father's life and given it shape. That line on the page was what he had tuned his soul to, taking, as the graph did, the shocks of history" (166-67). Dante's father's stories are thus contained in

these two books of success: one an example of enterprise and drive, the other made of peaks and lows; mainly peaks. Concerning these two books Dante reflects that only the success stories mattered for his father, "the others are just literature" (169).

Indeed, *Johnno* is itself "literature". This *Bildungsroman* is the story of Dante's uncertain coming-of-age in 1940s and 1950s Brisbane, and his intense and complicated relationship with the part-*fabulist*, part-revolutionary Johnno. Dante's formation as a citizen-subject is entwined with the development of Brisbane, from the time of its hosting American soldiers during world war two, to the moment of its architectural refurbishment and modernization (145). But it is the intensity of his relationship to the enigmatic Johnno that drives Dante's development. Johnno's desire to live "Larger than life" is realized in a string of schemes, pranks and dreams that Dante lives on the edge of, never quite entering into with anything more than a vicarious complicity (146). Underlying Dante's trepidation and credulity about such acts as having "gone out each night for a week and set fire to a church" are his romantic and homoerotic desires for Johnno (136). Part of the *Bildung* of the novel is registered in Dante's "confession" near its end, after we learn of Johnno's death, that as boys there had been "moments when the whole course of events as they stood between us quivered expectantly, and might have gone another way: an afternoon whose heat now returned so powerfully to my imagination that sweat started out all over my skin" (152). This confession effects a simultaneous coming-out and coming-of-age for the narrator: a ""discovery (dis-covering) of their homosexuality" (Dale and Gilbert 91). Yet, Malouf's transcendental thematics, which are achieved in part through "the ambiguities of his writing make *reading over* the erotic, not to mention the homoerotic, not only possible but plausible" (90).

Such a *reading over*, however, is never a concern in Grunge fiction as the fluids, organs and desires of its sexualised bodies are to be found promiscuously scattered amongst the pages of this genre of dirty realism. Contrary to Grunge

the possibility of homosexual sex being represented in *Johnno* is subsumed within the more encompassing project of Malouf's transcendental post-colonialism (Christie 47-54). Corporeality in *Johnno*, and Malouf's *oeuvre* in general, is more a matter of space than bodies (33-55). The formation of the self that is the critical task of the *Bildungsroman* is thereby a matter less of living in a body than of living in a space that is always already inhabited by the traces of empire, nation, capital or powerful and significant others, such as family members. In *Johnno* Dante's formation is a Romantic one as he accepts his love of Johnno at the same time as accepting the instability of his self-conception: an instability caused by the uncertain status of Johnno's desires and stories. Dante's is thereby both an artist-formation and *Bildung*: literature rather than one of his father's success stories.

Johnno is also not a success story like the one told in Kelly's *The End of Certainty*. Here an enterprise culture measured in graphs comes to replace the "old protected Fortress Australia" in the long Labor decade (13). But unlike Dante's father's two books, Kelly's account of the long decade is structured through a *Bildungsroman* of nation that reaches back into the federation period to emplot the coming-of-age of the national character through a new, mature Australian Settlement that is brokered on the terms set by the international financial markets. Kelly's is a story of coming-of-age achieved by revitalising the national character and integrating into global trade and financial networks. While *The End of Certainty* is similar to Malouf's *Bildungsroman* in offering a type of national post-colonial transcendence, its certainty about the realities that such a coming-of-age are to be anchored in, is not matched by *Johnno* which ends with uncertain affirmation of the openness of the literary imagination: "Maybe, in the end, even the lies we tell define us. And better, some of them, than our most earnest attempts as the truth" (170).

Malouf's debut novel is historically and formally distant from the Grunge fiction analysed in chapter three. And yet, in its use of the *Bildungsroman* form *Johnno* thematizes emergence, tying it to the symbolic form of youth which stands in for a protean and revolutionary period of open experimentation. Dante learns of the open-ness of the literary imagination, and of his identity's shifting imbrication in the flows of desire for and from another. In these terms, *Johnno* shares with *Praise*, *Loaded* and *1988* an incompletion in the two tasks of the *Bildungsroman*: to form a fixed identity, and to integrate socially. Yet Dante's formation is as one *open* to his own desires and the imaginative possibilities of narrative. These realizations are historically pertinent for a novel published in 1975. They are almost banal, however, for the Grunge fiction of 1992 onwards, as being open to desire in the literary fiction of the 1990s is less a question of un-repression than of limits. Indeed, in Grunge fiction the corporeality of sex, dance, illness and even violence no longer needs to be subsumed under or even displaced into transcendental projects. In Grunge the waste-full materiality of the body becomes the medium through which new forms of identity and politics are presented.

Come-of-age (as you do)

This new literary form of presenting politics through the body can be seen in a Grunge *Bildungsroman* that shares much with *Johnno*. Andrew McCann's *Subtopia* deploys the Grunge tropes of illness and abject sexuality to depict the political anatomy of bodies during the historical period of the long Labor decade. Unlike the Grunge fiction analysed in the previous chapter the temporal span of *Subtopia* traverses the long decade, and its depictions of bodies in this period has a transnational, specifically German, perspective. *Subtopia*, as a *Bildungsroman*, presents the fusion of biographical and historical time as a diseased dialectic of western capitalist modernity, where the tantalising possibilities of transformation are ghosted by the suburban and mundane "corpseworld" which

is the inescapable shadow of such dreams of transcendence (36). The narrativising of historical time is thus presented as an understanding oscillating between moments of pessimistic realism and stretches of yearning for transformations that are never quite achieved and suffused with a dread, emblematised by the narrator's fear of cancer: "All up it probably took me the better part of twenty years to realise that my fear of cancer was deeply political, bred into me almost at a molecular level, linked to a deep fear of privation, poverty and the multitude of other sins that threaten a vision of the good life" (144).

In spite of the Adorno-influenced nature of this fusion of biographical and historical time in *Subtopia*, it is structurally similar to the basic model laid out by Goethe, sharing with *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* an experimental journey through the non-work cultures of Melbourne middle-class Julian Farrell's milieu, and an intense and defining male-friendship with the rodent-like Martin Bernhard.[51] *Subtopia* ends with Julian not dwelling, but at least headed home, and with the probability that he is about to start a family with Sally, his English-academic female partner (McCann, 2005: 280, 259). Like Johnno, Martin "demolishes himself" (10). Unlike Dante, Julian comes to a "mature" accommodation with the very limited possibilities of the literary imagination and its transformative prospects: an accommodation which is also metafictionally signalled in the novel through the narrative beginning:

> It's not much of a way to conclude. I should have grown up, come to my senses, come of age (as you do), or fucked off for good. [. . .] But in the end, so the cliché goes, there is no end. At least not anything we can own up to. A bit of self-indulgent bullshit about perpetual becoming or mutual understanding, a nice rhetorical flourish and no one seems to notice just how inconclusive our experiences really are, which is not to say that they aren't also full of danger. (10)

An abandoned creature precariously perched on the border

Subtopia's narrator Julian, much like Dante in Malouf's *Bildungsroman*, grows up in the shadow of a more transgressive and enigmatic childhood friend, Martin.[52]

As in Dante and Johnno's relationship, Julian and Martin's is traversed by a homoerotic current. At times this current intensifies in *Subtopia* with Julian's relatively cleaner pornography-based sexual fantasies overwhelmed by the dirtier and more charged possibilities of Martin's body:

> Again I could feel my heart beating, my skin tingling, the strange sense of something running along my nerves, bidding me to open myself to the unknown. But at the same time my mind returned to the images of sex I'd inherited from the recesses of the Silver Fox's cupboard—Kiki's shaven lips, her anus visible between her index and her middle fingers as she grappled wantonly with her wet, sandy buttocks. Against those clean images of what now seemed innocent fantasy, Martin's presence was an affront. I started to worry about sexually transmitted diseases. I started to fixate on all the filthy, burping, farting old man he must have fucked and sucked off in the alleyways behind Fitzroy Street, in lonely car-parks, or by the side of the Elwood canal. I felt dirty. (59)

Julian's teenage years are lived in proximity to both Martin and his father's brother's family headed by the gauche "Silver Fox" who "worked in real estate and development, and was something of a local celebrity at the yacht club, where he raced a boat called *Moby Dick*" and whom Julian introduces us to by witnessing him sexually molesting Julian's younger sister Connie (13-4). This graphic sexual honesty, reminiscent of Grunge's pornographic writing, is a structural feature of the novel. Like McGahan's Gordon, Julian's sexuality is problematic and proximate to diseases, violent fantasy and pornography (17).

Julian emerges from the Melbourne suburbs, or subtopia, and his story begins in the 1970s. He lives on the periphery of an authentic encounter with a self he finds reflected in the returned gaze of the more dangerous, proto-punk Martin. Julian's lust for a violent transformation, for that moment in which to make the revolutionary leap into authenticity, is hampered by the clean-ness of his suburban desires and frightened by the abject proximity of the rodent-like Martin:

> even when he didn't turn up, he was still close by, the smell of him, a sort of physicality against which sexual fantasies of the glossy porno-magazine variety would dissipate or collapse into something that seemed much more bestial. I was almost neurotic about it, driven into little rituals of cleanliness and mental discipline by the superstitious presentiment that if I didn't wash him out of my thoughts, I might turn into him, the Mongrel, an abandoned

creature precariously perched on the border between the human and the animal. (55)

Later in the novel, after discovering that he has died of a brain tumour, Julian mourns the loss of Martin who had become for him a type of un-appreciated armature: a framework and generator of the possibilities of meaningful transformation:

> I knew then that Martin was dead, through I told myself that he was merely "gone", and I knew that his absence was the end of my ability to generate meaning out of the discontent that had welled within me for years. Without him the "outside" of the system had no form that I could readily grasp. It was simply building material, raw material: mud, wire, pipes, cement and boundless slag heaps. A dream-image collapsing into something abject and unassimilable. (271)

Julian's loss of Martin is figured in terms that resonate with Paul Kelly's "Fortress Australia" trope: "This framework – introspective, defensive, dependent – is undergoing an irresistible demolition. (1994: 2) Martin, however, has none of these qualities: he is extroverted, offensive and independent (McCann, 2005: 37-9). Rather than the period of the long Labor decade being one in which "the builders were on site fighting about the framework for the new Australia", the longing that Martin and Julian had for "transformation, metamorphosis", during this same period, also includes a drive to self-"negation" (Kelly, 1994: 13; McCann, 2005: 10). Thus Martin "was ready to demolish things if they didn't measure up, and finally he was ready to demolish himself" (10). This self-demolition evinces in Julian a sense of his own life as waste and sludge: a loss of a future-self that relied on the forcefield of Martin's proximity to imagine this self against the abjectivity of Martin's diseased danger. With this loss arousing "a feeling of profound abandonment" the novel ends with Julian ambivalent about the maturity his work of mourning has achieved: "I knew I was kidding myself, betraying his memory even as I tried to conjure it into the comfort of closure. For a moment, Martin already long gone, perhaps never really there, felt like everyone" (208).

Julian's 1980s are impelled by a movement out of the Melbourne suburbs chasing the flame of revolutionary transformation, mostly in the guise of Martin. Most of the 1980s are spent at university, studying English and hanging around on the periphery of a post-Nick Cave/ Birthday Party scene near St Kilda. The spectre of 1970s revolutionary Berlin haunts this milieu, and for Julian it is the ghost of Ulrike Meinhoff, from the terrorist Red Army faction, that draws his political and libidinal desires to Berlin. After finishing his study, he follows Martin and Martin's partner Anja to Berlin, arriving just before the fall of the wall. There, his fear of carcinogens is put on hold as he falls into revolutionary lust with the mentally-ill, possibly terrorist, Ingrid Gutmann. He leaves Berlin, knowing that Martin has a taste for heroin, and reunites with his ex-girlfriend Sally in New York who is succeeding in establishing herself as an academic there. Julian again becomes obsessed with friable asbestos and the carcinogenic properties of late capitalism, before heading back to suburban Melbourne, then onto Berlin, where he discovers Martin has died from a brain tumour. Julian's journeying ends with the revolutionary cancer cells invading Martin's body and taking his, and to some extent also Julian's, "vision" (272). The nexus between cancer in the human body and cancer in the body politic is given further reinforcement through the role that Berlin plays in the novel, as this is the city toward which Julian's social milieu is drawn and where the ill Martin shoots himself.

As is signalled in the novel's opening metafictional negation of the *Bildungsroman*, Julian's emergence is not one completed by a single transforming moment, nor achieved through a series of accumulative epiphanies, but is depicted via a sequence of episodes all polluted or diseased by some doubt, shame or proximity to a dangerous border. The intention of the novel, like McGahan's Grunge novels, is to use an orthodox generic form, refuse and negate it, so as to populate the narrative with disturbing and abject bodily techniques and actions. Julian's proximity to these tropes of the abject body and abject bodies is seen when he reflects enviously on the circle of his more dangerous friends, drawn to their

socially abject and physically threatening status: "They were mutants. Free radicals breeding in cells" (102). These abject figures, which includes Martin, are so dangerous that they were "mentally outside the corpseworld [. . .] tearing away at the social fabric" (102). Julian's oscillation between attraction and repulsion to the socially abject free radicals is indexed by his ambivalent self-definition in relation to these abject bodies; an inauthentic self-identification which he characterises as "law-abiding [and] prey to the malignancies of society, and of [my] own frustrated fantasies" (102).

Julian's sense of lacking self-authenticity is connected to his sense of belatedness: coming, for example, to Berlin in the aftermath of its 'revolutionary' heyday: "It was a nondescript, desolate corner. Everything was too big, too wide for the trickle of traffic and the sparse pedestrian population. It could have been Nepean Highway in Moorabbin. The Ice Age version. Life running down in the dead of winter, a few people surviving to ghost through the frozen streets" (131-32). Here the sense of a belated arrival in Berlin is effected through its banal suburban streetscape. This temporality – "the sense of being born too late" – is tied to McCann's melancholy over "the idea that the present has been emptied of its radical potential" (cited in Griffin par. 39). The free radicals in *Subtopia*, partly embody this radical potential, especially insofar as they are drawn into the orbit of Berlin.

Indeed, Berlin is also the site of Julian's political-pornographic fantasies that initially centre on the revolutionary Red Army Faction member Ulrike Meinhoff, but are displaced and transferred to the ghostly Gutmann (Sornig 68). Ingrid draws Julian to her with her anti-American fable of being raped by her GI father and her subsequent life-story which passes the fringes of the Red Army Faction and has a film-noir quality (McCann, 2005: 119-29). They bond over a mutual fascination with Meinhoff (149). For Julian an "intoxicating confluence of sex and politics that I had projected onto Ingrid" seems for a time to join the torn continuum of techniques of self to those of power that has haunted him since his earlier days in suburban Melbourne (151). But Ingrid's revolutionary life becomes

indistinguishable from a spy noir film (159). Her filmic life is based on delusions: Ingrid, like Julian, is a fabulist (180, 157). Her stories of a subterranean revolutionary cell in which she was active were a form of psychosis that Julian was ready to invest in, aided by a libidinal drive impelled by fantasies hatched in his suburban corpseworld (196). The historical dimension of the loss of this libidinal dream is doubled by the beginnings of the collapse of Eastern Communism: "all of this world-historical change—the triumph of the popular will and the final failure of European communism" (198).

The revolutionary cells of *Subtopia* are eating away at any alternative to the liberal-democratic-capitalism that Fukuyama will celebrate in his famous essay, and that Kelly will embed as the historical future in his *Bildungsroman* of nation. Yet for Julian a "capitalism gone derelict" is itself the cancerous cell growth that is wasting both the social body which is doubled by his own fears of the diseased cells "in my throat turning cancerous" (65). *Subtopia* like *Loaded* "manipulates abjection as social protest. Primarily the novel engages with abjection to demonstrate the obscenity of capitalism" (Kirkby, 1998: 239).

Metafictions: how to read the long Labor decade

The effect of using the *Bildungsroman* form, as McCann does here, without completing the hero's formation and by drawing attention to some of the conventions of this genre, is to enable a reading that can raise questions about a National coming-of-age which appears to have already been written by the investment projections of the international financial markets: Neoliberalism's version of *Wilhelm Meister's* Society of the Tower writing his life-script. By derailing this teleology other more unsettling chronotopes are given the time to work into the narrative. Set against a metafictional negation of the *Bildungsroman* the foregrounding of these Grunge tropes of illness, arrhythmia and abjection raises the question of whether Neoliberal techniques of self are emergent or regressive. Is the fact that such governmentalities have been contested through

the symbolic form of youth in Australian political culture a cue to help us decide this question?

Focussed on this genre in an earlier period Moretti argues that in spite of an increase in novels about youth in the 1898-1914 period this did not lead to a renewed phase of the *Bildungsroman*, but rather brought "it to a sudden close":

> If one wonders about the disappearance of the novel of youth, then, the youth of 1919 — maimed, shocked, speechless, decimated — provide quite a clear answer. We tend to see social and political history as a creative influence on literary evolution, yet its destructive role may be just as relevant. If history can make cultural forms necessary, it can make them impossible as well, and this is what the war did to the *Bildungsroman*. (2000a: 229)

Moretti is here pointing us back toward the fusion between historical and personal time that we have seen at work in the identification of Whitlam with an assemblage of modernist cultural, social and political movements, econographies of Keating, and in the characterological *Bildungsroman* of the post-Australian Settlement nation that both Keating and Kelly narrated. For Moretti, when historical time is regressive, cultural forms like the *Bildungsroman* are redundant. Yet at the level of political discourse in the long Labor decade the *Bildungsroman* form was central to the embedding of Neoliberal rationalities and techniques within the Australian political culture. This centrality suggests an emergent, creative, and modernising historical force in need of cultural forms through which it could be lived with.

In the Grunge texts considered in chapter three we saw a defiant negation and refusal of this cultural forms which enabled more troubling symbols of history to emerge into these fictional narratives: not so much history regressing but times being dis-jointed and off their hinges (Derrida, 1994: 18). Indeed, such temporal arrhythmia was central also to the pre-Grunge Lohrey and Moorhouse novels *The Reading Group* and *Forty-Seventeen*. If the central chronotope of Grunge fiction analysed in this thesis is the dirty realist representation of the failed coming-of-age of the white male, it is the surfacing of this temporal arrhythmia through tropes of illness and abject sexuality that turns mere failed *Bildungs* into

Grunge. Unlike the destruction of youth in World War One, the embedding of
Neoliberalism as the political culture of post-Keynesian finance capitalism was
an emergent form of historical creation. As we will see in the next section of this
chapter, to treat Neoliberalism as historically regressive is to profoundly
misdiagnose this form of governmentality. Attempting to control such a
misdiagnosis through literary form has all manner of consequences for the
political unconscious of such literary work.

2. *Three Dollars* and Economic Times

> I have a simple plea to make: that writers start focusing on what is
> happening in this country, looking Australia in the face, no flinching,
> coming to grips with the fact that we have been on a long loop through
> time that has brought us back almost – but not quite – to where we were.
> Few Australian novels [. . .] address in worldly, *adult ways* the country
> and the time in which we live. (Marr par. 23 emphasis added)

A literary public sphere equal to these times

The most popular explicit fictional critique of economic rationalism is Elliot
Perlman's *Three Dollars* (Steeger; Gelder, 2006: 54-6). His debut novel has a
temporal span of over twenty years and traverses the 1970s, 80s and 90s as the
narrator-hero Eddie Harnovey tells the story of his life from the point of time
when he and his nuclear family are almost destitute: having only three dollars.
Perlman's novel is a celebrated one having won the The *Age* book of the year
award, shortlisted for the Miles Franklin, and in 2006 was voted best novel about
Victoria in a poll conducted by the Victorian State Library (Steeger).

When a film adaptation was released in 2005 *Three Dollars* began to act out its
metafictional aspiration of becoming a literary narrative through which a critical-
rational discussion of economic rationalism would be staged. Neoconservative
cultural critic Keith Windschuttle used the novel to argue for the privatisation of
the ABC (Australian Broadcasting Commission) as one way to close down the sort
of cultural elitism that he argued Perlman's novel represented, while another

Neoconservative journalist and occasional cultural critic, Greg Sheridan pointed out, in The *Australian,* how unrealistic this realism was considering that its hero could go from a reasonably comfortable middle-class existence to one of almost homelessness in the space of days (Windschuttle; Gelder, 2006: 54-6). On the other hand Gelder has argued that while the novel is "one of only a few that might [. . .] be claimed by the Left" because it is the closest recent example of a critical political realism, its resolution is conservative as Eddie – after being sacked from his Federal government job for leaking his rejected critical report on proposed Smelter development to the media – is returned safe to his wife and child and with the prospect of employment high up in the human resources department of an un-named bank (Perlman, 1998: 54).

Unlike the highly compressed temporal spans of *Praise, 1988* and, especially, the twenty-four hours of *Loaded, Three Dollars* spans over 20 years and its critique of Neoliberalism is both explicit and profoundly disabled by its formal politics: the politics of its poetics. The central problem with the novel is that it adopts the *Bildungsroman* convention of a future-anterior narrating position from which to tell a story not of the hero's formation, but of the hero's integrity, while the Australian public sphere is de-formed by Neoliberalism (Slaughter 1415). Eddie is not presented as emerging along with history, as Bakhtin argues is central to the *Bildungsroman,* but as already formed through the civilising culture of what can be seen as an Arnoldian-Leavisite project enabling him to retain a clean ethical grasp on his sense of civilisation and integrity: "no one we met in those early days at university read Wordsworth, Keats, Eliot, Robert Frost or A.D. Hope" (Perlman, 1998: 41).

The novel presents a revealingly self-conscious display of 'literariness' where the story of the early years of Eddie's life can be interrupted by lines from a Gerard Manley Hopkins or Wordsworth poem (16, 33). In many ways Eddie represents the values that Davis argues are embedded in those ""pre-revolutionary" forms of literary theory" that

> continue to play [a powerful role] as guiding forms of public knowledge.
> Such ideas inform the "popular critical consciousness" in so far as popular

discourse about the humanities remains dominated by modernist critical paradigms such as Leavisim and New Criticism, even underpinned by a throwback to a residual Arnoldianism. (2007: 8)

Indeed, Eddie explicitly eschews such "post-revolutionary" theory when he tells us,

> I was always suspicious of the bush balladeering sentimentality of, say, the Jindyworobaks and its more recent socio-political manifestation, that type of often unyielding, unscientific, dogmatic, and bombastic environmentalism that does for society's habitat what the followers of Foucault and Derrida did for the promotion of literature as a source of sustainable enjoyment. It takes the people out of the equation and leaves it so much the poorer. (260)

Three Dollars thus appears to have aspirations that resonate with Marr's plea for an unflinchingly adult fiction that can civilise in these regressively uncivilised times. This project for a renewal of a Social-liberal literary public sphere is metafictionally encoded into both Perlman's debut novel and, as Todd Kontje argues, into the *Bildungsroman* genre itself. For Kontje the emergence of the German *Bildungsroman* was not only coterminous with that of the German public sphere, the creation of a rational-critical public through literary institutions and literary forms was effected through a self-reflexive genre that represented the techniques for transferring Christian practices of the intensive reading of religious texts to secular ones in the service of secular modes of *Bildungs* (1992: 1-5; Habermas, 1989: 43-56). Kontje argues that Friedrich Schiller's influential recasting of Kant's aesthetics into a system of aesthetic education that would both civilise and prevent a politicisation of art capable of repeating the violence of the French Revolution, was drawn into *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* by Goethe through a metafictional debate and parody over the limits of the Kantian indifference to political interest in art that forms the basis of Schiller's highly political treatise (Kontje, 1992: 56-60). This Kantian technique of aesthetic disinterestedness travels to Matthew Arnold's criticism where it forms the prime value (Baldick 22-3). Perlman's novel is a palimpsest of these traces which sometimes stand out and at other times travel around the text as emblems and allusions appearing through condensations and displacements. *Three Dollars* has a rich political unconscious, that can be read as the novel's attempt to revitalise the literary paradigm.

The metafictional depiction of Eddie as a figure steeped in the civilising values of this paradigm of Australian literary-Liberalism is present in the novel's allusion to the Hamlet revenge-plot (Davis, 2007: 9). This aspect of the novel's intertextuality is doubled. The Ghost of the record store owner, Old man Williamson, proffers advice to Eddie as he vacillates over whether or not to act courageously and report truthfully on an environmentally dangerous land development, while his leaking of the report on its hazards to the media enacts a revenge on the rapacious, developer father-figure whose daughter he had been prevented from associating with as a young boy (Perlman, 1998: 226-31, 286-87).

In keeping with the techniques of the classic *Bildungsroman*, the narrator of *Three Dollars* assumes the temporality of the future-anterior to narrate from the imaginary of a universal and transcendent humanistic culture that is capable of providing the means for civilising capitalism. As Terry Eagleton argues "[w]hat *Scrutiny* [Leavis' journal] represented [. . .] was nothing less than an attempt to reinvent the classical public sphere, at a time when its material conditions had definitively passed" (2005: 75). *Three Dollars* doubles a melancholic longing for the classical literary public sphere that Leavis also struggled to revive, propelling it into zones of reactionary politics such as when Eddie bluntly refuses to entertain his, at the time, girlfriend Tanya's plan to play the role of Hamlet: "'Listen Tanya, Shakespeare wrote him as a man, a young man, with all the attendant oedipal hang-ups that young men keep somewhere between the head and the heart'" (50).[53]

While the classical public sphere relied on a belief in a naturalised and strictly policed distinction between economy and culture, Neoliberalism functions through an enculturation, or formation, of the subject as entrepreneurial, flexible, productive, self-managing, and accountable (Eagleton, 2005: 26-7). Culture, like the state, becomes an object of market political rationality in the 1980s and 90s and in *Three Dollars* nearly all the main characters, except Eddie, become subject to these

emergent structures of feeling. The novel's longing for the imaginary of the classical public sphere is displaced onto the figure of Hamlet; the key intertextual figure of youth in Goethe's *Bildungsroman* (Moretti, 2003: 3).

Literary Social-liberalism: caring for the sick

These Neoliberal structures of feeling are most strongly manifested in Eddie's wife Tanya's depression (Perlman, 1998: 145-47). The link between Tanya's illness and her doctoral work is made through the juxtaposition of, on the one hand, the defence of her thesis and advocacy for "'a return to the Keynesian economics of the forties, fifties and sixties'" and, on the other, a bout of Tanya's "'not uncommon'" depression which follows causally from her most vehemently mounted defence of Keynesian governmentality (143, 146). Tanya struggles with the onset of Neoliberalism both as managerial practice at University and as the subject of her unfinished doctoral thesis "The death of political economics" (125). The links between Tanya's depression and Keynesian government are twofold. Keynesian government emerged as the civilising Social-liberal cure for the unemployment and stagnation of the Great Depression, and the loss of this form of governmentality – the armature – in the present opens it to the risk of another Great Depression. Tanya's body, like the sick bodies in *Praise* and *1988*, symptomatizes these economic conditions.

While Tanya's experience of Neoliberalism is felt as depression, it is their child Abby's epileptic-like fit that signals an analogy with what Kelly calls the "convulsions of the 1980s" (1994: 1). Indeed, Abby first has an epileptic seizure after Eddie dallies with a female friend, Kate: even Eddie's small indiscretions are punished. Helpless, as Abby moves into a fit, Eddie watched as "[s]he bounced. She appeared to be bouncing. Her back was arched unnaturally and her arms and legs stiffened and then relaxed *arrhythmically*. It was no rhythm at all but a violent madness in her, no rhythm I could recognise" (236 emphasis added).

In terms of the sufferers of illness in the novel there are two others whose depression is so severe that they commit suicide and who are positioned in terms of economic and geopolitical events that, like Tanya's doctorate thesis, make an explicit link between mental and economic illness. In the case of Eddie's Uncle George, who "had stories from the depression", a desire to endow his younger wife with goods leads to financial speculations that bankrupt him, and his ensuing depression moves him to suicide (7, 12-3, 29). The connection between George's decline and that of the Keynesian period, in which the Australian Labourist-Social-liberal armature held sway, is evident here. Similarly, Tanya's father, like Abby an epileptic, was a theatre troupe leader who had fled Czechoslovakia for Australia after World War II, and who "thought that Shakespeare was the font of all wisdom" (149). On tour in a rural Australian town he causes a sexual scandal by sleeping with the town mayor's daughter and two days later kills himself, a long battle with depression exacerbating the guilt over the scandal (150-51). Tanya's father is proximal to World War II, which emerged, in part, from the Great Depression. We can therefore see that in *Three Dollars* depression is thematically tied to Keynesian governmentality. The novel symbolizes the loss of Keynesian Social-liberalism by embodying both its passing and emergence in these three characters.

Unknown pleasures[54]

Tanya's father – like Wilhelm Meister – "had long wanted to start his own theatre company, one which would travel the country offering a mixed repertoire of light comedies, drawing-room farce and, of course, Shakespeare" (Perlman, 1998: 149). Moretti has drawn attention to the central role that Hamlet plays in Goethe's germinal *Bildungsroman*:

> According to the text, Hamlet is thirty years old: far from young by Renaissance standards. But *our* [western modern] culture, in choosing Hamlet as its first symbolic hero, has 'forgotten' his age, or rather has had to alter it, and picture the Prince of Denmark as a young man.
> The decisive thrust in this sense was made by Goethe; and it takes shape, symptomatically, precisely in the work that codifies the new paradigm and sees *youth* as the most meaningful part of life: *Wilhelm Meister*. (2000a: 3)

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These allusions to Goethe's novel in *Three Dollars* are accumulative and odd. The Hamlet plot mentioned above is doubled by the performance of the play in which Tanya seeks to play the Prince during that time in her and Eddie's lives when they are both experimenting with personas and considering their options: this is a time of youth so it makes allusive sense for Hamlet to appear at this point in the story. Also appearing at this point in the novel's historical time is "an apocalyptic epileptic Mancunian Sinatra" Ian Curtis the lead singer of postpunk band "Joy Division" (Perlman, 1998: 42). In an effort to maintain Tanya's wavering attention Eddie affects the manner and look of Curtis, becoming "a post-industrial parody of myself" (42). At this point in the novel Eddie and Tanya are momentarily recognisable as being in transition, as emerging along with history, in a process of becoming. They are at this moment engaged in *Bildung*.

Eddie's dalliance with "Joy Division" and Tanya's with playing Hamlet mark the moment in which their earlier, passionate romance evaporates and they separate. If Tanya and Eddie are momentarily emerging along with the world then the sudden end to this period of experimentation which finishes with their reuniting and committing to careers is both a missed opportunity in the novel and is symptomatic of the contradiction that *Three Dollars* attempts, but fails, to resolve. This contradiction is between the novel's address to, and metafictional longing for, an imagined classical public sphere during the ascendance and embedding of the new form of governmentality: Neoliberalism. In other words *Three Dollars* aims to hail a reader who having read Eddie's story of middle-class un-protection is armed with the subjective but realist life-narrative that builds a moral-aesthetic force into arguments in the political public sphere: arguments ultimately aimed at a Social-liberal civilising of capitalism through an ethical-state that regulates the private market sphere in line with universal humanist ethical values. These ethical values, *Three Dollars* argues, arise naturally from the intimate human-ness of the private domestic sphere when an ordinary, middle-class, patriarchal and heterosexual family is supported by the state. Near the end of the novel Eddie, who has been downsized, and whose family is about to lose their home, tells us: "I understood

that secular humanism, liberalism and social justice had not abandoned me [. . .] it was just that everybody had abandoned *them*" (345).

Three economic times

In the novel there are three chronotopes of economic time represented. The major symbol of time-space is Eddie's childhood friend Amanda Claremont. "Every nine-and-a-half-years" they cross paths and every meeting finds him with only three dollars. Amanda's mother removes the lower-middle class 10-year-old Eddie from Amanda's life because, Eddie thinks, he will stain her with his lower social standing (1). This economic time or rhythm symbolises the boom-bust business cycle – cyclic and inevitable, requiring the Keynesian macroeconomic regulation regime to even out its highs and lows (Capling 8-10).

The second chronotope attached to political economy in the novel is Depression. Tanya's endemic depression is exacerbated by her struggle to write a political science doctorate on the death of political economics which she plans to bolster with a defence of Keynesian economics and is an illness accelerated by her tutoring contract finishing at her campus. Tanya's depression runs on a deeper cycle than Amanda's nine-and-a-half year appearances. Tanya's father and Eddie's Uncle George also suffer from depression; theirs resulting in suicide. It is also significant that both these bouts of depression and suicide are structured, within the novel's moral economy, as being caused by abnormal sexual acts or desires that conflate sex and money. Uncle George's suicide due to a depression is coterminous with the collapse of the Bretton Woods system, the oil shocks and stagflation of the early 1970s – stagflation being the death knell for Keynesian macroeconomic demand-side regulation. Tanya's father's depression runs back to the Great Depression of the 1930s. To be depressed is one thing, but in the moral economy of *Three Dollars* to consume of desire too much is to enter a shameful condition where the only escape is suicide.

The third chronotope is never as explicitly figured as being economic as the first two are, and this brings us back to Bakhtin's notion that the *Bildungsroman* presents human emergence alongside historical emergence. What sort of historical emergence, then, might be represented in the disease of epilepsy? Here we come back to Ian Curtis. Rather than the deep temporal return of the dystopic long-wave of depression, and unlike the more regular, troughs and peaks of the business cycle that the middle class are largely insulated from, epilepsy is a convulsive, shuddering and highly compressed oscillation that makes its victims unconscious. Curtis is one of the novel's epileptics and so is Tanya and Eddie's daughter Abby. *Three Dollars*, while structured like a *Bildungsroman*, disavows the primary category of this key narrative form of modernity: a transition between youth and adulthood. The cultural form of youth in being almost entirely abjected from Eddie's life re-appears in his talisman Ian Curtis and pointedly in the novel's most concentrated symbol of youth: Abby.

The all ordinaries index

Youth cannot emerge in *Three Dollars* because in the universe of the novel, history is disappearing; it is contracting rather than expanding. The figure of epilepsy, however, that awaits Abby's teenage years – as we imagine, since her grandfather also suffered from the illness – and inflicts the postindustrial poet of punk, Ian Curtis, functions as an ideologeme of the novel operating in its political unconscious. Rather than history contracting and returning to 1930s Germany, as the novel's tropes suggest, the temporal logic of the epileptic seizure is such that its regulation – to extend the reading here of how to govern an economic condition like this illness – requires a flexible, micro-timed support and release regulation-deregulation regime.

At its ostensive level *Three Dollars* presents an Arnoldian-Leavisite cultural formation as a civilising bulwark against the philistine culture and psychology of what it understands as economic rationalism. Economic rationalism cannot be presented as historical emergence because its culture is regressive and, as the

novel makes clear, so are those characters that inhabit its discursive regimes. But *Three Dollars* cannot, however, resolve its own contradiction that the civilising foundations of the Arnoldian-Leavisite literary paradigm are based on a nostalgia for a classical public sphere that despite its self-advertised universal address, was always governed by entry restrictions and was structurally transformed as the domestic private sphere itself became more and more a space of commodification and cultural industry colonisation. The contradiction here is that digital finance capital and its cultural logics – the politically dominant form of which is Neoliberalism – convulse like epilepsy and that this epileptic temporality of light capitalism is historically emergent and produces new structures of feeling. Edward LiPuma and Benjamin Lee claim that speculative finance capitalism "focuses on the *fluctuations* themselves, defining them as its objects of profitability" (410-11 emphasis added). Such arrhythmic fluctuations are, as Eddie observes, "no rhythm at all but a violent madness [. . .] no rhythm I could recognise" (236)

James Ley is half-right when he argues that *Three Dollars* is an anti-*Bildungsroman* (2006: 36). The novel's *Bildung* is in the barely repressed figure of epileptic illness: a figure for the cultural logic of finance capital. A figure that is doubled in the mirco-timed up-dating of the national share price indices that Tanya appropriates as a metaphor for measuring her psychological fortunes:

> Tanya predicted that the day would come when people would have difficulty remembering a time that movements in the stock market were not reported more frequently than the road toll or air pollution indices. She was right. The interminable repetition of sharemarket indices thereafter did not leave us unchanged. I would call Tanya at work and get a quotation of her 'all ordinaries index'. Was she up or down today? 'Slightly up but coming off a low base', she might say. (87-9)

By employing the narrating position of the *Bildungsroman* in a first person narrative, Perlman's novel attempts to overcome the historical emergence of Neoliberalism by annihilating his narrator's moment of transition. Eddie doesn't need to grow up – to experiment, to go through a formation or apprenticeship, to complete the two tasks of *Bildung*, a precarious becoming of autonomy and socialisation. His almost innate maturity is a judgement performed from the future-anterior of the story's end, so that Eddie's human-ness, his ethical

sensibility, his acts of kindness to strangers, are obviously and always already the right act at the right time. And this sense of Eddie's *kairos* gets us closer to the challenge of an emerging arrhythmia that would normally be presented through the transitional sequence in a novel, but here must be abjected. Neoliberalism is not necessarily a regression or return, to Germany between the world wars for example. The spaces of cultural autonomy from which this rationality is mis-recognised as being a form of capitalism that can be civilised in the same ways as Keynesian Social-liberalism attempted to civilise capitalism, are themselves becoming marketized, made productive, efficient, flexible.

Three Dollars, for all its insights into the quotidian experiences of the emergence of Neoliberalism, is disfigured by its abjection of those diseases which reside outside of Eddie's body, instead inhabiting his wife and child's. Unlike the corporeal imbrication of abjection, atopia and arrhythmia in Grunge fiction's narrator-protagonists, in Julian the narrator of *Subtopia* and in the key characters in Lohrey and Moorhouse's fiction, the narrator of *Three Dollars* keeps a clean distance from these unsettling and troubling symbolic forms. The attempt also to repress the coming-of-age period forces historical emergence, via its political unconscious, into the novel's most intriguing ideologeme: the epileptic seizure. The global financial system has recently been through a series of rolling crises. The international markets that Kelly placed at the organising centre of his *Bildungsroman* of nation, and which he endowed with the evaluating power to judge Australian political culture from the historical future, are having, what might be called, an epileptic seizure. Whether or not this is our historical future the times will tell.

The politics of poetics

The post-Grunge novels *Three Dollars* and *Subtopia* are metafictions which seek to take the *Bildungsroman* form and use it to shape a critique of Neoliberalism and the capitalist system that this form of governmentality supported and still supports. *Three Dollars* has coiled within its narrative of Eddie Harnovey's Social-liberal

reaction to the locust strike of economic rationalism over the long Labor decade, a covert appeal to the values and techniques of Australian literary Liberalism, based on a belief in the Arnoldian civilising project. Indeed, in "The Human Cost of Economic Rationalism" Perlman argued that textual depiction of this cost has been silenced while economic growth has proceeded: "there is a need therefore to articulate the human cost of this irrational economic doctrine we in Australia call economic rationalism" (2005: xiv). He goes on to argue that "[i]f this return to the economic jungle is an abrogation of the social contract upon which civilised society is predicated, then so much the worse for the social contract" (xv). Seen in combination with his novel *Three Dollars*, which I argued founded its ethics on a metafictional appeal to those of the literary paradigm, Perlman's speech points toward a defence of the role of English which can be drawn upon as a resource of civilising, human values in times when states and markets, or the masses, in the case of the Leavises, are seen as threatening the middle-class (Baldick, 1983: 161-85). It is *Three Dollars*, in Perlman's estimation, which attempts to speak the human cost of economic rationalism and in so doing did spark a degree of rational-critical debate and discussion, albeit one that was quickly degraded by Australian culture-war polemics. This discussion has failed to take into account some of the key problems with Perlman's text which we can better see by juxtaposing it with McCann's *Subtopia* and reading both texts through the rubric of the *Bildungsroman* arising out of Kelly's *The End of Certainty*.

McCann's text too is metafictional but self-consciously so, and alludes to a different literary formation than Perlman's. Where in his essay Perlman approvingly references Orwell and Trevelyan, and advocates a return to Keynesian Social-liberalism, McCann's novel alludes to a more troubling and experimental literary and political canon, including "Dostoevsky, Ibsen, Camus [. . .] Adorno, Burrows" (Perlman, 2005: xiv, xxv-xxvi; O'Reilly, 2006: 203). McCann too seeks to use literary fiction to provide the resources for thinking contemporary conjunctures differently. Yet, if for Perlman such a critique is to be issued from that exteriority, to what he calls economic rationalism, which rests on the ground of literary Social-liberalism, McCann seeks to present his fictional narrative

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through a Western Marxist-based negative dialectics where any final closure, reconciliation or transformation is always foreclosed and unsettled by the negative which enables, haunts and arrives with the positive (McCann, 2007; Habermas, 1990: 119-30; Jameson, 1971: 54-9). The question for McCann as author of fiction and literary academic is whether or not literary fiction can escape, so as to critique or provide the resources for new ways of moving around or through, the centripetal pull of global capitalist modernity (2007: 20-1). McCann's gambit is to negate and refuse the *Bildungsroman* form, which on one level de-nationalizes the narrative so that a more transnational geography can emerge (Griffin, 2005). The novel's focus on those figures of revolutionary transformation which Julian longs to emulate and move toward are presented as missed opportunities thereby multiplying the negation of the *Bildung* and in the process presenting a world in which both developmental and revolutionary times are defunct. Into this arrhythmia, abject and ghostly bodies form the population of *Subtopia*'s "corpseworld" (McCann, 2005: 110). Much like the Grunge novels considered above McCann's self-conscious subversion of a literary form works to unsettle *doxas* concerning development and time, health and mobility.

Literary form is clearly centrally important to any claims of fiction to be performing political work. Perlman tries to 'out-muscle' the *Bildungsroman* form with his Social-liberal humanism while McCann negates it. And so it is to literary form first that we must look for ways around the dilemma of a culture that is perhaps no longer contained from the market but is, under Neoliberalism, forming us as human beings through market rationalities presented *via* culture. What role then can literary fiction play when culture itself becomes "a shorthand but *expansive* way of challenging the conduct of others people's everyday working lives"? (Frow and Morris, 1993: vii).

The literary public sphere and literary field

Literary form is at the heart of two of the more cogent theories of the interactions between literary fiction and democratic politics. If Neoliberalism is, in a sense, the

cultural logic of finance capitalism, whereby selves are conducted to become entrepreneurs of, and guided to invest in, the self then the sphere of culture as such becomes increasingly unavailable for providing the same means by which the self could previously have come-of-age, ethically and aesthetically. The Neoliberal shift in the relationship of culture to the literary and political fields – a relationship that has relied on a separation of the cultural from the economic sphere during western modernity – has profound implications for both Jürgen Habermas's argument about the means by which the bourgeois public sphere forms on the back of the literary public sphere, and far-reaching consequences also for Pierre Bourdieu's argument about the "rules" of literary art and the inverted market in symbolic goods in which literary reputation is valued and circulated, generating a culturally powerful form of 'autonomy' (Habermas, 1989: 27-56; Bourdieu, 1996: 47-112).

In the case of Habermas's theory of the genesis of the public sphere, it is the precursor public sphere, or the literary public sphere, for which the culture-governance of Neoliberalism presents a specific dilemma (Habermas, 1989: 51). For Habermas epistolary novels such as Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* addressed a fictitious autobiographical interiority, based on the modes of intimacy extant in diary and personal letter writing, to a potential 'public' for whom the narratives of such novels became the basis on which critical discussion circulated (48-51). The expansion of such shared public-ness, proceeding through a growth in the readership of literary journals "formed the public sphere of rational-critical debate in the world of letters within which the subjectivity originating in the interiority of the conjugal family, by communicating itself, attained clarity about itself" (51). Habermas's main point in seeking to establish his genealogy of the political public sphere is that publics do not precede the cultural forms through which they are addressed but are created with them (Warner, 2002: 50).

The specific implication that I want to draw out here is that in arguing as I have throughout this thesis that Grunge literary fiction contests the embedding of Neoliberalism in Australian political culture through tropes and symbolic forms, I

am also suggesting that the representations of abject, atopic and arrhythmic bodies and selves presented in Grunge fiction ask to be read as symptoms of the condition of that 'outward-turned-inwardness', that shifting boundary between private and public, that comprised a significant arena within which the Australian literary public sphere was conducted in the mid-1990s (Davis, 1999: 113-39). Referring back to the Grunge fictions discussed in chapter three, it can be argued that Davis' claims concerning the decline of the Australian version of the literary paradigm can be read metafictionally through the genre of Grunge as the presentation in symbolic forms of an atopic, abject and arrhythmic privateness addressed to a public (Davis, 2007). Literary fiction is, in this reading, a 'turnstile' through which models of the continuum of governmentality – techniques of the self that can potentially harmonise with those of the state – are presented. Reading Grunge through the periodising heuristic of the long Labor decade reveals these models of the literary public sphere to be profoundly unsettled; probing for new ways to form a self after the loss of the armature and the narrative embedding of Neoliberal governmentality in Australian political culture.

In *The Rules of Art* Bourdieu argues that the economy of the literary field functions on the basis of a type of consecrating recognition which an author is granted, by a range of other 'actors' in the field, on the basis of a double refusal: the author seeking the consecration of a literary reputation refuses the lures of power, meaning political power, and money, meaning commercial power (1996: 141-66). For Bourdieu these rules of art are social rules whereby no author can self-generate a reputation and no text simply install itself into a canon (xv-xx). Instead, the seeking of positions in the field is at the same time a game in which the stakes are a type of pre-modern symbolic capital which, to the extent that it has been granted from within the field, is complemented by an 'autonomy' – a determined indeterminacy – for the author which can be used to enter the public sphere with a high degree of critical authority (221, 231-34; Guillory, 1997: 394).

The problem Neoliberalism poses for this model is a debilitating one as Bourdieu's sociology of literary art relies on a strict boundary between art and the market

(Guillory 389). The novel on which Bourdieu bases his theory, Flaubert's

Sentimental Education, presents a failed *Bildung* in the figure of the perennially

'youthful' Frédéric Moreau (Moretti, 2000a: 174-79). Frédéric's inheritance enables

him to live the life of a dilettante outside of work enabling him to be positioned in

terms of a double refusal: of money and power (Guillory 392). Yet in the failed

Bildung of *Praise*'s Gordon, *Loaded*'s Ari and *Subtopia*'s Julian, their capacity to

make a double refusal is entwined in the culture-governance of Neoliberalism.

Rather than negate or refuse the market and political power, as though these

institutional forces are external to the self, Gordon, Ari and Julian are intimately

subject to the market rationalities that are forming them. In other words that

refuge of culture in which Frédéric can dwell as he refuses the market and power

is, in the time of Grunge fiction, culture-governance. This expansion of the political

rationalities of Neoliberalism into the cultural realm can be seen in the failed

attempt of *Three Dollars* to bypass this ascendant force, and in the more self-

consciously 'cautious' Adorno-esque metafictional approach taken in *Subtopia*.

*

To introduce the last novel that this thesis will analyse its author's critical voice is

well-placed to have the last word on Perlman's novel:

> Questions of political economy have been underrepresented in the Australian
> novel in recent times, and Perlman is to be commended for taking economic
> rationalism and its effects on the family and society as his central theme. [. . .]
> Contemporary Australian novelists have been slow to take up the theme, the
> few with critical sensibilities largely restricting themselves to discourses of
> subversion anchored in identity politics or sexuality. [. . .] While I admire
> Perlman for his choice of subject matter and his critical spirit, I can't claim the
> same enthusiasm for either his methods or his conclusions. (Macris, 1999: 179)

The fictional methods Anthony Macris uses to address these questions of political

economy is the subject of the final section of this chapter, where I will also evaluate

the conclusions drawn in his debut novel *Capital, volume one* and move toward

those of this thesis.

3. *Capital, Volume One*: the Cultural Logics of Finance Capitalism

> So what's left? (Beilharz, 1994: xiii)

> This is not a conception of labor power; it is a conception of capital-ability which [. . .] receives an income-wage, so that the worker himself appears as a sort of enterprise for himself. (Foucault, 2008: 225)

Human Capital, volume one

The textuality of the long Labor decade is a diverse and heterogeneous field. Texts turned toward mourning, whether these are directed at Whitlam or other lost objects associated with the armature, present a tear in the continuum of governmentality which manifests as dis-jointed times, or arrhythmia. Some texts focussed on the bodily effects of Neoliberalism speak to its ecstasies or of that which is abjected in the 'production' of blanket market penetration. Others talk of healthy growth in contrast to chronic illnesses like asthma, eczema, epilepsy and depression. I have argued that after accepting that the Labourist-Social-liberal armature and its concomitant forms of governmentality is a lost political project, it is possible to more directly consider the textuality of this period as concerned with representing forms of young male bodies coming-of-age. Further, I have argued that these symbolic forms can best be explained by seeing the specific roots in Australian political culture which Neoliberalism grafted itself to as those of the Labourist figure of the citizen-subject – the industrial citizen. It was this figure which was to come-of-age by becoming more productive, open, flexible and entrepreneurial; from a seller of labour seeking a degree of decommodifying armature to an entrepreneur of one's self, responsible for managing the risks and investments that constitute the potential earnings-streams of one's economic conduct (Foucault, 2008: 223-28).

Moretti alerts us that forms lose their relevance, and they do so even for the work of literary history (2000a: 229-45). If Neoliberalism is, in part, the political and cultural logic of finance capitalism, then the closing section of this thesis analyses a fiction that shares some of the formal responses to these forces considered above,

but also provides new forms for attempting to come to terms with a contemporary capitalism we are still in the midst of and its cultural and political logics.

Two tracks I

Anthony Macris's *Capital, volume one* proceeds by way of two alternating narrative threads: one narrates temporally discontinuous episodes in first person present tense depicting moments of markets, cultural commoditizations and employment conditions dominating or deforming the narrator, while the other thread presents an approximately thirty minute period in the London Underground in the early 1990s. Episodes in the first thread are set mostly in parts of Australia, particularly in Brisbane where the narrator grows up, and range across a variety of times from the 1970s to the early 1990s.

Unlike any of the texts discussed above Macris' employs the present tense, not only in this first thread but also in the second where a third-person focalisation begins in the consciousness of the same character who is telling the stories in the first thread, before floating free into the minds of other commuters in the London Underground, a pregnant mouse scrambling between the train tracks for food between train arrivals, and a seemingly animated character on a discarded chip packet tableaux writing a letter (Macris, 1997: 1, 40, 73, 81).

Unwinding the armature

The novel moves through a similar period to that depicted in *Three Dollars* and *Subtopia*, and as in those two novels there is a narrativisation of the collapse of the Keynesian Labourist-Social-liberal armature. This episode begins with the young narrator watching the movie *Lawrence of Arabia* on television (171). With his father and older brother the three head out on a car journey to Brisbane. Petrol becomes a central theme in the narrative:

> We pass through a busy intersection. An enormous white petrol truck
> swerves into the space in front of us, swallowing us up in its tremendous
> roar. On the back of its fuel cylinder, gleaming stainless steel, a dark red star

has been painted, its tips narrowing out to fine points. The star's centre is filled with black letters that spell the word CALTEX. (174)

Charged with filling the car with petrol his father instructs him: "Only five dollars son. Petrol is like gold now" (180). The link between the movie and the OPEC driven 'oil shocks' is made explicit in a passage which draw these together with a major theme of the novel: the embedding of advertising slogans and jingles into consciousness:

> I press the button, again feeling the surge of liquid mineral. The powerful sweet smell makes me dizzier. Petrol is short for Petroleum. British Petroleum. Lawrence of Arabia is British. He fought for the Arabs, who were backward and disorganised, when all the time there was a sea of petrol under the desert. Americans call petrol gas, they call bills checks. CAL is for California, TEX for Texas. SHELL means seashell but it also means petrol. GO WELL, GO SHELL. (181-82)

This episode occurs in the sixteenth of nineteen chapters which, as it is placed so late in the novel, unsettles any progressive, developmental narrative in which the young Brisbane narrator is embedded. Indeed, the biographical thread has no progressive chronological order, which is in contrast to the novels analysed in chapter three and earlier in this chapter, along with the developmental chronologies of Keating's and Kelly's stories of nation. In the biographical thread of *Capital, volume one* a series of episodes are presented in which the narrator is imbricated in some form of capitalism; whether it be cultural capitalism in the form of pop music, a school history lesson on Cold War politics, or being subjected to managerial psychology at a Pancake restaurant where he works (14, 51, 30-2). In these episodes the narrator is subject to a specific instance of the "increasing penetration of market forces into everyday life" (Macris, 2002: 36). For example, in chapter 10 the young narrator seeks the coolness of the cinema on a hot day as he watches the screen adaptation of Richard Bach's allegory of Libertarian self-reliance, *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, a book he had also been assigned to read at school (Macris, 1997: 86, 53). The narrator's headache merges with the seagull's daring ocean flights, while a deep voice-over commands the gull and the sole audience member to "*B-E-E-E-E-E*" (87). As the seagull's flights and admonitions from the gull elders are described the narrator notices another

presence in the cinema, sitting unnervingly close by (89-91). While the movie's drama intensifies the young narrator is slowly being approached by the older man in the cinema, as the seagull is *"henceforth and forever OUTCAST"* he experiences "two hands [which] will not stop until they reach the centre of my body" (94-5). As he flees and seeks refuge in the cinema toilets and proceeds to "squawk and vomit" we can see that the literal penetration of his body is figurative of the cultural penetration by a narrative text that was complementary to Neoliberal notions of self-empowerment (96; Dean, 2007: 61-2). Indeed in nearly all the episodes in this biographical thread the penetration of market forces, including the commodities of culture, results in an increased alienation or un-becoming for the narrator.

Thus in terms of the biographical thread of the novel, historical time emerges as series of discontinuous episodes, within which an aspect of market culture is thematised and depicted as not so much providing *Bildung* for the narrator, as a de-forming of the narrator's self. In tandem with the present-tense narration, episodes in this thread have the cumulative effect both of negating any sense of a coming-of-age, and of depicting Neoliberalism as the cultural logic of the dominant force that is capitalism. Apart from the 'possible' sexual molestation recounted above there is none of the diseased violence of Grunge fiction present in *Capital, volume one*. The series of failed micro-*Bildungs* in the biographical thread are presented as humiliations and disillusionments, moments of alienation and self-disgust. While there is a multi-temporal arrhythmia at work in the novel, Grunge tropes of atopic illness and abjection are absent in Macris's text (although the dirt and grime of the London Underground are probably closer to the 'grime' and 'grit' that the term grunge evokes). What we shall see is that Macris's innovation is based on having negated *Bildung* in the biographical thread which places the narrative at liberty to use the London Underground track for the purpose of representing finance capitalism.

Kelly, as we saw, narrativised finance capital in the form of the evaluative historical future which narrates Australian, and indeed, global modernity. This is a cultural logic of finance capitalism: the finance markets will decide the fate, indeed they are the times, of national bodies like the Australian one. In Perlman's novel the cultural logic of finance capital is repressed, emerging as the ideologeme of epilepsy: the body convulsive and unconscious, its electrical rhythms in a state of arrhythmia. For Jameson finance capitalism has its own cultural logics which are based on the abstraction of money that neither produces nor consumes but rather circulates in money markets (1997: 265). Published in the same year as Macris's book, Jameson's "Culture and Finance Capital" is a suggestive essay using Giovanni Arrighi's spiral, rather than teleologically progressive, model to explain the three stages of capitalism: the implantation, or embedding stage; the productive development stage; and, finally, the financial speculation stage (248, 251).

Jameson seeks to locate homologous cultural forms which match the psychic dimensions required to live in, with, and critique these stages (260-65). Using Simmel's theories on the link between the money form and forms of abstract consciousness in the modernist period, Jameson extrapolates on the notion of capitalism as increasing mental abstraction in the modernist phase by suggesting that in the third stage of financial capitalism money takes flight from the ground on which it is generated, not to be re-invested into machinery or land, but rather to be invested in the de-territorialized cyberspace of financial markets (259-60). Rather than being linked to substances and objects, in finance capitalism money relates abstractly to other monies, producing new forms of abstraction especially those derived from speculation on the volatility of the inflation and deflation of money (261). Jameson looks at and historicizes the career of the form of the "image fragment'" including the ways that it has been presented and conceived between the modernist period and our own 'post'-modernist one. The dominant form in this 'period' is the film preview: an advertisement for a future product

sufficient in itself (261-62). There are image fragments opaque to analysis and those, like the ones Roland Barthes analysed in *Mythologies*, that are over-signifying. They use stereotypes, where an excess of meaning serves the connotative second order meanings (264). Jameson writes: "I think we need a concept of renarrativization of these fragments to complement Barthes's diagnosis of connotation at an earlier stage of mass culture" (264). While "in the modern moment the play [of image fragments] remains meaningless" postmodern representations of "total flow" art attempts to renarrativize those cultural fragments, that assert their independent stereotypical significance, into a continuum:

> [w]hat happens here is that each former fragment of a narrative, which was once incomprehensible without the narrative context as a whole, has now become capable of emitting a complete narrative message in its own right. It has become autonomous, not in the formal sense I attributed to modernist processes, but rather in its newly acquired capacity to soak up content and to project it in a kind of instant reflex – whence the vanishing away of affect in the postmodern. The situation of contingency or meaninglessness, of alienation, has been superseded by this cultural renarrativization of the broken prices of the image world. (264)

Modernist abstraction is money itself in a situation of capital accumulation. Money abstract and empty – looking sideways toward what it can hitch a ride to: "it is thus incomplete like the modernist images I have been evoking; it directs attention elsewhere, beyond itself, towards what is supposed to complete (and also abolish) it [–] it knows a semiautonomy" (264). Macris's innovation is to have found a way to renarrativize, or to make continuous up to a point, image-fragments without merely presenting a string of over-signifying stereotypes. Instead, in *Capital, volume one*'s London Underground track we read not of Grunge bodies but of something like a Grunge cavern within which used commodities, other life-forms and organic matter too small and fast to qualify for mercenary attention are narrativised into a slow motion singular camera-tracking *mimesis*. These London Underground subjects and objects, a pregnant mouse, a Lucozade bottle, the Australian tourist, are also temporalities thus making a continuity out of different times.

Yet Macris is not content to leave his depiction of the increasing penetration of market forces at renarrativizing fragments back into their material situations. He also introduces a literary 'machine' into his novel in the form of Generative *mises en abyme*. In its more basic forms the *mise-en-abyme* can be defined as employing

> relatively simple, near-mechanical procedures of miniaturisation, embedding, and mirroring; later progressing to more complex modes of reflection across multiple narrative levels, and only reaching the truly generative stage once the mirrors proliferate and distort, converting the text into a field of reflections governed by modalities that go beyond referential and mimetic functions. (Macris, 2003: 51-2)

This play of the embedding and dis-embedding of the symbols and models in a novel, which is often analogized as the play of reflections in a series of mirrors, is again a cultural form for derivatives, the *avant-garde* of finance capitalism, which take a 'grounded' asset and turn it through a complex set of risk-calculating mirrors, embedding and dis-embedding the financial 'instrument' as its ownership changes hands and its integrity is disaggregated, or fragmented as the "underlying asset can now itself become an abstract relation" (LiPuma and Lee 412). Indeed, the homologous descriptions below of the culture of financial derivative circulation and that of Macris's Generative *mise-en-abyme* are worth noting: "[o]nce speculative capital devoted to financial derivatives becomes self-reflexive and begins to feed on itself, it develops a directional dynamic towards an autonomous and self-expanding form" (412).[55] While Macris writes in similar terms:

> By multiplying the actual number of *mises en abyme*, and making each of them of the same importance, Simon has begun to solve the problem of having an originary text that is mirrored at all: the first term has been abolished, and there is now only an infinite series of reflections amongst multiple mirrors, all of which 'produce' one another. (2003: 53)

The ensemble of literary forms Macris produces with his novel *Capital, volume one* is, on the one hand, aimed at undoing a naturalisation of Neoliberal *Bildung*, in the novel's thread of biographical episodes and, on the other, in part a homology of the operations of the leading instrument of finance capitalism in the form of the Generative *mise-en-abyme*. These two threads, or tracks, in being presented alternately ask to be read into and against each other. Thus the

episodes of failed Neoliberal *Bildung* are traversed by image-fragments from the other thread, such as the accordion that appears on page 180 as the young boy travels toward Brisbane, while another accordion appears in the London Underground thread (199-201). In the young boy's eyes the accordion is a folk instrument, while in the tunnel it becomes apparent that the accordion is being used to attract the attention of the Underground commuters to a mini-market where an old David Bowie cassette is for sale. The novel appears to ask: what is the meaning and value of an accordion, and is it even possible to fix a stable meaning and value onto such an instrument?

Two tracks II

An indication of the extent to which Bowie is considered to be a marketing machine designed to sell commodities is indicated in the episode, discussed above, in the Underground tunnel in chapter seventeen earlier. This is, however, mild compared to the de-consecration of Bowie in chapter fourteen where the narrator, now at university, is present at the fag-end of a post-punk era party, and feeling alienated from the centripetal trio who have organised the party, slinks into an armchair on the living room and starts to generate a narrative-critique of Bowie's cynical careerism as he listens to a string of Bowie songs, before stationing himself in the toilet:

> I knock my forehead against the toilet door; I want to cry. There must be some way of getting all this Bowie junk out of my head. I feel as if I had been poisoned, years of afternoons in front of the record player unwitting sessions of exposure to low-level radiation, my brain drip fed with sterile data, passive data that lies there inert, blocking the flow. I feel like a cat taught how to use a can opener, given an unlimited supply of Whiskas and left to eat itself to death. How did all that brain junk get in there in the first place? I put it there. Pocket money from my parents, Christmas money from my relatives, TEAS cheques from the Department of Finance, dole cheques from the DSS, pay cheques from Pancakes, all spent on records. But it's not only my fault. RCA is to blame. Tony Defreak is to blame. David is to blame. (150)

The deep penetration of popular culture into the narrator's psyche is both a form of disciplining his market behaviour, and a part of his *Bildung* which cannot be abjected, even though he regards it as junk. In the London Underground the

young man in the fawn trench coat haggles with a hustling vendor over the price of the Bowie cassette, after a fragment of himself is brought out by the "fetish object of his past [and] the feeling of idol worship that accompanied it" (200). He must have the tape even though he knows its value is now wasted on him.

Like Grunge characters, the narrator in *Capital, volume one* lives in proximity to the abject waste of his youthful years, including Bowie cassettes. This waste is given greater physical shape in chapter 18, where the narrator drops "into this second-hand record to visit my old record collection" (205). He sets about recollecting the fragments of his life, stored in the records that now reside in shop, but after the collapse of a rack of cassettes, decides to leave these parts of himself behind: "There seems no point in buying the again [. . .] what's the point of gnawing on old bones? I feel a twinge of sadness as I shove them back into the rack" (216). As he leaves he looks for his identity in the security mirror positioned in the store, but finds instead only the reflection of the store manager – the entrepreneur of the room – "positioned at his cash register, staring patiently into the mirror, keeping a watchful, paternal eye on his stock and clientele" (217).

Unbecoming-of-age

Joseph Furphy's novel of a travelling bush-worker in the 1880s, *Such is Life* (1986), begins with the narrator exclaiming: "Unemployed at last!" (1). In *Praise* Gordon begins: "[t]hings started with Cynthia in October. It was three days after my twenty-third birthday. I'd just quit work at the drive through bottle shop of the Capital Hotel [. . .] work wasn't the answer to anything" (1-2). Such a prospect is at the antipodes to how Eddie Harnovey feels and acts in *Three Dollars*. For *Such is Life*'s Tom Collins and *Praise*'s Gordon unemployment is not a condition of shame and rapid descent but rather an enabling state from which the narrator can seek some distance from orthodox life: to write up diaries; to experiment with drugs and sex, and to fall in love. Artists and writers seem to operate with different rules to most people, where a job is not a question that can be refused so much as a foothold in self-respect and independence.

In the literary underground, novels like Anthony Macris's *Capital, volume one* begin like *Such is Life* and *Praise*: "Ever since he was unexpectedly laid off from work three weeks ago ('The recession, I'm afraid,' were the only words of explanation), his days have been spent keeping his spirits up by arranging outings – preferably those that are either cheap or free" (18).

Yet there is nothing experimental about the character's life here nor elated about the tone, and in these ways Macris' unemployed character is closer to Eddie, once unemployed, in *Three Dollars*. But while Eddie, precariously unemployed, hovers at the mouth of the Underground Flagstaff train station the young unemployed man in the fawn trench coat – a young Australian traveller – is discarded by the narrative like a used commodity as the life of the London Underground asserts its forms, presences, assemblages and time-spaces (Perlman, 1998: 310-15).

In the underground the struggle for literary autonomy is not pursued by refusing the market, as it is the commodity form and market rationalities that form the self. To resist an exterior market is no longer an effective form of resistance under Neoliberal governmentality. It is only by de-forming the self, by becoming a discarded commodity, by getting off the train and being too late that any distance from Neoliberalism can be attempted. It is perhaps by becoming like the Underground that some symbolic capital worth fighting for can be pursued:

> his whole head seems to be at the mercy of the wind that has finally
> succeeded in penetrating his ears, nose, mouth, and is free to roar through the
> network of tunnels and passageways under his face. He tries to step forward,
> but the wind is now so strong that it is nearly impossible. (Macris, 1997: 226)

Epilogue.

Leaving the Long Labor Decade

> [W]e got this cultural shift by exposing ourselves to necessity. That is the essence of it. There remain a few people on both sides of politics who disagree, but the fact is undeniable – only by establishing an environment of necessity did we get these changes. Nothing else would do. The recognition of necessity has driven change in the past decade and it will drive it in this one. There is no greater weapon against the tendency to inertia. No better way to expose and defeat those without ideas and policies or the will to realise them. (Keating, 1995: 34)

> Being an adolescent at the moment of punk and postpunk music, succumbing to the aggressiveness, revolt and atonality of the music, influence the rhythms and tones and expression of what I wanted to write. (Tsiolkas, 2008)

We had travelled up the Pacific Highway from Sydney in our Rover Quintet, stopping at Grafton to vote, before arriving at Kangaroo Point on Friday October 2nd, 1998. The rest of "Crow" arrived that evening in the Tarago, three of my bandmates and our manager, spilling out of the bubble-van with the cigarette smoke. We had come to Brisbane to play a short set at the Livid festival at the RNA Showgrounds along with about fifty other bands and acts.

It was a blazing heat that hit us as we set up on the Zoo stage that Saturday. We had worked our way through most of the beer rider that afternoon before going on stage, and Robert Forster from the "Go-Betweens" was gliding between the rooms of the old shed, dressed like the Great Gatsby in a linen suit and Panama hat, letting us know that we denizens of Sydney and Melbourne were close to the tropics.

When I turned around to catch my breath after the fifth song of our set, I knew that we had just been in the midst of a run of songs when the band's power and grace, its grain and breath had for once gelled and fired. It felt like flying off a cliff.

Later we took half a pill and swooned to the Underground Lovers, before heading back to load the van as the music stopped and the crowd leaked out. It was about nine-thirty and we were all in the Tarago ready to leave the Showgrounds when the results of the Federal election started to be called over the radio. It was lost.

Pauline Hanson, the reactionary populist from South-East Queensland, had failed to win a seat in the lower house, but Labor had failed to win back Government. There was crying in the van.

*

After the long Labor decade, the Howard years: eleven long years of an intensified Neoliberalism allied to a reactionary social conservatism. These years coincided with a long boom, partly as a legacy of the 1990-91 recession which had burned Neoliberal governmentalities into Australian political culture in ways that made them appear second nature. The early Howard years were marked by the ascendance of the reactionary populist Pauline Hanson, whose tone of grievance and appeal to a blunt equality captured that segment of the population who had felt unrecognised, unprotected and even discarded during the later years of the long Labor decade. Hanson's culture-war appeal was pandered to by the Liberal-National Coalition who set about the slow process of reeling in her new-won constituents and undermining her through legal attacks on her party structure.

Two novels from 1996 and 1997 come out of a similar moment to Hanson: David Foster's *The Glade within the Grove* (1996) and David Ireland's *The Chosen* (1997). Both novels can be described as satirical pastoral, although Foster's has a radical ecological edge (Blaber, 2006: 62). What ties these novels to the long Labor decade and the rise of Hanson is their shared sense of a rural crisis which is felt most by some deformation of masculinity.[56] Hanson spoke to and for the men damaged not only by the recession, but by the collapse of the armature: the culture of Labourism and the political economy that had been its bulwark. In *The Chosen* the narrator is employed by the Lost River Council to interview one town member per week and from their stories to fashion a weaving that connects into a patchwork of stories from the 'chosen'. The town has recently been subject to a murder and the narrator is also mourning a lost love who ghosts the narrative. What emerges from the stories is a violent patchwork of individuals whose traditions keep them from collectively unravelling at the same time as they are incommensurable. The

damaged man here is Davis Blood the narrator whose work of mourning is the tapestry, which brings the plural subjects of the rural town together. Ireland's novel suggests that if the long Labor decade produced damaged men then their best hope was to both mourn the loss of the political culture that had underwritten their centrality, and to listen to the collective stories of the diverse people in their towns, rather than to scapegoat as Hanson and her acolytes did, those who had never enjoyed the centrality and privileges of white, wage-earning men.

In Foster's *The Glade within the Grove* a counter-mythology of settlement is presented and the birth of an eco-religion is recounted in which the men of the commune castrate themselves. Here the damage to men is a self-sacrificial offering to a spirit of reforestation. Far from Hanson's petit-bourgeois *ressentiment*, the damaged men in Foster's novel are acts of reparation to the ecosphere. The governmentalities practised in this novel are far removed from those discussed throughout this thesis. In terms of the ascendance of Hansonism Foster's novel abjures Government, so that while Hansonites demand recognition from Government, the denizens of *The Glade* are part of the birth of a religion: outside the state.

*

The stories of feminine sexuality in the fictional texts of the long Labor decade appear infrequently in the body of the thesis above. Cynthia Lamonde in McGahan's *Praise* is presented as having a voracious sexual appetite: a libidinal drive which is placed in proximity to the literal abjection of an abortion and the incidence of cancerous genital warts. In other words Cynthia has a dangerously diseased sexuality. In Justine Ettler's *The River Ophelia* (1995) a highly self-conscious set of metafictional allusions are paraded through the narrative. Less concerned with deploying abjection as social critique Ettler's Grunge novel could be said to be seeking to claim the symbolic capital in the Australian literary field for a novel that is itself abject in relation to other novels in the field (Kirkby, 1998: 239). Linda Jaivin's *Eat Me* (1995) qualifies as a Grunge novel on the basis of its

depiction of graphic female sexuality. Its Libertarian sexuality is presented with humour but the subjects of the stories are so comfortably situated in their inner-city milieu that the playful sexual fantasies, while enjoyable, amount to an ephemeral text.

Although mentioned in passing in chapter one, Lohrey's *Camille's Bread* is a substantial novel of the long Labor decade. Read through the concerns that this thesis has thematized, Lohrey's novel presents what could be called a world beyond Labourism. The novel's central female character has taken a year off from her job to spend time with her asthmatic daughter Camille. Into their lives enters Stephen, a public servant who is attempting to refashion himself as a Shiatsu masseur and who has entered wholesale non-western techniques of self, most notably by way of a macrobiotic diet. The coming together of these three poses fundamental problems over how: to move beyond Labourism for Stephen, whose past contains some un-worked through rage; to reconcile practices of single-mothering with those of self for Marita; and for Camille to learn to negotiate with a father-figure. What is of particular salience for this thesis is how Stephen's attempts to move beyond those Labourist governmentalities he practises as union representative in his public service job, shadow his renewed self as he finds himself the object of an intrigue initiated by Camille's estranged father, a merchant banker with a heart arrhythmia. Realising that he has been played he attacks Camille's father, his new non-violent practices of self abandoning him as rage erupts. In this brief reading of *Camille's Bread* the utopia of the reformed body, a theme carried through from Lohrey's work of mourning *The Reading Group*, is shown in the character of Stephen to be carrying a kernel of unresolved rage that such a refashioned self cannot easily abject. To read Stephen's story as emblematic of the fortunes of Labourism across the long Labor decade, we might say that while the Labourist-Social-liberal armature is a lost political project, a residual Labourism remains a strong core within sections of Australian political culture. The repudiation of the Neoliberal Workchoices industrial relations laws at the 2007 Federal election, the election at which Prime Minister Howard was unseated, points to this residual Labourism in Australian political culture, which may be less

a lost formation than an ethos awaiting new articulations, new forms of governmentality to animate it.

<center>*</center>

This thesis presented a two track reading of key themes and genres in the textuality of the long Labor decade. Off to the side of the thesis some music could be heard: Ari's eurhythmic dancing in *Loaded*; the sound of David Bowie in *Capital, volume one*; perhaps at some points Nirvana's *Smells like Teen Spirit* caught your ear. While the boundary work of this thesis has shuttled between fictional and non-fictional texts, there are other boundaries to be worked, not least that between the music of the long Labor decade and its texts. Indeed, in Bob Blunt's *Blunt: a Biased History of Australian Rock* (2001), the Seattle-based genealogy of Grunge music is challenged by the acknowledgement that "US Sub Pop bands like Nirvana and Mudhoney [. . .] were openly avowed fans of [Australian band] the Scientists" (151). The short analysis given in the thesis introduction of Kurt Cobain's post-Fordist guitar solo in *Smells like Teen Spirit* – which works on the boundary between Grunge musical form and Gramscian Marxist political economy – could be extended into analysis of the homologies between musical and literary forms in other periods, or between Australian musical culture and Grunge fiction.

Another trajectory for future research would be to perform a set of more extensive mid-range readings over the long Labor decade. The focus in the thesis on two Left writers could be multiplied to investigate a larger set of Left-wing texts which thematise government differently, or similar practices of mid-range reading could be applied to Social-liberal writers, those whom Mark Davis argues work within the paradigm of literary Liberalism. Other themes could be the focus of distant readings including ones that take an ecological form as their unit of data, such as the use of trees in novels like Murray Bail's *Eucalyptus* and Foster's *Glade within the Grove*.

<center>*</center>

Finally, this thesis has sought to analyse and interpret the language of economics through its figures of speech and narrative instantiations. Recent novels like Jonathan Franzen's *The Corrections* (2001) and Kate Jennings's *Moral Hazard* (2002) perform their own boundary work, shuttling between the discourses of the economic and the self. The complex temporal narrativity of financial derivatives must surely be the equal of any labyrinthine multi-temporal plot. In order to understand these products so that we can track their movements better, narrative specialists like literary critics are well-placed to produce models that can analyze and interpret these dangerous 'instruments'. As Keating reminds us: "They go on with all this bullshit because they won't admit it's an art, not a science" (cited in Edwards 407). Bringing economics back into the domain of the arts by focussing on its narrativity, as this thesis has done, is one research trajectory urgently in need of extension.

Endnotes.

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[1] While there is an extensive literature on the theory and history of the *Bildungsroman* – formation novel –there is a general agreement amongst literary historians that Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (also known as *The Lehrjahre*) most comprehensively codifies the genre, and thereby sets up the template against which subsequent novels of formation will be measured (Cuddon 81). It's also generally agreed that Wilhelm Dilthey, German philosopher and sociologist, introduced the term as a concept into critical literary studies (Boes, 2006: 230-31). The term *Bildung* derives from (German) Western Christian use denoting God's active transformation of the passive Christian individual (Kontje, 1993: 1). This passive model itself alters as developmental thought mediated by organic narratives of change secularizes this religious sense of *Bildung* so that a forming of unity with the Christian God is replaced by the forming of a unified individual self whose integrity is enabled and strengthened by accommodation of and reconciliation with a developing and modernising environment (1-2).This notion of organic development which leant on biological genetics and its model of teleological destiny exerted a strong influence on German 'classical' thought in the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: becoming is thus seen as a becoming-towards, where the matured state of that which becomes is already known. This conception of *Bildung* as secular organic teleological development will have productive effects for literary-fictional narrative and will also provide generic conventions against which novelisation, in Bakhtin's sense, operates to satirise, carnivalise and place into dialogue other models of change (Bakhtin, 1981: 33, 39). Indeed, Todd Kontje has gone so far as to argue that the 'classical' *Bildungsromane*, and here he means Goethe's *Lehrjahre* among others from this period, were intentionally metafictional: fictions about the role and place of reading, the rise of fiction and the implications for the formation of the public sphere that these developments brought (1992: 1-17).

To some extent the key lesson of the *Bildungsroman* is that it provides a model with which to develop an individual life through the paradox of a freedom to choose the pre-determined plot of one's life. This paradox is given a narrative form through the convention of issuing the narrating from a future-anterior or in the mode of a teleological tautology (Slaughter 1415).

The formative dimension, or *Bildung*, of governmentality – what Mitchell Dean calls "'culture-governance' or governance through the ethical culture or cultivation of the individual" – is significant in understanding how the two tracks of literary and political discourse entwine and overlap during the long Labor decade (2007: 61). For Dean this "barely articulated thesis" of "culture-governance" links the phenomena of the progressive politics of post-national or

cosmopolitan forms of "self-government" to those forms of self-government that operate on the responsibilities and moral dimensions of self (60-1).

2 An influence on this thesis and an alternative to the masculine focus it takes, is Margaret Henderson's *Marking Feminist Times: Remembering the Longest Revolution in Australia* (2006). Henderson's range of boundary work brings aspects of the political, cultural and literary fields together as a way of interpreting and explaining, often through a psychoanalytic approach, the textuality of feminist times. See especially Chapter 3 of her study.

3 It might appear odd but in this thesis I will use a capitalised 'G' Government to refer to *the* Government as opposed to the heuristic that Foucault deploys – government – meaning the practices of conducting the conduct of oneself, others or any social formation (Foucault, 2001: 341). The purpose of signalling the distinction between Government and government in this way, following the Foucauldian "research program devoted to the study of rationalities of government in the modern West", is to indicate that "government is heterogeneous and pervasive [and] it intrudes into all aspects of life [and] should not be seen as emanating from a single controlling centre – [. . .] the state" (Dean and Hindess 2).

4 Theodore Adorno's work in this stream of the sociology of musical form and his affirmation, albeit guarded, of Schönberg's 12-tone system as the only path through the limits of tonality, is severely limited by its Eurocentric and high-modernist prejudices. But what Adorno established was that the sociology of twentieth century musical form must begin with the exhaustion of tonality and its symbolic forms of harmony and reconciliation, which for Adorno are homologous to the forms of reification that capitalist commodity exchange and Enlightenment Reason produce (Martin, 2002: 9-10).

The most significant extension of Adorno's analysis of post-tonality in music is Jacques Attali's *Noise: the Political Economy of Music* which seeks to provide a historical-structuralist approach to the political economy of music (1985). Attali argues that human systems of exchange and production are first worked out in the field of music: he famously writes that "[m]usic is prophecy" (11). For Attali changes in the production, distribution and consumption of music prefigure transformations in western political economy (19). The starting assumption for Attali is René Girard's notion of the link between violence and the sacred: the production of music is essentially an imitation of the sacrificing of the scapegoat which any 'society' must perform periodically as a means of ending cycles of revenge killing: ending the general violence (26). Music is mimetic of sacrifice: a gift that exceeds repayment (27). Thus music is active in the general economy and by tracking changes in the economies of music Attali persuasively argues that phases of modernity correlate to orders of music (19). The order of Sacrifice is superseded by that of Representation which in turn is overwhelmed by the order of Repetition (20). Attali posits a fourth order, that of Composition, which he argues is prophesised by improvisational play and 'playing' primarily for self-pleasure, as can be heard in Jimi Hendrix's solos and jazz improvisation (132, 137-40). Nevertheless, Attali's theory of historical musical orders is both at its most

interesting and most contentious as he outlines and explains the factors that presage and mark the paradigm shift from the order of Representation to that of Repetition.

Central to this explanation is the notion that commodity exchange in capitalism is actually an exchange of dead labour: that the commodity form is one of sacrificed labour-time (58-9). During the rise of Western European Liberal capitalism music was always embodied. Whether decoded from a score or played from folk-memory music was performed by musicians for an audience. But with the rise of mechanical reproduction music was recorded and could thereby be re-played in situations no longer structured by national and bourgeois institutions (87-101). This dis-embodying also amounts to the victory of the simulacra, or the mediatised parade of empty signifiers marking the shift from industrial capitalism, where products are produced and consumed, to the society of the spectacle where signs are produced and consumed (88; Frow, 1997: 4-8). The visual bias in this account is immediate once Attali's aural history is heard, but what is clear is that Attali's account of Repetition leans heavily on Baudrillard's concept of the commodity form as dead-labour (Fink 7-8, 10).

Attali writes:

> Repetition is established through the supplanting, by mass production, of every present-day mode of commodity production. Mass production, a final form, signifies the repetition of all consumption, individual or collective, that replacement of the restaurant by pre-cooked meals, of custom-made clothes by ready-to-wear, of the individual house based on stereotypical designs, of the politician by the anonymous bureaucrat, of skilled labor [sic] by standardized tasks, of the spectacle by recordings of it. (128)

Robert Fink in his study of the sociology of American pulse-pattern minimalist music argues that

> Attali's broad grasp of socioeconomic realities is unmatched, as is his materialist understanding of how technological advances in production and reproduction engender passive repetition in consumer society – but he is too in love with Thanatos to see how complex and multivariate our experience of repetition might be. (2005: 8)

For Fink, part of this multivariance is the erotic dimension to the production of demand that Attali either ignores or eschews in favour of the centrality of death to the order of Repetition: 'For death [. . .] is present in the very structure of the repetitive economy: *the stockpiling of use-time in the commodity object is fundamentally a herald of death*' (Attali, 1986: 126). To some extent Fink's approach to repetitive music, his foregrounding of Eros over Thanatos, is complementary to Foucault's focus on the productivity of desire as opposed to the repression of desire, and thus valence of Thanatos, as the mark of civilisation (Fink, 2005: 4-12; Hamilton, 137-38).

So, if repetition is one way out of tonality – and there are diverse social-psychological interpretations of this broad musical form that range from a focus on the Death-drive to those focussing on the creation of desire – then such a brief foray as this into the historical sociology of musical form reveals that 'sound thinking' offers a rich counter-point to the visually dominated terminology and explanations that structure much historical and cultural study. While this thesis is in no way a musical history it will at times draw on aspects and methods of this sub-field of historical sociology in order to strengthen and extend some of the arguments concerning literary form and especially concerning Grunge culture in the thesis introduction. In particular it is the equation of grunge and thereby punk-rock music with an un-theorised notion of noise or dissonance as authentic rebellious youth-culture expression that I want to dispel.

5 This treatment of Grunge music in the critical reception of Grunge fiction is a practice analysed in "Reads like ~~Grunge~~ Spirit" in the thesis introduction.

6 It is interesting to note, then, that the generation most associated with Grunge fiction, Generation X, can be said to derive its "X" sign from New York Punk Richard Hell's song "Blank Generation" (Savage 90). The substitution of the adjective "Blank" by the "X" maintains Hell's original sense of an absence portending presence: a generation that had possibilities opened to it through the power of negation. This use of negation, rather than nihilism, was a key tactic in the politics of Punk music specifically, and punk culture, generally (Marcus, 2001: 9). Whether a "Blank Generation" or Generation X, both adjectives signify an indeterminacy, a status of erasure. In placing Grunge fiction under erasure, critics and literary historians unconsciously rehearse this Punk tactic.

7 This thesis situates its boundary work, in David Carter's terms, at the interface between practices of literary criticism and textual politics applied to both literary and political texts. Whether this is a redundant approach or not can't be prophesised. However, Carter's advocacy for research "that pursues the life of books into the marketplace and public domain" rather than that older work of "formal literary criticism performed [. . .] on texts necessary to move them *into* the academy" must surely be only part of the work of Australian literary studies, as this putatively 'academic' work is part of the forcefield by which the market in texts operates (2007: 119). Part of the "public life of literature" is the system of consecration and indeed canonisation, that the academy, in part, struggles over and bestows (Carter and Ferres, 2001). To disavow this central function of the literary studies academic in this aspect of the literary field appears as an act of bad faith.

The concept of 'boundary work' and a definition of how this concept will be applied within the thesis are introduced on page 19.

8 The concept of affiliation used here derives from Edward Said (1991: 174-75). For Said, affiliation is "that network of peculiarly cultural associations between forms, statements, and other aesthetic elaborations on the one hand, and on the other, institutions, agencies, classes, and amorphous social forces" (174). While Said lists three implications of his definition of affiliation for critical activity, it is in his third sense that I will employ the term in this thesis:

> Affiliation releases a text from its isolation and imposes on the scholar or critic the presentational problem of historically recreating or reconstructing the possibilities from which the text arose. Here is the place for intentional analysis and for the effort *to place a text in homological, dialogical, or antithetical relationship with other texts, classes, and institutions.* (175 emphasis added)

[9] Use of the term fields here derives from Pierre Bourdieu's sociology of culture, where a field is

> a network or configuration of objective relations between positions. The distribution of certain types of capital – economic, social, cultural and symbolic – denotes the different goods, resources and values around which power relations in a particular field crystallise. Any field is marked by a tension of conflict between the interests of different groups who struggle to gain control over a field's capital. In the final instance, all fields are determined by the demands of the capitalist system of accumulation, however, each field is autonomous in that it has a specific internal logic which establishes non-synchronous, uneven relations with other fields and which renders it irreducible to any overarching dynamic. (McNay cited in McRobbie, 2005: 131)

Angela McRobbie summarises the concept of field as "a structured social space within which relations of power are pursued through struggle for position" (133).

[10] There is a detailed discussion of Habermas' concept and history of the public sphere, and in particular what he calls the literary public sphere, in chapter four on pages 201-03 of this thesis. I treat Habermas' concept of the public sphere as part of the "social imaginary". This term, as it is applied in the *Public Culture* journal, is defined at an angle to Cornelius Castoriadis's use of the term, where it has a more radically creative meaning (Castoriadis 13-8). Dilip Gaonkar writes:

> the idea of *social imaginary* [refers] broadly to the way a given people imagine their collective social life. Within the folds of a social imaginary, we see ourselves as agents who traverse a social space and inhabit a temporal horizon, entertain certain beliefs and norms, engage in and make sense of our practices in terms of purpose, timing, appropriateness, and exist among other agents. (2002: 10)

As a core part of the modern social imaginary the importance of the public sphere, as Craig Calhoun notes,

> lies in its potential as a mode of societal integration. Public discourse (and what Habermas later and more generally calls communicative action) is a possible mode of coordination of human life, as are state power and market economies. But money and power are non-discursive modes of coordination, as Habermas's later theory stresses; they offer no intrinsic openings to the identification of reason and will, and they suffer from tendencies toward domination and reification. State and economy are

thus both crucial topics for and rivals of the democratic public sphere. (1992: 6)

[11] See endnote 39 for a definition of Neoconservatism, and how it relates to Neoliberalism, especially in the context of the 1990s culture wars.

[12] I am taking the definition of metafiction used in the thesis from Patricia Waugh, who defines it as "fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality" (Waugh cited in Kontje, 1992: 11)

[13] Unlike Hawke, who embodied an identifiable larrikin spirit and whose story drew heavily on identifications with John Curtin's war-time sacrifices, most notably Curtin's abstinence from alcohol, Keating's political claims were prosecuted in and through a modernising story of nation and self (Curran, 2004: 181-84). There will be little mention of Robert Hawke in this thesis which might appear to be a major omission. After all the long Labor decade is mostly led by Hawke (1983-1991) and Hawke's trajectory came out of the industrial wing of the Australian labour movement, while his intellectual formation emerged out his prolonged study of the Arbitration Courts and system in Australia: two central institutions of Australian Labourism (157-61).

The omission is due to Hawke's keynote mode of leadership and the fundamental political discourse through which he articulated his leadership: building national consensus in a time of crisis (Hawke, 1979). In particular, Hawke's identification with and invocation of World War II Australian Prime Minister John Curtin's sacrifices in a time of National existential crisis as the means with which to generate the urgency that the economic and industrial crisis of 1982-83 demanded have a limited hermeneutic value for this thesis due to the mythical nature of the Curtin identification and due to the cyclic understanding of history that the 1942 homology presents (Kelly, 1984: 406; Curran, 2004: 147, 169-72, 181-84).

Indeed, sociologists like Peter Beilharz have rarely been kind to Hawke's leadership not least because his mythical identifications coupled to a cyclic representation of history, on personal and national levels, were contradicted by the modernizing economic reforms that the crisis was presented as calling for (Beilharz, 1994: 89, 123). Hawke's language has limited interest for this thesis because the putatively inclusive nature of the national consensus, between organised labor in the form of the ACTU, the Government represented by the ALP and business and industry peak groups, on which his early claims to leadership stood was clearly contradicted by the selective invitees to the 1983 National Economic Summit that was presented as having endorsed the new consensus (130-33). Hawke's leadership was less based on Keating's qualities of linguistic inventiveness and narrative density than a persona which embodied key aspects of the Labourist ethos including a larrikin image that combined sporting and drinking skills with the techniques of mateship. Hawke's initial electoral popularity can be seen as a Labourist reaction to the more urbane Social-Liberalism of Whitlam (Watts 60).

14 Joan Kirkby traces its emergence, as a term of classification applied to Australian novels and short stories, to a series of tabloid and broadsheet newspaper articles published in the middle of 1995 (1998: 229).

15 For Frow, following Arjun Appadurai,

> The *regime of value* [is] a semiotic institution generating evaluative regularities under certain conditions of use, and in which particular empirical audiences or communities may be more or less fully imbricated [. . .] Regimes of value are mechanisms that permit the construction and regulation of value-equivalence, and indeed permit cross-cultural mediation. [. . .] Regimes of value are [. . .] relatively autonomous of and have no directly expressive relation to social groups. [. . .] The concept of regime expresses one of the fundamental theses of work in cultural studies: that no object, no text, no cultural practice has an intrinsic or necessary meaning or value or function; and that meaning, value and function are always the effect of specific (and changing and changeable) social relations and mechanisms of signification. (Frow, 1995: 144-45)

The advantages of using the notion of regimes of value are twofold:

> First, by specifying the *mechanism* by means of which 'extratextual' determinations like social position are translated into reading practices (mechanisms of training in the recognition and use of distinct codes of value) and the formal and informal institutions within which they operate, it demonstrates the irreducibility of semiotic codes to class or race or age or gender – and, conversely, it stresses the point that, because of this very non-equivalence, class and race and age and gender are always to an important degree imagined (but not imaginary) structures. Second, it makes possible to rethink the relation between canonical (or 'high') and non-canonical (or 'popular') culture, as *practices* of value rather than as collections of texts with a necessary coherence[.] (Frow, 1995: 150)

16 The concept that the timbres and rhythms of rock, and punk rock in particular, are Fordist is reinforced by Iggy Pop, the leader of proto-punk Michigan band "The Stooges". Talking about the visceral genealogy of the sound of "The Stooges" Pop reflects:

> What our band did was basically make a big noise and create some movement with that noise. Slowly I came up with a kind of concept. A lot of it was based on the attitude of juvenile delinquency and general mental grievance that I'd gotten from these dropouts I was hanging out with, mixed in with the sorts of music I like: hard r&b, hard rock and roll, and the exciting elements of jazz, 'cause I was starting to listen to John Coltrane, and the unpredictability of that. And then an added element was to find something simple, monolithic, metallic, like a big machine - like the drill presses at the Ford plant, stamping out fenders. I'd listen to that and think. 'God those are impressive sounds, big sounds.' And they're

so regular and simple, I thought, 'Those are sounds that even we could master. (cited in Palmer 176)

[17] Foucault's concepts of techniques of self, and of governmentality will be given detailed definition and explication in chapter two. See pages 110-14, and also pages 62-3 of this thesis.

[18] Generally, throughout the thesis I will use the Gramscian meaning of articulation as it is reworked by the Birmingham School. Dick Hebdige defines articulation as:

> [a] continually shifting, mediated relation between groups and classes, a structured field and a set of lived relations in which complex ideological formations composed of elements derived from diverse sources [are] actively combined, dismantled, bricolaged so that new effective alliances can be secured between different fractional groupings which can themselves no longer return to static, homogeneous classes. (Hebdige, 1994: 394)

However, there is no normative dimension to my use of the term in this thesis. For example the Australian anti-Arbitration association, the H.R. Nicholls Society, can said to have been as much articulated to small business owners as the ACTU leadership was articulated to the department of Treasury in the long Labor decade.

[19] By poetics I mean the linguistic conventions and forms that constitute the conditions from which writing emerges as imitative rather than descriptive of reality: in Aristotle's terms poetics is the study of the art of representing, in language, impossible probabilities (Aristotle, 1996: 16-17, 41). The meaning of textuality refers here to the productivity of a signifying unity, such as a poem or political speech, the meanings of which are immanently and temporally unstable, and which forms meaningful and utilisable subjective orientations. See Frow and Morris (1993: xviii-xx) and Frow (1986: 125-206) for a detailed application of Marxist-based textualism.

[20] Dipesh Chakrabarty writes: "The periodizing instinct and the political instinct are deeply connected [. . .] How we periodize our present is thus connected to the question of how we imagine the political. The reverse must be true as well: that every imagination of the political entails a certain figure of the now" (2004: 458). Chakrabarty's focus on 'the present' applies equally to the 'recent past' which is often invisible in histories because of its temporal proximity. The gambit of this thesis's periodization – the long Labor decade – is to focus on Neoliberalism as it is embedded in Australian political culture through modes of textuality, narratives in particular, and the discourse and practices of Labourism. Focussing this analysis through the categories and texts sharpened through the periodisation of the long Labor decade enables the specific boundary work of this thesis to be practised.

The politics of periodization also run through use of the terms modernity, modernism, post-modernity and postmodernism. I have eschewed the term

postmodern in this thesis for reasons summed up by John Frow, who suggests that postmodernism, as a term:

> [c]an be taken as designating nothing more and nothing less than a genre of theoretical writing. [Y]our first major gambit must be to predicate the existence or non-existence of the postmodern [. . . .] The classical structure of this gambit [. . .] is this: first, you assume the existence of a historical shift in sensibility, which you call the postmodern; then you define it by opposition to whatever you take the modern to have been; finally, you seek to give a content to the postmodern in terms of this opposition. The content, that is to say, is deduced logically from the axiom of existence and only then described as historically real. (1997: 15)

Peter Osborne argues that modernity is a multiple, qualitative and not chronological concept (1995 and 1992). For Zygmunt Bauman the historicism of a post modernity elides, again, the qualitative shift in that experience of time and space that is better explained and connoted by the figuring of a move from a solid to liquid modernity (2000: 1-15). Furthermore, the alternative modernities 'school' that surrounds the Chicago University based *Public Culture* journal, including Dipesh Chakrabarty, argue that the paths to and through modernity are multiple and that to fix any one path is often Eurocentric if not also teleological (Gaonkar, 2002: 4; Chakrabarty, 2000: 6-16).

[21] Three of the five elements in Hagan's description of Labourism – white Australia, tariff protection, and compulsory arbitration – form the core of Paul Kelly's influential heuristic the "Australian Settlement," indicating not only the centrality of Labourism to Australian political culture but also that Hagan and Kelly's histories are placed on the cusp of fundamental changes to Labourism, and thereby fundamental changes to Australian political culture. While a useful heuristic device, adumbrating five tenets or pillars of a discourse tends to flatten those elements or commitments that resist easy nominalisation.

[22] Bernstein's interest in the movement rather than the end of socialism is summed up in his presentism:"I am not concerned with what will happen in the more distant future, but with what can and ought to happen in the present, for the present and for the nearest future" (Bernstein cited in Adams and Dyson, 2003: 152).

[23] Robert Menzies was prime minister of Australia for two periods. The first period is from 1939-41, and the second period is from 1949-66. It is the second post-war period that I refer to as the Menzies period.

[24] The Labourist-Social-liberal armature is a heuristic that functions in the thesis as a constantly tested hypothesis concerning what was mourned for and what Neoliberal governmentalities replaced in the long Labor decade. This heuristic is a more polysemic figure than Paul Kelly's Australian Settlement, or than that of the Keynesian-Fordist-Welfare State. The notion of an armature historicises this political-economic-social-cultural assemblage during the consumer and car-based period of the post-war boom, when the great mass-electricity schemes were constructed. It operates as a boundary figure, connoting the framework on

which the shaping and *Bildung* of citizens and selves occurred alongside the protective armoury that the White Australia policy, Tariffs and wage Arbitration brought to a section of the population. Above all else, the figure of an armature refers to a forcefield against which other forms of political subjectivity, social formations and practices were able to solidly define themselves.

[25] The electro-magnetic connotations of this figure are the main ones I am referring to by using this term. An armature, in the electrical sense, is both what electrical current can pass through to produce motive power or torque, and can itself be the receptacle of a rotor's oscillations through which electrical current is generated ("Armature"). An armature is also the skeletal frame on which sculpturers build clay or plaster models, and it is another term for armour, the art of protecting with armour and even the apparatus of attack ("Armature"). It is the first meaning that I intend here, but the other meanings are also significant for the textuality of the long Labor decade as will be apparent when Keating 's tropes of old and new motors that his government removes and installs, and when Kelly's argument about Fortress Australia and its bedrock ideology of protection that is to be dismantled and demolished, are analysed in chapter one.

[26] Raymond Williams explains his term structure of feeling in the following way: "it was a structure in the sense that you could perceive it operating in one work after another which wasn't otherwise connected – people weren't learning it from each other; yet it was one of feeling much more than thought – a pattern of impulses, restraints, tones" (Williams, 1979: 159).

[27] 'The 'living' wage promised men who had work that they and their families could, under most circumstances, maintain a decent life, one that conformed to the standards of the 'civilized community' in which they lived' (Castles, 2002: 44).

[28] There is also a literature on the authoritarian nature of Neoliberal states and on the propensity of states to rule through techniques of biopower and through states of exception. See Dean 2007.

[29] Hamilton is possibly leaning on Jacques Derrida's use of the figure of Hamlet's father – the ghost of Shakespeare's play – in Derrida's deconstruction of spectres and ghosts in Marx's philosophy of history (Derrida, 1994). For Derrida the presence of the ghost who arrives with a message profoundly unsettles the being of the present, effecting a haunting of ontology – a hauntology. I use the notions of ghosts and haunting here as suggestive of spectral figures rather than in line with the weak messianism of a 'democracy to come' that Derrida derives from his reading of the specters [sic] of Marx (65 and 180-81).

[30] See especially chapter one from *It's Time Again: Whitlam and Modern Labor* (2003).

[31] Derrida argues in *Specters of Marx* that as a spectre for Marx communism is a "presence-to-come" (101).

[32] James Walter's psychobiography *The Leader: a Political Biography of Gough Whitlam* (1980), and Graeme Freudenburg's *A Certain Grandeur* (1977) lie

outside the period of the long Labor decade. Political histories focussed on Whitlam, such as Paul Kelly's *The Unmaking of Gough* (1976), Laurie Oakes and David Solomon's *The Making of an Australian Prime Minister* (1973), and Alan Reid's *The Whitlam Venture* (1976) are journalistic accounts of the Whitlam era that again lie closer to the central dramas of the Dismissal and 1972 election win than to the long Labor decade. Whitlam published a long account of the policies of his Government in *The Whitlam Government: 1972-1975* (1985), but this text, while emerging in the long Labor decade is a diary of Government rather than a narrative of a life.

33 The use of the term ALP 'ego' here is a reference to Freud's depiction of the work of mourning, whereby the ego must describe the lost object in consciousness so as to work through a detachment of the residual libidinal investments in the lost object (Freud, 2005: 204-05).

34 In his foreword to Paul Keating's *Advancing Australia: the Speeches of Paul Keating* (1995), Don Watson surrenders ownership to Keating of those speeches Watson wrote or collaborated on: "whoever is the author of a speech, the giver of it is the owner" (1995: xvi). I have followed this attribution and ascribed a de facto authorship to Keating for the speeches and writings made in his name.

35 Temporalization, for Peter Osborne, refers to the model of time given form in a particular philosophy of history of time:

> if structural categories of historical analysis, like 'capital' [and 'modernity'], are to be rendered effective at the level of experience, they will have to be mediated by the phenomenological forms through which history is lived as the ongoing temporalization of existence. 'Modernity' is one such form; 'progress', 'reaction', 'revolution', 'crisis', 'conservation', 'stagnation' and 'the new' are others – to name only the most obvious. These are not the products of competing totalizations of historical material across a common temporal frame. They are not just based on different selections of which practices and events are most historically significant. They represent alternative temporal structures, alternative temporalizations of 'history', which articulate the relations between 'past', 'present' and 'future' in politically significant ways.' (1995: 200)

Like John Frow (1997: 13-63) and indeed Zygmunt Bauman (2000: 1-15), Osborne rejects the prefix of 'post' to modernism and modernity as "the whole network of ideas about the postmodern is firmly inscribed within the problematic of the temporal dialectics of modernity. (It may involve a decisive mutation of the field, but it remains within its parameters nonetheless)" (1995: viii). Furthermore, Peter Osborne argues that modernity is a qualitative and not quantitative category and that "[p]ostmodernism [. . .] is the revenge of the philosophical discourse of modernity upon Marxism for neglecting problems in the philosophy of history" (1992 and 1995: ix).

36 On Anzac Day, 25 April 2007, I entered the exact phrase "Australian Settlement" into Google's Advanced search field and received around 22,000

hits. Of the first 50, 20 hits – 40% – used the phrase in reference to early British Settlement: the colonial period, the invasion, the first fleet. One hit out of the first 50 referred to an insurance claim – a legal settlement. The remaining 58% of hits – 29 out of the 50 – refer to Kelly's 'Australian Settlement'. These appear in book reviews, blogs, journal articles, conference paper abstracts, university course outlines, speeches, conference flyers. Not all these references are uncritical, but more than half are. The most common verb attached to the noun phrase is "dismantling": the "dismantling of the Australian Settlement" appears in numerous times in *The End of Certainty* (Kelly, 1994: 98, 226). Who or what did the dismantling is at the core of Kelly's story and goes towards explaining why its central narrative sequence has insinuated itself into Australian writing and discourse as a commonplace.

37 The number of those critiquing Kelly's text and the heuristic of the Australian Settlement have been growing. For some, like Geoffrey Stokes, "to the extent that we can speak of a 'Settlement' in Australia, it was one reached on a wider range of key conflict or cleavages than those to which Kelly refers" (2004: 5-6). On other hand, there are those critics who dismiss its temporalization of Australian political culture. Stuart Macintyre writes: "Kelly has little interest in recent history. His Settlement is a cipher for the long-delayed and urgently needed deregulation of the Australian economy" (31-2). Paul Smyth argues that

> [t]he relevant historical context to the rise of economic rationalism in the 1980s was not any crisis in federation-style developmentalism – let alone the tariff regime of Kelly's Australian Settlement – but that central object of attack of the monetarists, supply-siders and other globalising neo-liberals: Australia's Keynesian legacy. (2004: 40)

For Tim Rowse "Kelly's story of the dissolution of the Australian Settlement is the closest thing we have to a widely respected account of the modernisation of Australian politics" but it is one that ignores the

> Keynesian critique of two of the pillars of the Australian Settlement: compulsory arbitration and industry protection. The effect of pointing to this [. . .] critique [. . .] is to break open Kelly's category of sentimental traditionalists, that is, to show that there is more than one way to be critical of the recent neo-liberal antidotes to the Australian Settlement. (2003: 220)

But the most extensive and sustained critique of Kelly's text comes from James Walter who is alive to the diachronic antecedents and synchronic bedfellow of Kelly's central argument. Walter links Kelly's construction of the Australian Settlement to Hancock's *Australia*, a link that has been given further emphasis in this thesis through their shared use of 'characterology' (1996: 33). Moving sideways, Walter pairs his hermeneutics of Kelly's text with a reading of Francis Fukuyama's coterminous "The End of History?" arguing that both texts "express the wisdom of the moment with a comprehensiveness and historical sweep that gives [them] real force" but the problem with both is that they "re-read the past in anachronistic ways" (33, 36). Fukuyama's triumphal declaration of the victory of the "free market" and "'the liberal idea'" embedded in a "universal,

directional history" collapses the distinction between Social-liberalism and its market-based cousin, thereby effecting a depoliticization between the quite serious differences between these forms of Liberalism (36-7). For Walter,

> Kelly's anachronism – and emptying of political history – is even clearer. His astute description of 'the Australian Settlement' shows the ameliorative tendency, and the expectation of a significant role by the state, to be leading characteristics in Australian politics. The difficulty emerges when he implies that, because such assumptions no longer seem appropriate, they were always mistaken. Thus, the tactics which generated a local politics and sustained an economy increasingly oriented to Australia's interests can be shrugged off as simply 'the protectionist shackles which stifled its (Australia's) first century'. How such delusions could have survived, with (to some extent) bipartisan support and popular acceptance, is a mystery. That there might be some cause for pride in Australia's political achievement is inconceivable. (37)

[38] Kelly's choice of the term Settlement is in some ways pernicious as it seeks to whitewash the violent settlement of indigenous Australia that began in the late eighteenth century and bury this earlier settlement under the weight of a putatively civilised social contract between the representatives of what were white, male Australian citizens.

[39] While Davis uses the terms new conservatism and neoliberalism interchangeably, I agree with Wendy Brown who sees Neoliberalism and Neoconservatism as two distinct yet related forms of governmentality. For Brown Neoconservatism – a moral political rationality – is planted in the seed bed prepared by Neoliberalism – a largely amoral market-political rationality (2006: 691, 703). The problem with conflating these two terms is that Neoliberalism's radical newness is disavowed and misrecognised due to it being subsumed to a conservatism said to be based on economic liberalism. I have followed Brown's guidance throughout this thesis and kept the two rationalities separate (691).

I argue Davis conflates these rationalities, possibly due to a Left melancholy and the desire for a Left populism that needs a single target against which to define its identity. Davis' attacks on Liberalism are both, arguably, an acting out and working though which are given force by the extent to which Labourism was lost in the 1980s – a loss that Meaghan Morris is at pains to articulate to the concomitant collapse of identity politics (Morris, 1998: 202).

[40] Discontinuous narrative is a technical literary phrase coined by Moorhouse: "I see it as circuits, circuits within a larger assembly, with the books coming in one on the other" (Moorhouse in Baker, 1989: 224-25). It refers to a collection of short stories where characters and situations return through a 'novel' or series of novels, but are not central to any one novel.

[41] This ascription of a Marxist-based utopianism to Lohrey's politics is based on the consistency of her commitment to Western Marxism until the late 1980s, when her focus shifts onto emerging technologies of the self, the new politics of ecology,

and a greater concentration on the body and on psychoanalytic models
("Amanda Lohrey" par. 3, 8)

42 Henri Lefebvre argues that there are three modes of polyrhythm: isorhythmia –
where two or more rhythms are identical; arrhythmia – where two or more
rhythms are disharmonious; and eurhythmia – where two or more rhythms are in
harmony (Lefebvre, 2004: 67). Lefebvre:

> At no moment have the analysis of rhythms and the rhythmanalytical
> project lost sight of the **body.** Not the anatomical or functional body, but
> the body as **polyrhythmic** and **eurhythmic** (in the so-called *normal* state).
> As such, the living body has (in general) always been present: a constant
> reference. The theory of rhythms is founded on the experience and
> knowledge of the body; the concepts derive from this consciousness and
> this knowledge, simultaneously banal and full of surprises – of the
> unknown and the misunderstood.
>
> Along with arrhythmia, **isorhythmia** (the equality of rhythms) completes
> this repertoire of fundamental concepts. With one reservation: iso- and
> eu-rhythmia are mutually exclusive. There are few isorhythmias, rhythmic
> equalities or equivalences, except of a higher order. On the other hand,
> eurhythmias abound: everytime there is an organism, organisation, life
> (living bodies).
>
> In this respect, thought could return to the *Liebnizian* principle
> apparently abandoned by philosophers, logicians and scientific types.
> Were there *isorhythmia* between two temporalities, they would coincide.
> Equivalence entails identity (and reciprocally, non-identity implies
> difference); **polyrhythmia** is composed of diverse rhythms. **Eurhythmia**
> (that of the living body, normal and *healthy*) presupposes the association
> of different rhythms. In arrhythmia, rhythms break apart, alter and bypass
> *synchronisation* (the usual term for designating this phenomena). A
> pathological situation – agreed! – depending on the case; interventions
> are made, or should be made, **through rhythms**, without brutality. (67)

43 Derrida writes

> If there is something like spectrality, there are reasons to doubt this
> reassuring order of presents and, especially, the border between the
> present, the actual or present reality of the present, and everything that
> can be opposed to it: absence, non-presence, non-effectivity, virtuality,
> or even simulacrum in general, and so forth. There is first of all the doubtful
> contemporaneity of the present to itself. Before knowing whether one
> can differentiate between the specter of the past and the specter of the
> future, of the past present and the future present, one must perhaps ask
> oneself whether the *spectrality effect* does not consist in undoing this
> opposition, or even this dialectic, between actual, effective presence
> and its other. (Derrida, 1995: 39-40)

Derrida's *hauntology*, or haunting of ontology, is a way of theorising the uncanny
presence of the future in the present (51). The dystopian near-future that is the
temporal setting for *The Reading Group* can thereby be seen as a haunting from

the future; a technique in the politics of poetics which aims to unsettle the present.

44 Moorhouse is currently working on his third League of Nations novel (Australian Prime Minister's Centre).

45 Barry Hindess also refers to governmentality as a continuum:

> Foucault maintains that [. . .] there is a certain continuity between the government of oneself, the government of a household and the government of a state or community. Linked to this continuity, he argues, is the fact that the principles of political action and those of personal conduct can be seen as being intimately related. He suggests, for example, that successful government of others depends, in the first instance, on the capacity of those doing the governing to govern themselves. As for the governed, to the extent that it avoids the extremes of domination, their government must aim to affect their *conduct*—that is, it must operate through their capacity to regulate their own behaviour. In this respect too, successful *government* of others is often thought to depend on the ability of those others to govern themselves, and it must therefore aim to secure the conditions under which they are enabled to do so. (1996: 105)

46 The focus on sex amidst excreta and proximity to 'rubbish' is a setting and act that is central to how sex is presented in Grunge fiction. Moorhouse's transgressiveness lies also in the infusion of his genealogical interest in his great-grandmother's sexuality with sexual desire. He wants to 'know' his great-grandmother and Belle offers him this. This is a strong taboo-boundary that is oedipal to the power of three. The point though is that Ian's fundamental orientation is toward connecting himself to the past through his sexuality: that sex is a form of boundary crossing politics. This is a theme that will be formalised in the League of Nations novels, where the connection to the past through sexuality will be a structural condition of the narrative through Edith Berry's cosmopolitan sexuality.

47 "Chronotope" is Bakhtin's term for fusions of time-space in novels that "are the organizing centers [sic] for the fundamental narrative events of the novel. The chronotope is the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied" whereby "time becomes palpable and visible; the chronotope makes narrative events concrete, makes them take on flesh, causes blood to flow in their.veins" (1981: 250)

48 Rock'n'roll is rhyming slang for the "dole", or unemployment benefits.

49 The Australian 'textbook' of literary postcolonial theory – *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures* – was first published in 1989.

50 Gordon's boils can also be seen as an inversion of the illnesses that white invasion brought to the indigenous populations, and that Keating acknowledges

in the Redfern Park speech. I thank Elisabeth van de Wetering for pointing to this other layer of *1988's* inversion structure.

[51] Wilhelm journeys through German towns and has an intense friendship with the commercially-oriented Werner (Goethe).

[52] My comparison of Malouf and McCann's *Bildungsromane* is influenced by Peter Pierce who argues that "*Subtopia*, is in part a grunge version of David Malouf's first novel, *Johnno*. Both are tales of an intimate dependence between two young men that is ultimately fatal to one of them."

[53] Even for Habermas, this melancholic longing for the universally open, democratic public sphere is not based on a strictly realistic assessment of the public sphere:

> Our investigation is limited to the structure and function of the *liberal* model of the bourgeois public sphere, to its emergence and transformation. Thus it refers to those features of a historical constellation that attained dominance and leaves aside the *plebian* public sphere as a variant that in a sense was suppressed in the historical process. (1989: xviii)

[54] *Unknown Pleasures* is the name of "Joy Division's" 1979 debut album.

[55] LiPuma and Lee continue their analysis of the power of the financial derivate for speculative capital by claiming that

> It operates independently of production and becomes global in scope, enormous in size and growing exponentially, starting from virtually nothing in 1973 to become, some thirty years later [. . .] the planet's largest, most profitable and most influential market. [. . .] the creation of risk-driven derivative that focus on the interconnectivity of forms of money allowed for the ascension of a new and powerful form of circulation-based speculative capital. (412)

[56] Ron Blaber situates *The Chosen* within the populist moment of the rise of Hansonism (2006: 60).

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