

‘A KIND OF LOVE’: Supergirls, Scapegoats and Sexual Liberation

The response to Junie Morosi, Jim Cairns, and the scandal that rocked the Australian Government, 1975.

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Abstract

The 'Morosi affair' captured the fascination of the public in 1975 during the turbulent political atmosphere of the Whitlam government. The Treasurer of the government, Dr Jim Cairns, hired the beautiful and controversial Junie Morosi to work in his office, causing an unprecedented media scandal. This thesis will use the scandal to look at the wider societal anxieties and cultural assumptions of the time, and analyze the responses from three different perspectives: the media, Morosi and Cairns themselves, and the Australian Labor Party (ALP).

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Introduction

There is no homecoming for the man who draws near them unawares and hears the Sirens' voices; no welcome from his wife, no little children brightening at their father's return. For with their high clear song the Sirens bewitch him, as they sit there in a meadow piled high with the mouldering skeletons of men, whose withered skin still hangs upon their bones.¹

Homer, The Odyssey

There are stories thousands of years old and littered all through history of sexually dangerous women causing the destruction of important, brave men. Like the Sirens of Homer's *Odyssey*, 'who bewitch everybody who approaches them', they have served as cautionary tales, warning men of the dangers of female strength and power.² Similar to mythology, the involvement of women with powerful men has been used as a stereotype to conveniently explain the downfall of virtuous men in politics. Australian political history is no exception to this.

On Monday the 2nd of December, 1974 the Australian public saw the first of Junie Morosi, with large pictures splashed on the front cover of all the Australian metropolitan newspapers. The interest was created by Jim Cairns, the incoming Treasurer of the Whitlam government, offering her a job. Some of the first captions following the glamorous photos read 'Australia's Treasurer-elect is about to add glamour to the nation's purse strings' and 'The new Treasurer's office will be well coordinated'.³ The articles justified the giant pictures by attempting to create a news story about Morosi being appointed to Dr Jim Cairns's staff. They accentuated her

¹ Homer, *The Odyssey*, (E.V. Rieu's translation 1946, Penguin Classics, London) p158.

² Homer, *The Odyssey*, p158.

³ *The Age*, 2/12/1974, p1. & *The Daily Telegraph*, 2/12/1974, p1.

lack of public service experience, her breathtaking beauty, and pointed out that she had often been seen dining in Canberra with senior Cabinet ministers. On the 5th of December, the front pages became more damaging, with ‘Political storm develops on Cairns’s staff’ and ‘New stir over Morosi affair’ headlining the papers.⁴ Those few days of investigation allowed more allegations to smear the appointment. *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported on the suspicion that the Attorney-General Senator Murphy (whom Morosi previously worked for) tried to use ministerial influence to arrange Morosi preferential treatment in finding a government flat in Canberra. *The Daily Telegraph* highlighted Liberal MP John Howard’s questions in the House of Representatives pertaining to Morosi’s past failed business ventures.⁵

By Friday 6th Morosi, obviously shaken by the media attention, decided it best not to accept the appointment causing so much fuss. *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported ‘I am: Morosi not taking job’ and *The Australian* stated: ‘Miss Morosi quits after day of attacks in Parliament’.⁶ Both papers reported on Cairns and Morosi’s statements with ‘press accused of spying’, claiming press vilification brought about the outcome, but in such a way that accepted no blame or responsibility. At this stage the scandal was raised to full blown ‘Morosi storm rocking government’ status and given its own title ‘The Morosi Affair’.⁷ Over the subsequent days, front pages documented her flight back to Sydney to resume her old job with Al Grassby in the Department of Immigration, the Opposition’s calls for a senate inquiry into the controversy, and Morosi going on leave because of stress. On December 12th she was defending herself against sexual innuendo and vague allegations of impropriety until the 13th when it

⁴ *The Daily Telegraph*, 5/12/1974, p1. & *SMH*, 5/12/1974, P1.

⁵ *SMH*, 5/12/1974, P1.

⁶ *The Daily Telegraph*, 5/12/1974, p1.

⁷ *SMH*, 6/12/1974, P1. & *The Australian*, 6/12/1794 p1.

was reported in *The Australian* that she would again accept the job offered to her on Dr Cairns's staff.⁸

After investigation, it was revealed that there was no impropriety or preferential treatment given to her application for a Commonwealth employee flat and while she had been involved in failed business ventures in the past, her conduct was neither criminal nor negligent. This did not end the matter. For months into the new year the scandal hit the headlines, the most damaging of which appeared during the ALP National Conference in February. In that article, titled 'My Love for Junie', Cairns discussed with a hostile reporter how he felt about having her on his staff.⁹ Allegations were made in the House and the Senate, the highest decision making bodies in Australia. Accusations of misconduct were bandied about from all parties involved, ending in Morosi taking *2UE* and the *Daily Mirror* to court on defamation charges. Morosi and Cairns resisted the accusations of sexual impropriety and corruption, and actively fought against the media in an attempt to expose the prejudice.

Prior to this, personal scandal had rarely affected an Australian government to the same degree. Many even claimed that the fall of Whitlam's Government, now infamously known as the Dismissal, was partly attributed to press treatment of the Morosi Affair. According to historian Clem Lloyd, the negative attention gave the opposition excuses to justify blocking supply in the Senate: 'The cumulative impact of the Loans Affair and the Morosi affair formed the basis for the 'reprehensible

⁸ *The Australian*, 6/12/1974 p1.

⁹ *The Sun*, 7/2/1975, p1.

circumstances' that justified the opposition's refusal of supply in October 1975.¹⁰
This is extraordinary, considering there was no legal basis for complaint.

This thesis explores these events and asks the following questions; how can we explain this intense media interest in Morosi's appointment? What do these events reveal about gender relations in Australian society at this time? Did Cairns and Morosi, as 'people who complained so bitterly about invasion of privacy', exacerbate the intrigue by 'courting publicity with extraordinary indiscretion'?¹¹ And what was special about the way that Morosi and Cairns interacted with the reactions they provoked?

Scandals are revealing and important to study historically because they often arise during moments of great social upheaval where the reactions hold deep political meanings. Morosi challenged the standards governing behavior because she held power over a married, important man in a workplace previously exclusively controlled by men.

This scandal involved the differentiation between public and private lives of elected officials, and questioned how much information the public had a right to know. I argue that it illustrated the concern over women moving into more senior roles with more responsibility in politics with influence and power. At the same time it tried to define the appropriate gender relationships that should occur if women were to take on these roles. Historian Kirsten McKenzie wrote: 'scandals involve battles over

¹⁰ Clem Lloyd, 'Edward Gough Whitlam' in Grattan, Michelle (eds) *Australian Prime Ministers* (Sydney, New Holland Publishers, 2000).

¹¹ Graeme Freudenberg, *A Certain Grandeur*, (Melbourne, Penguin books, 1977) p322.

knowledge and power in the construction of reputation.’¹² In political environments where reputations are a resource, this scandal was certainly used to make and smear the reputations of Cairns, those involved, and the Government itself.

Literature review

When historians have written about the Morosi scandal, it has been as a precursor to the Dismissal or as a defining episode in Jim Cairns’s biography rather than as a significant event itself. The only people at the time to write extensively about the wider implications of the scandal were Cairns and Morosi themselves, works that I will be treating as primary material in Chapter Two. Those who wrote about the scandal in relation to the Whitlam Dismissal included Tom Uren MHR, a factional colleague and close friend of Cairns, and Grahame Freudenberg, a speechwriter for Gough Whitlam; both published their opinions a few years after the events. Quite a few writers, journalists and historians rushed to publish accounts of what they knew were extraordinary historic events: in 1976 Laurie Oakes, Alan Reid, and Paul Kelly all published books on the Dismissal with whole chapters dedicated to Cairns and his scandals. Another, Michael Sexton, published his account slightly later in 1979. While these accounts focus primarily on the Dismissal, they recognised the Morosi affair as inextricably linked to the Government’s downfall. Some state this conclusion

¹² Kirsten McKenzie, *Scandal in the colonies* (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 2004) p.10. Scholarship around scandal has been extensive. See, for example, James Lull, & Stephen Hinerman, *Media Scandals* (Chichester, Columbia University Press, 1997). Scholarship on famous scandals includes: the Oscar Wilde trial- Ed Cohen, *Talk on the Wilde Side* (Routledge, NY&London, 1993) and the Randolph Scandal- Christopher Doyle, ‘The Randolph Scandal in Early National Virginia’, *Journal of Southern History*, May 2003, 69,2 p283. Australian examples include the Makin Babyfarming trial- see Lee Butterworth, ‘Ignorance or murder ‘Baby Farming’ and Infant Mortality’, *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland* vol 20 no 1 (Feb 2007) pp. 18-30.

more overtly than others but they all connect the employment of Morosi to the disgrace of Cairns, the loss of credibility of the government and the Dismissal. While these texts present themselves as detached accounts, their personal connection to the events is both close and emotional.

Journalist Laurie Oakes published his book *Crash through or Crash; the Unmaking of a Prime Minister* in 1976 dedicating a chapter to the Morosi affair.¹³ Oakes's opinion was that Morosi was the cause of Cairns's disgrace, 'Cairns was being seriously put forward by many as a man who might make a better fist of the Prime Ministership. Then came Junie.'¹⁴ Another Journalist, Paul Kelly, gave a similar account in his book *The Unmaking of Gough*, stating; 'The Morosi factor is the crucial one in the equation leading to the downfall of Jim Cairns.'¹⁵ Kelly's sources are drawn from his experience working in the parliamentary press gallery. Both accounts briefly run through the events of the scandal and the background of Morosi, often focusing on her inexperience or her lack of talent as though degrading her ability would justify their harsh treatment of her character. For example, Oakes describes her performance in the tourism industry before she came to Canberra: 'The Australian travel industry is not a large pond, and in it she was a very small fish. Almost a fringe hanger-on.'¹⁶ Both Oakes and Kelly conclude that Morosi allowed Cairns's reputation to be destroyed: 'Cairns, isolated in his office with Morosi guarding the door, became a rather pathetic figure in many ways', and 'Morosi bore final testimony to Cairns's political

¹³ Laurie Oakes, *Crash through or crash: the unmaking of a prime minister*, (Richmond: Drummond imprint, 1976). P73.

¹⁴ Oakes, *Crash through or crash*, P73.

¹⁵ Paul Kelly, *The Unmaking of Gough* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson Publishers, 1976), p183.

¹⁶ Oakes, *Crash through or crash*, P74.

naivety.¹⁷ With no discussion of the wider social context, these rather shallow descriptions fail to understand the way that Morosi and Cairns engaged with the controversy surrounding them.

Alan Reid wrote in a very similar way about the scandal in his book, *The Whitlam Venture*, but he is more aggressive in his criticism. He refused to grant any legitimacy to Cairns's objection to the intrusive media, saying the idea that the publicity 'had a sexist and racist basis was a lot of hogwash.'¹⁸ Reid was known for courting controversy as a journalist, covering Canberra since the 1930s and boasting of having played a role in the 1955 Labor Party split.¹⁹ The true problem, he argues, was Morosi's inexperience. He rebutted Cairns statement to the parliament that had she been a man this would not have been an issue:

The pressure would probably have been as heavy if Miss Morosi had been male, albino, Anglo-Saxon and physically repulsive, though in those circumstances the publicity might not have been so pictorial as the press photographers would have been denied a photogenic subject.²⁰

Each of the above writers was directly affected by the events of 1975. So, too, was Michael Sexton, who published the book *Illusions of Power: The Fate of a Reform Government* in 1979, after having worked in the Attorney-General's office during the 1975 crisis. In contrast to Reid, Sexton paints Cairns as a flawed hero. He dedicates a whole chapter to Cairns called 'Prophet without honour: Jim Cairns' but surprisingly spends only one paragraph on the Morosi Scandal. It is as though he felt Cairns's career was overshadowed by the inconsequential scandal, and he refused to acknowledge its significance. What little Sexton does say about Morosi focused on

¹⁷ Kelly, *The Unmaking of Gough*, P186. And Oakes, *Crash through or crash*, P74.

¹⁸ Alan Reid, *The Whitlam Venture* (Melbourne: Hill of Content, 1976), P241.

¹⁹ Ross Fitzgerald, *Alan 'the red fox' Reid*, (Sydney, New South Books, 2010), p79.

²⁰ Reid, *The Whitlam Venture*, P243.

her incompetence, using a quote from Cairns at a defamation case where he stated, 'One of the things she isn't interested in is economics.'²¹

Later works about the Dismissal convey a different tone. In most narrative descriptions of the Whitlam Government there is a description without much analysis of the events in the Morosi Scandal, cementing it in historical consciousness as one cause in the avalanche of mistakes, betrayals and scandals that led to the downfall of the Government.²²

The other main field of scholarship on the Morosi affair is biographies of Jim Cairns, the main two being *A Foolish Passionate Man* by Paul Ormonde, published in 1981, and *The Keeper of the Faith* by Paul Strangio, published in 2002.²³ Another, by Irene Dowsing called *Jim Cairns MHR* was published before the scandal occurred, but does give a certain amount of uncritical insight into the personality and political journey of Cairns.²⁴ As biographies of Cairns, they focus on how the scandal affected his political rise and fall, rather than why it occurred or how it affected the wider society.

Ormonde's biography is a critical account. Jim Cairns himself disagreed with some of its interpretation.²⁵ Yet Cairns willingly cooperated and Ormonde said his biography

²¹ Michael Sexton, *Illusions of Power: the fate of a reform government* (Sydney, Allen& Unwin, 1979), P62.

²² For example Brian Carroll, 'Gough Whitlam: The Crasher' *Australia's Prime Ministers: from Barton to Howard* (Dural: Rosenberg Publishing, 2004), pp 229-243. Or Rodney Tiffen, *Scandals: Media, politics & corruption in contemporary Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1999).

²³ Paul Ormonde, *A Foolish Passionate Man*, (Victoria: Penguin, 1981). And Paul Strangio, *Keeper of the Faith* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002).

²⁴ Irene Dowsing, *Jim Cairns M.H.R.* (Victoria: Acacia Press Pty Ltd, 1971).

²⁵ Ormonde, *A Foolish Passionate Man*, p viii.

of a living man profited from Cairns's 'frank testimony'.²⁶ As the title suggests, the emphasis of the book portrays Cairns's life as a journey of idealism and failure. 'He set himself', writes Ormonde, 'the task of changing a nation. By his late sixties, his only sure achievement was that he had changed himself.'²⁷ Researched while the events of 1975 were occurring, this biography does not consider how wider social, economic and ideological forces shaped events. It does, however, make great use of the interviews that Cairns did with psychologist Dr John Diamond, giving what Ormonde described as an 'unusually detailed psychological dimension' to the book. This background of Cairns's early childhood and relationships with family and friends gives great insight to his ideological evolution, especially when he began to relate to the sexual politics of Wilhelm Reich. Ormonde named the chapters concerning the Morosi affair and the influence of Junie Morosi 'The Great Transformation' because he recognised the effect that the relationship with her had on his development politically. I will discuss the influence of sexual politics and Reich in detail in Chapter Two, but essentially Ormonde distinguished the scandal as not simply political naivety, but rather part of a new era of self-discovery for Cairns himself.

In contrast, Paul Strangio's work is more detailed and forgiving. Published in 2002, it is the only serious account of the Morosi affair with some distance from the events. It recognises that the affair overshadowed and camouflaged the real reasons for Cairns's political destruction, but also argues that Morosi was a catalyst for Cairns's personal liberation and change. Strangio is perhaps the most sympathetic towards Morosi and most willing to understand her motivations throughout the process. He seriously questions the ethics of the media and presents a damning portrayal of their conduct in

²⁶ Ormonde, *A Foolish Passionate Man*, p viii.

²⁷ Ormonde, *A Foolish Passionate Man*, p1.

trumping up the allegations. He also recognised the way that the ALP turned against her, arguing that she ‘came to represent the archetypal *femme fatale*. She had used her feminine wiles to corrupt the previously incorruptible Cairns. For this crime they were prepared to see her metaphorically burned at the stake’.²⁸

Both biographies focus on the impact of the Morosi affair on Jim Cairns’s political career and his downfall rather than as an historical event that should be studied on its own. What is starkly evident is the fact that all writers, historians and journalists, have been men and have presented Morosi almost as a disembodied force of destruction, or a superhuman influence of ideology rather than as an individual experiencing the events herself. Very little has been written about the effect this scandal had on the growing feminist movement of the time or the radical changes that were happening under a reformist government.

Since the publication of these texts, several events have shone more light on the situation. In late 2002 Cairns publicly admitted to the much-speculated sexual nature of his relationship with Morosi.²⁹ Similarly, Cairns’s death in 2003 prompted many tributes and renewed interest in his colourful life.³⁰

This thesis is divided into three chapters. In Chapter One I examine the coverage, looking at why the media created the scandal out of very limited information, and why the public was so ready to consume sexist interpretations. Using works of Anne

²⁸ Strangio, *Keeper of the Faith*, P321.

²⁹ ‘Junie and me: Cairns concedes a very real kind of love’ in *SMH* (17/09/2002), p2. ‘Cairns admits sex, and breathtaking hypocrisy’ in *SMH* (20/09/2002), p13. ‘Cairns and Morosi? How the truth emerged, 27 years on’ in *SMH* (21/09/2002), p15.

³⁰ ‘Jim Cairns – the man who was too decent for politics’, in *SMH* (13/10/2003), p12. & ‘Jim Cairns: a noble, flawed crusader’ in *SMH* (14/10/2003), p10.

Summers and Marian Sawyer, links can be drawn between the scandal and the changes that were happening with women in the workplace, to which male dominated spheres like politics had to adjust.³¹

In Chapter Two, I analyse the way the Cairns and Morosi wrote about the events themselves, how the different influences of Reich gave them a framework for intellectualising the oppression and prejudice they experienced, and a potential way of creating social change.

Chapter Three will challenge the way the ALP leaders and members justified their vilification of Morosi, arguing that the party fundamentally misunderstood the approach Cairns and Morosi were taking.

Newspaper articles and media resources will be the primary source base for this thesis, found in archives in the Mitchell Library, the National Library, personal collections and media clippings found in the National Archives. Other source bases include Hansard from the House of Representatives, interviews Cairns gave to the Australian biography project, and the many written works by Morosi and Cairns themselves.

³¹ Anne Summers, *Damned Whores and Gods Police*, (Victoria, Penguin books, 1975). & Marian Sawyer, *A Woman's place*, (Sydney, Allen& Unwin, 1984).

Chapter One

‘The Morosi time bomb ticks away...’: The Media’s portrayal of the Affair³²

*Denied economic independence, unable to control their fertility adequately, **and always aware of the reprobation which awaits the rebel**, none but a handful of Australian women has had the opportunity to do any more than submit to living out their lives as dutiful wives and bountiful mothers; and having no alternatives and wanting some share of human happiness, they have accepted and enjoyed this as best they could.³³*

Anne Summers, 1975

It has been argued, commonly by journalists writing at the time of the scandal, that the response to Junie Morosi was not a gendered issue, rather that it was based solely on her inexperience for the job of private secretary to the Treasurer. However Australian society in the early 1970s was witnessing the rise of second wave feminism, inextricably linked to women entering the workforce, acclimatising to a period of hope and political promise, finding access to no fault divorce, and having more freedom and control over contraceptives and their bodies.³⁴ Feminist writers such as Anne Summers and Germaine Greer published influential works that articulated changes that they believed needed to happen.³⁵ As changes happened, public opinion was not always accepting. We therefore need to consider the wider gendered context at the heart of the scandal.

³² ‘The Morosi time-bomb ticks away...’ headline in *SMH* (27/2/1975), P1.

³³ Summers, *Dammed Whores and Gods Police*, P78. Bolding added.

³⁴ Megan Le Masurier, ‘My Other, My Self; Cleo Magazine and Feminism in 1970s Australia.’ *Australian Feminist Studies* 22:53 (2007), 191-211.

³⁵ Summers, *Dammed Whores and Gods Police*. & Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch* (Sydney, Harper classics, 1970).

The Whitlam Government swept into office in 1972 with what Whitlam described as a 'mandate for change', implementing reforms as a government that acknowledged the inequality women faced in society.³⁶ It seemed after 23 years of Liberal governance that 'a change of government seemed inevitable', a mood the *It's Time* campaign was able to capture.³⁷ Yet in the few short years between the Labor victory and the Dismissal, it seemed one of the major failures of the Labor government was its inability to communicate its policies to an electorate used to a conservative political style of governance. Looking at why the government could not get the message through, it would be simple to only see the shortcomings and mistakes made by ministers and those involved. It is also important to understand the media's role, described by historian Donald Horne as 'vendetta journalism', and by Jim Cairns as 'the significant cause of the defeat of Labor in 1975'.³⁸ The Morosi affair was not the only example of vendetta journalism, nor was it the primary reason for the Dismissal, but the media certainly was a prominent player in those events. To explain its motivations and influence, we must look at the major media players of the seventies and their perspectives on Australian politics.

The Dissemination of Information

Authoritative Information in 1970s Australia was primarily communicated through print media, which was the basis for the media monopolies of the News Limited Group, (chairman Rupert Murdoch), John Fairfax Limited Group (chairman James

³⁶ Gough Whitlam, *The Whitlam Government 1972-1975* (Viking, Victoria, 1985), P.1.

³⁷ Whitlam, *The Whitlam Government 1972-1975*, p1.

³⁸ Donald Horne and Jim Cairns quoted in Humphrey McQueen *Australia's Media Monopolies*, (Widescope International, Victoria, 1977), P.1.

Fairfax), the Consolidated Press Holdings Limited (chairman Kerry Packer), and the Herald and Weekly Times Group (chairman Duncan Macpherson). Each represented a characteristic bias and was driven by profit and commercial advertising. These monopolies were created after technologies of the twentieth century made mass circulation of newspapers possible, but only for corporations with the requisite capital. In 1971 Australia had the second highest degree of press concentration of all developed nations.³⁹ In 1972, the Herald and Weekly Times group controlled the daily paper *The Herald* and others, along with weeklies, sports press and a number of radio stations and television stations. The Fairfax Group controlled the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *Sydney Sun*, *Australian Financial Review*, *The Age*, *Women's Day*, and *The Sun Herald* just to name a few, not including the many radio and TV stations such as *2GB Sydney*. Consolidated Press Holdings run by the Packer family owned *the Daily Telegraph*, *Sunday Telegraph* and *Australian Women's Weekly* and a number of other magazines. News Limited controlled *The Daily Mirror*, *The Australian*, and after 1972 took control of the *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Sunday Telegraph*.⁴⁰ It is necessary to observe the extent to which all the print media were connected and controlled because it outlines the motivations behind manipulation and presentation of events. Essentially 'Australia [had] a capitalist press which represent[ed] capitalist viewpoints', and most had notorious and unashamed commitments to political ideologies.⁴¹ According to Mungo Macallum, a left leaning journalist, in relation to the events of 1975:

The mainstream press had already made its judgement. The Murdoch press had been baying for months. The *Sydney Morning Herald* had declared open war in April, ostensibly as a result of the government's acceptance of the communist victory in Vietnam. The *Age* had to justify its excess of

³⁹ Patricia Edgar, *The Politics of the Press*, (Sun Books, Melbourne, 1979), p.16.

⁴⁰ McQueen, *Australia's Media Monopolies*, P.59, 69, 77, 88.

⁴¹ McQueen, *Australia's Media Monopolies*, p.60.

chequebook journalism, and the Melbourne-based Herald and Weekly Times group, traditionally anti-Labor, now felt they had to outdo the *Age*. An alarming feature of this period was that the media all but abandoned the quest for real news and fell back on interviewing each other.⁴²

Observations like this show us the editorial power that the owners of the media had in shaping the way the Australian public viewed events of 1975. One powerful example of this partisan alignment and misuse of editorial control was anecdotally admitted by Alan Reid, a veteran journalist working for Australian Consolidated Press for over 30 years and promoting a very ‘hands on’ approach to journalism:

Sir Frank [Packer] called me in and asked me [who would win the 1961 election], and I said Labor would win. And he asked me if there is anything that could prevent that and I said I suppose if Menzies gave an assurance that he would restore full employment within a certain time. [Packer instructed Reid to tell Menzies]... within 24 hours the pledge of restoration to full employment emerged. I think if he hadn't said it he would have gone down. As it was he won very narrowly⁴³

In this anecdote, we see that Sir Frank Packer openly used his position of power, or believed that he had, to influence the outcome of an election; something he could attempt by controlling the media coverage. It would be naïve, however, to believe that these few men had absolute control and journalists of the time consistently refer to their journalistic freedom. Nevertheless, this does illustrate the partisan nature of the industry. Politicians and political parties seemed to be justified in feeling targeted by media groups pushing agendas and perspectives. Even if prejudice was not intended, the nature of the media saw simplified versions of complex situations, printed stories where facts were black and white or stories had ‘goodies’ and ‘baddies’, and would

⁴² Mungo McCallum, *Mungo; the man who laughs* (Duffy & Snellgrove, Sydney, 2001), P.277.

⁴³ Alan Reid, quoted in ‘The old Red Fox- Mr. Alan Reid Esq.’ Televised tribute on Sunday program, 6 September 1987. (YouTube- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3uerbTrdeW0>)

leave out history or context in standard competition for space, time and audience interest.⁴⁴

The era leading up to the Dismissal is important in media history because of the new influence of investigative journalism and the different way journalists began to approach and cover political and personal scandal. Historian David McKnight argues that there were two traditions of investigative journalism in Australia. He describes one as 'objective', where the journalist would remain detached and impartial and the other as 'muckraking'.⁴⁵ Muckraking investigative journalism viewed itself as a watchdog, taking responsibility for reform of society by exposing corruption. Where investigative journalism was involved in this scandal, it certainly fell into the category of 'muckraking'; the journalists themselves did not stand outside the political process or the opinion discussion but were active participants and dealmakers.⁴⁶ They wanted to reveal if any corruption or favouritism had occurred with Morosi's employment. This tradition in Australia followed trends from the US and the urge for reform often 'occurred and [was] effective in periods when social reform [was] on the agenda in the wider society'.⁴⁷ However, not everyone saw the approach as legitimate; Graeme Freudenberg observes:

In the attitude of the press in all these matters, from Morosi to the loans affair, there was a special factor at work. These were the months after Watergate and the example of the *Washington Post* and the achievements of Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein in 'investigative journalism' became the fashion...But the events of 1975 provided opportunities for the appearance of investigative reporting without any of its substance. There was no true investigations; there

⁴⁴ Julianne Schultz, in Curthoys & Schultz, *Journalism: Print, Politics and Popular Culture* (Brisbane, UQ Press, 1999), p.261.

⁴⁵ David McKnight, in Curthoys & Schultz, *Journalism: Print, Politics and Popular Culture*, p.155.

⁴⁶ McKnight, in Curthoys & Schultz, *Print, Politics and Popular Culture*, p.155.

⁴⁷ McKnight, in Curthoys & Schultz, *Print, Politics and Popular Culture*, p.156.

were only leaks. There was no financial risk in the work of the reporters; there were only a few pay-outs for documents.⁴⁸

In December 1974, when the scandal first broke, the Opposition leaked dossiers of information to the press gallery to fuel interest in the story, which they assumed would give the government bad publicity.⁴⁹ The reporters published those unchecked allegations the next day with very little attempt to clarify whether information was well founded or correct. Considering the nature of the journalistic profession that lived in the permanent present, relying on new information and the race to be first with it, counting minutes and seconds between scoops and always waiting for what was next, this was unsurprising.⁵⁰ Without truly recognising the nature and style of the information they presented, or the power they held in deciding what information to privilege, the competitive industry kept adding more to the scandal.

Freudenberg points to the role played by the Liberal Opposition in creating the Morosi scandal. It had realised, he suggests, that the ‘strongest ground on which the Labor Party and the Labor Government stood was its claim to idealism, the assertion by its leaders and the assumption by its supporters that it stood for a set of ideals of service and justice. To take that away is to undermine it at its strongest point.’⁵¹ By releasing information and encouraging interest the Opposition gained control of the language and terminology used to position the debate and therefore had the power to shape the image of corruption and infidelity in the minds of the media and the Australian public. In Freudenberg’s opinion:

⁴⁸ Freudenberg, *A Certain Grandeur*, P.325.

⁴⁹ Freudenberg, *A Certain Grandeur*, P.320.

⁵⁰ Julianne Schultz, in Curthoys & Schultz, *Print, Politics and Popular Culture*, p.259.

⁵¹ Freudenberg, *A Certain Grandeur*, P.317.

Fraser's performance in 1975 was one of the most concentrated, single-minded and effective exercises in political destruction ever undertaken in Australian history... The constant repetition of the word 'scandal' and its indiscriminate application to any controversial action of the government worked.⁵²

The repetition of the label 'scandal' leads to the second reason the Morosi Affair remains unique. According to historian Rodney Tiffen; 'the first time scandals so dominated Australian politics that in the view of some commentators they determined the fate of the government was in the dramatic events leading up to the fall of the Whitlam Government.'⁵³

Political scandal remains important and intriguing because it is intrinsically linked to accountability within democracy. Investigative journalism became a fashion because people recognised the importance of exposing corruption and catching out politicians breaking political promises they made when wooing the electorate. When the private lives of parliamentarians became involved, the media and the public felt they had a legitimate right to know what was happening, because of the tendency of politicians to use their private lives in promotion and campaigning techniques. According to Rodney Tiffen: 'When leaders encourage positive publicity about their personal lives, it becomes harder for them to argue credibly that negative publicity should be out of bounds.'⁵⁴ Jim Cairns represented the family life ideal, which made his circumstance all the more scandalous and the targeting of him all the more salacious. Yet, there was no proof at the time of any wrongdoing. There was no evidence of corruption in his decision to employ Morosi or evidence of corruption in Morosi's past business affairs. The scandal implied there was something else of public concern.

⁵² Freudenberg, *A Certain Grandeur*, P318.

⁵³ Tiffen, *Scandals: Media, politics & corruption in contemporary Australia*, P2.

⁵⁴ Tiffen, *Scandals: Media, politics & corruption in contemporary Australia*, P84.

Junie Morosi's story

To fully understand the reaction of the press to Morosi we must understand her story and the reasons she represented such a threat to the morality of the government. Junie Morosi was born in China in 1933 but moved with her family to the Philippines where from age 8 she experienced life under Japanese occupation.⁵⁵ By age 18 she had given birth to three sons to her first husband from whom she separated and underwent a legal battle for custody with her husband's family.⁵⁶ Despite later marrying twice more, Morosi had a progressive view of marriage that caused her to be looked down upon in Manila as a single working woman.⁵⁷ She told *Woman's Day* that she turned down offers of marriage during this period of financial difficulty, stating, 'The kind of marriages that might have been open to me was to my mind sheer prostitution. Frankly, I regard a lot of marriages in that light. What else is it when you marry someone for something called security, to get a meal ticket for the rest of your life?'⁵⁸ In 1958 Morosi moved into the travel industry working in Manila as the Ground Hostess for Qantas, which by 1962 allowed her to move to Australia with her sons. Before this move, she met her second husband Denny Alejandro who followed her to Australia but soon died of lung cancer. She met David Ditchburn in 1965 and later married him because she was attracted to his supportive nature saying; 'he was the only man I'd met who seemed to understand why I wanted a career.'⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Junie Morosi, *Sex, Prejudice and Politics*, (Widescope publishing, Camberwell Victoria, 1975), p41.

⁵⁶ Junie Morosi, 'Junie Morosi's own story part two' in *Woman's Day* (February 24, 1975), p24.

⁵⁷ Morosi, 'Junie Morosi's own story part two', p24.

⁵⁸ Morosi, 'Junie Morosi's own story part two', p24.

⁵⁹ Morosi, 'Junie Morosi's own story part two', p27.

By 1973 Morosi finished a contract with Hawaiian Airlines and her children were now adults. She began looking for more challenges and opportunities and found one being appointed a Civil Marriage Celebrant by the Attorney-General, Lionel Murphy. From there began her work in Canberra and her connection to the government, she was soon offered a job by Al Grassby MHR, becoming Special Assistant to the Government's Consultant and Commissioner-Designate on Community Relations. In that portfolio she was responsible for immigration casework, which she found overwhelmed the small, understaffed office.⁶⁰ From that position she introduced herself to Jim Cairns, whom she greatly admired from having read his academic writings. He offered her a position on his staff once he was promoted to the Treasury. Almost immediately the media speculation began.

The media and the Opposition evidently had a wider agenda in opposing the Labor government of the day. They needed a story to discredit the government and could use the appointment because the gender issues touched a nerve. They recognised it was something that the community would be interested in hearing about, and used it to legitimise their vendetta. Prior to this scandal, there had been another example that indicated the interest and intrigue in women in the political landscape: Ainsley Gotto was a young girl hired to be the private secretary to Prime Minister John Gorton. Gotto was used as a scapegoat for an unpopular Prime Minister and the outrage was centred on his lack of judgment in employing her and listening to her advice. The headlines read, 'PM listened to girl more than to his cabinet' and 'Ainsley Gotto ('it's

⁶⁰ Morosi, *Sex, Prejudice and Politics*, p26.

shapely... it wiggles') tells her own story'.⁶¹ They focused on her youth and beauty, implying the reason for her appointment was her sexual attraction rather than her professional experience. When Gotto flew with the Prime Minister to the US on Air Force One for meetings with the President of the US, the reporting seemed almost spiteful, as though she was simply a girl sitting 'close to the policy makers, the architects of world power, the men whose figures loom larger than life, who with the stroke of a pen can change a nations history'.⁶² The reports despised her for thinking she was worthy to be in their presence because of her age and inexperience. These two cases have often been compared when talking about the media treatment of women in the workplace and in government employment because of their proximity to each other, the Gotto affair occurring in 1969 and the Morosi affair happening in 1974. Similarly, journalist Alan Reid was highly critical of PM John Gorton and used the Gotto situation as a way of turning public opinion against him, outlining that Gotto was only 22 years old and unmarried, therefore could never be taken seriously, nor could a Prime Minister relying on her advice.⁶³

The media presentation of the Morosi case can superficially be compared to that of the Gotto case mentioned above, as they were both women targeted by political opponents and the mass media for their employment in a sphere not deemed appropriate by conservatives in the society. However, the Morosi case is fundamentally different because of the context. Morosi was not young; she went to work for Cairns when she was 42 years old. She had been married three times and

⁶¹ 'PM listened to girl more than to his cabinet' in *SMH* (1/08/1971), p9. & 'Ainsley Gotto ('it's shapely... it wiggles') tells her own story as John Gorton's secretary' in *Woman's Day* (18/10/1971), p1.

⁶² Alisa Craig, 'Ainsley Gotto ('it's shapely... it wiggles') tells her own story as John Gorton's secretary', in *Woman's Day* (18/10/1971), p12.

⁶³ Fitzgerald, *Alan 'the red fox' Reid*, P200.

was divorced with three adult sons.⁶⁴ She remained desirable and attractive, alert and ready to face new challenges rather than accepting a predetermined role about where her life should be. Despite this, the scandal was based entirely on rumours printed as facts and the media's refusal to print any apologies or corrections. Misrepresentations were based on misrepresentations and the media was able to push further than they had ever before. According to Tiffen editorial partisanship played a role:

In 1975 no major media group was editorially supporting the Whitlam government. The press gallery could certainly feel more confident that they would find editorial approval for critical stories of the Whitlam Government in 1975 than for the Gorton Government in early 1969.⁶⁵

Journalists and media outlets played on stereotypes of women to allow people to infer meaning from the select information given. The portrayal of women in the media of the 1970s, according to Patricia Edgar and Hilary McPhee in *Media She* (1974), perpetuated distorted views of women that were unhealthy for the society:

We have images of women as flirts and vamps, as symbols of purity, as Madonnas folding little sons who somehow gaze at the camera more directly than their mothers do, women as housekeepers, 'before and after' wives, the girl next door, the butt of the joke, the simple fool. Men are the playboys, the bachelors who are desired, virile, strong, breadwinners, specialists, authorities, decision-makers– who are only laughed at if they are shown as hen-pecked *or playing a female role*.⁶⁶

The portrayal of Junie Morosi from the outset conformed to this sexist analysis of women in the media, presenting her in stereotypes and drawing on socialised accepted norms to create her image. Some articles were explicitly sexist in their reporting, while others only hinted at it. Before there were even suggestions of an improper relationship, the media referred to the scandal as an 'affair'. In every major newspaper

⁶⁴ Morosi, *Sex, Prejudice and Politics*, p26.

⁶⁵ Tiffen, *Scandals: Media, politics & corruption in contemporary Australia*, p88.

⁶⁶ Patricia Edgar & Hilary McPhee, *Media She*, (William Heinemann Australia Pty Ltd, Melbourne, 1974), P16.

details were given about her looks, using headlines like ‘Glamour comes to Treasury’ and ‘The Supergirls’ to outline her beauty.⁶⁷ Paragraphs began with a description of her looks and a statement about her appeal or charm. All articles ran photos of her, one showing her sitting suggestively on a desk and looking right into the camera.⁶⁸ The flood of images that accompanied articles that had no real news in them encouraged people to draw certain conclusions without the papers having to explicitly state them.

Articles solely about Jim Cairns began to be accompanied by a photo of the two of them together, with the papers trying to reinforce her presence as much as they could, or increase suspicion about the nature of their relationship. Many articles refer to her as ‘Miss’ or as a ‘girl’ such as ‘Junie’s a sweet girl’ despite being in her forties. This reinforced the idea that she was a woman in a situation where she did not belong.⁶⁹ The term ‘girl’ not only patronised her, it vividly connoted images of naivety and immaturity, and in other cases the habit of using her first name showed a lack of respect. Journalists looked into her background and trumped up allegations about failed business dealings, which were taken seriously in Senate inquiries and clarified by Whitlam requesting information from the NSW state government.⁷⁰ Headlines like ‘What have I done wrong?’, ‘Morosi attacks sex innuendos, I cheated nobody, no public monies were involved’, ‘I’ll survive a cool Junie tells press’, ‘Don’t blame me says Miss Junie’, and ‘Morosi says no truth in sexual innuendos’ were printed, that all seemed to exacerbate the issue, all disguising the fact that there were no real

⁶⁷ ‘Glamour comes to treasury’ in *Daily Telegraph* (2/12/1974), p1. ‘The Supergirls; So far, not a very good track record’ in *The Adelaide Advertiser* (6/12/74), p32.

⁶⁸ *The Age*, 2/12/1974, p1.

⁶⁹ ‘Junie’s a sweet girl’ in *The Australian* (Friday December 6 1974), p1.

⁷⁰ Morosi files, National Archives of Australia (Canberra), National Archives record: A12385, AI/39 Item title: Junie Morosi.

allegations of misconduct that could be proven.⁷¹ The matter had become one of all consuming interest. According to Tiffen, ‘all the attendant details, no matter how trivial, can feed the media’s appetite. There then develops what we may call hyper-demand— an impatience and hunger among the news media for new developments, an enhanced sense of newsworthiness attending all aspects of the story, a universal anticipation that something dramatic is about to happen.’⁷²

Evidence surfaced that showed the *Daily Telegraph* had offered a staff member of Cairns \$15,000 to write about life in the office. Cairns emotionally discussed this in his last speech to parliament after being dismissed from the ministry:

I do know that members of my staff have been offered money even to provide telephone numbers and other information, which they have refused. I know that countless details appear distorted unfairly in the press all over Australia about me and about members of my staff... What have they discovered as a result of this intense scrutiny, this enormous expense, this vast spread of publicity? That I have employed some attractive women - women, more unfairly misrepresented about this nation than any other people in it, who have served me with loyalty and dedication that I have not experienced up to now, and I do not intend to be intimidated about any one of them.⁷³

The media began to be more intrusive in trying to feed the hyper-demand. One example was at the 1975 ALP conference in Terrigal where a photographer hid in a tree and waited while Morosi, her husband, Cairns and his wife were having breakfast on a balcony. The photographer took the photo just when Cairns’s wife left the balcony and Morosi’s husband was out of shot, so *The Daily Telegraph* could run the

⁷¹ ‘What have I done wrong?’ in *The Herald* (11/12/74), p.27. ‘Morosi attacks sex innuendos, I cheated no body, no public monies were involved’ in *SMH* (December 12 1974), p12. ‘I’ll survive a cool Junie tells press’ in *The Australian* (Tuesday December 12 1974), P1. ‘Don’t blame me says Miss Junie’, *The Age* (Thursday December 12 1974), P5. ‘Morosi says no truth in sexual innuendoes’ in *SMH* (Thursday, December 12, 1974), p1.

⁷² Tiffen, *Scandals: Media, politics & corruption in contemporary Australia*, P90.

⁷³ Jim Cairns, House of Representatives Hansard, 9 July 1975, p.3634.

picture the next day with the headline ‘Breakfast with Junie’.⁷⁴ In this state of frenzy, where the slightest action or even a lack of action was reported as news, stories where Morosi had attempted to defend her position painted her in an even worse light, especially to female readers. Attention grabbing headlines were ‘The Crime of being beautiful’, ‘Rumours for the bored and lonely says Miss Morosi’ and ‘Is my face to be my sin?’⁷⁵ Any appearance that the pair made together, whether it was work related or not, was put under intense scrutiny: ‘Cairns, Junie off again’ and ‘Jim and Junie! Fly to Sydney together’.⁷⁶ The most obvious case of sexism was *The Sun* publishing a front-page full-length photo of Morosi running on the beach in a swimsuit, with the headline ‘My Love for Junie’.⁷⁷ Similarly when *The Daily Mirror* reported on the dismissal of Jim Cairns, the headline in bold was ‘Junie Sacked’, another attempt to continue having her name in the papers and keep the scandal alive in the minds of the public as the Whitlam government started to show signs of failure. The text was hyperbolic, saying; ‘Miss Junie Morosi, the most powerful woman in the Government has been sacked. The axing of her boss, Dr Jim Cairns, last night means the end of her spectacular and controversial seven month career in Canberra.’⁷⁸ It is quite clear there was no incidence of her being ‘sacked’ merely that because of Cairns’s demotion her job would be no longer available, as was the convention with all political staffer jobs.

⁷⁴ ‘Breakfast with Junie’ in *The Daily Telegraph* (Saturday, February 8 1975), p1. & Tom Uren, *Straight Left*, p245.

⁷⁵ Toni McRae ‘the crime of being beautiful’ in *The Sun*, (1975), P3. ‘Rumours for the bored and lonely, says Miss Morosi’, in *The Age*, (1/8/1975), P1. ‘Is my face to be my sin?’ in *The Herald* (11/7/1975), P5.

⁷⁶ ‘Cairns, Junie off again’, in *The Telegraph* (15/4/1975), p1. ‘Jim and Junie! Fly to Sydney together’ in *The Daily Mirror* (Friday, December 6, 1974), P1.

⁷⁷ Toni McRae, ‘My love for Junie’ in *The Sun*, (Friday February 7, 1975), p1.

⁷⁸ Trevor Kavanagh, ‘Junie Sacked’, *Daily Mirror*, (Thursday July 3, 1975), P1.

There have been suggestions of infidelity in politics before that have not created anywhere near the same anxiety or coverage time. Cairns described this double standard in an interview given reflecting on his life in 1998 by saying:

They didn't do the same for anyone else. I know men who got above the rank of Prime Minister who have children by another woman... whose children carry their names... Look there's things all over the place. The media doesn't tell you about all this stuff.⁷⁹

The Gendered Dimension

Evidently, there was something more to this particular scandal that prompted the media to exploit it, and that was more than a vendetta against the government. As Humphrey McQueen has suggested; 'To see why the media are the way they are, you have to go far beyond the words, voices and film images which are our contact points with the media. The explanation has to be sought through an investigation of the way the social patterns of Australia work together.'⁸⁰ The fixation in the Morosi affair was on Junie Morosi's employment, and in 1970s Australia women's engagement in the workforce was still something that the society was only beginning to accept, something that was inevitably tied up with the women's liberation movement and which raised issues of sexism regarding a woman's responsibilities in the home.

Anne Summers stated the statistics of married women in the Australian workforce in her work *Damned Whores and Gods Police*, identifying that at the time that there was outrage over Junie Morosi working for the government, working women had

⁷⁹ Cairns, 'Interview' Interviewer: Robin Hughes, *Australian Biography* www.australianbiography.gov.au/subjects/cairns/interview12.html (Recorded May 22, 1998).

⁸⁰ McQueen, *Australia's Media Monopolies*, p.3.

increased from only 6.5% of married women working in 1947 to 17.3% by the early 1960s and then almost doubled to 32.8% in 1971.⁸¹

In the early 1970s, while married women were increasingly entering the workforce, the socially accepted roles were still restricted. Australian society was only slowly coming to terms socially with this new trend. However this was not simply an outcry over women working. It was an objection to women working in a position senior to men, and earning more than men. Morosi had responsibility to a powerful politician in a professional environment still barely accepting of women as anything other than typists, secretaries or dutiful wives. Not just any environment, but the centre of power for the entire nation, Canberra and the halls of the national government. Patricia Edgar recognised that not many women were willing to take on these prominent roles:

Factors influencing the occupational futures of girls are largely social. Most women today would not be willing to achieve greater success, or earn more money than their husbands. In this tradition-bound, sex-stereotyped culture few marriages could survive such marital insubordination. Apart from the emasculating blow to the breadwinner's ego the woman would be likely to suffer symptoms of stress resulting from guilt because she did not conform.⁸²

Perhaps as this quote suggests, what was most perplexing to Australian society about Junie Morosi was that she had an unconventional relationship with her husband, one where she could feel free to earn more, have more public notoriety, and educate herself in any tradition she liked without anxiety of unsettling the prescribed power balance. In 1972, it was still believed woman's primary place was in the home, and statements such as this made by Dr Francis Macnab were still widely believed and being published, by both men and women:

⁸¹ Summers, *Damned Whores and Gods Police*, P.477

⁸² Edgar & McPhee, *Media She*, P8.

The woman who feels she will find her proper fulfilment in a career while someone else is minding her children is, in fact, depriving the children of their birthright. If a woman cannot find fulfilment in helping her children build the foundations of life in the stability and trust of those early years, then she will probably never find fulfilment. Fulfilment is found in relationships. And if she cannot find it in her own children, I wonder if she really deserves to find it elsewhere.⁸³

While Morosi was a mother of three, her children were all adults putting her in a unique position of being an exception to that criticism. But this did not stop people defining her with regards to her relationships with men rather than for her expertise or career. Indeed the barrage of criticism against her was politically motivated and gendered. This obscured the analysis of her experience and makes it hard to evaluate her qualifications. Again according to Summers, 1970s society closely tied women to family life, and the acceptance of women in any other sphere was only at the allowance of men:

The major impediment to female rebellion, and that which keeps women physically and psychologically bound to their family-centred roles has been the absence of any cultural tradition which approved of women being anywhere else... where women *have* participated in Australian culture it has had to be with due acquiescence to a game whose rules were drawn up without their consent. They had to conform to what men assured them was important.⁸⁴

Despite Morosi representing someone rebelling against these prescribed norms for women, she failed to gain the sympathies of the feminist movement at the time. It is relatively hard to reference an absence in historic documents, but it seems that her situation was largely ignored by established women's organisations and resented by some women, even those within the Labor party. In the early 1970s the second wave feminist movement was fraught with contradiction. It needed a platform to express the

⁸³ Dr Francis Macnab of the Cairnmillar Institute, quote in Patrick Tennison, *The Marriage Wilderness*, 1972. Found in Summers, *Dammed Whores and Gods Police*, P.471.

⁸⁴ Summers, *Dammed Whores and Gods Police*, p79.

need for social transformation, but most feminist discourse was bound up in opposition to the mass media.⁸⁵ Because the movement had such an uneasy relationship with popular culture, it often refused to claim role models or public spokeswomen for the movement, which is what the media were doing to the image of Morosi. Essentially, ‘the movement was also deeply distrustful of the media and its tendency to stereotype and caricature women’s liberation. Radical feminists resisted the media’s desire for spokes-women, but their refusal to elect leaders gave the media freedom to choose their own feminist figureheads’.⁸⁶ Feminists had reasons to be distrustful of the media, having analysed the sexist ways the media manipulated the images of women.

The women’s movement’s attitude was further complicated by the fact that feminists were opposed to encouraging male adoration, which Morosi was painted as doing. Radical feminism was critical of the way femininity played to the patriarchy, and other portrayals of femininity in the media only reinforced women’s submission. Yet Morosi discussed her sexual attraction freely in the *Women’s Day* articles and the way she interacted with the ‘power’ she seemed to have over men, in a way that would not have won favour with the organised feminist groups. According to historian Megan Le Maurier, the women’s movement was very splintered, with disputes about strategy as radicals opposed ‘femocrats’ who were seen as playing the men’s games. The divisions continued:

The earlier critique of limited sex roles for women developed into a critique of heterosexuality, and the heterosexism of the early years of women’s liberation came under fire from lesbian women. Concern with male sexual aggression,

⁸⁵ Megan Le Masurier, ‘My Other, My Self: Cleo Magazine and Feminism in 1970s Australia.’ *Australian Feminist Studies* 22:53 (2007), p197.

⁸⁶ Michelle Arrow, ‘It has become my personal Anthem.’ *Australian Feminist Studies* 22:53 (2007), p.217.

the dangers rather than the pleasures of heterosexuality, began to dominate discussions of sexual politics... the differences between mainstream 'respectable' feminism and the militant 'revolutionary' strands received extensive media coverage.⁸⁷

The response of Labor women committed to change through incremental reform, was also negative, though for different reasons. According to Anne Summers, 'It can be argued that when in power both major political groups have subordinated women's concerns and interests to economic considerations.'⁸⁸ Women's groups within the party were dealing with a male dominated political environment and were having difficulty getting their male counterparts to take their concerns seriously. The attention-grabbing Morosi was seen to be exacerbating this issue of giving men, already reluctant to give them time, an excuse not to take them seriously. She did very little to play down the sexual impact of the controversy, and according to Ormonde she presented herself in a way that commanded attention, 'moving with a statuesque grace common among cosmopolitan European and Asian women, but rare in Australia.'⁸⁹ Women within the party saw her as destructive to their goals. Backing Junie Morosi or using her case as a moment to rally around was not the way they were used to operating. Even then: 'For many years the contribution made by most women was akin to what Friedan has termed 'political housework'. This refers to such low status chores as canvassing, door-knocking, enveloping, making the tea and fund-raising— auxiliary functions traditionally performed by the women's organisations associated with the political parties'.⁹⁰ This interaction was only beginning to change. What is more alarming is the fact that the media interest in glamorous 'supergirls' like

⁸⁷ Le Masurier, 'My Other, My Self; Cleo Magazine and Feminism in 1970s Australia', P203.

⁸⁸ Summers, quoted in Marian Sawer, *A woman's Place; women and politics in Australia*, p.138.

⁸⁹ Ormonde, *A Foolish Passionate Man*, p194.

⁹⁰ Sawer, *A woman's Place: women and politics in Australia*, P131.

Morosi and Gotto, who were actually peripheral to politics in Canberra, distracted attention from the fact that in 1972 only 42 women had been elected to state or federal parliament, and in 1974 only one woman, Joan Child, held a seat in the House of Representatives. Child lost her seat in 1975, leaving the House make up entirely male, and it stayed that way until 1980.⁹¹

The uncertainty of public opinion over the appointment of Junie Morosi was revealed in a Morgan Gallup poll issued on the 18th of January 1975 asked the question ‘In your opinion was Dr. Cairns right or wrong to appoint Miss Junie Morosi as his private secretary’. Only 23.3% believed it to be wrong, while 40.2% thought it was right and 36.5% were undecided.⁹² Morosi came across as quite glamorous, and her supporters were impressed with her strength to continue in face of such intense criticism and disapproval. Letters hint at women finding her composure fascinating and her commitment inspiring like one written to the *SMH* ‘I would like to see Australian women show as much steely resilience as Junie Morosi.’⁹³ Her greatest supporter was Adele Koh who was also considered a ‘supergirl’: she worked for the Premier of South Australia Don Dunstan. She publicly stated at the 1975 International Women’s Year Women and Politics Conference in Canberra, ‘the trouble is that the Australian press is still infantile, it does not know how to control its bowels. Only one paper has to get on to a good story and we get several cases of verbal and pictorial

⁹¹ Julia Baird ‘Women, Take a hint from Junie Morosi’ in *Sydney Morning Herald*, (Sydney: Fairfax, 2003). And Marian Simms, ‘Women in Caucus’ in John Faulkner & Stuart Macintyre, *True Believers, The Story of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party*, (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 2001), P221.

⁹² Morgan Gallup poll no.56. 1975.

⁹³ Gwen Plumb, ‘High hopes for international Women’s Year’ in *SMH* (5/1/1975), p86.

diarrhoea, all trying to go one better.⁹⁴ She also had her fair share of negative publicity and would have had first hand experience in relating to Morosi's situation.

In summary, we can not really know what the average family felt, or how they interpreted the flow of information given by the mass media about Junie Morosi, but we can acknowledge that a demand and an obsessive interest was created. The media observed an anxiety over women in the workplace and exploited it to create the scandal, which turned out to be very detrimental to the Whitlam Government. The complexities of the feminist movements, as well as the unprecedented treatment from the media betray a complicated situation, which says a lot about the society if inspected closely. In a way, the Morosi affair seems to have been an acceptable outlet for frustrations of a society struggling to catch up with these social changes, targeting Morosi for publically demanding the opportunity to do more than submit to being a dutiful wife.

⁹⁴ Adele Koh, September 1975 International Women's Year Women and Politics Conference in Canberra, found in Julia Baird 'Women, Take a hint from Junie Morosi' in *Sydney Morning Herald*, (18/10/2003).

Chapter Two

‘Jim Cairns’s trek to political irrelevance’: Morosi and Cairns’s perspective⁹⁵

‘Perhaps I do wear my heart too easily on my sleeve. Perhaps if I do that I am not suitable to be a Minister of this nation. If that is the decision of the Government and the nation I accept it because I will not cease to wear my heart on my sleeve.’⁹⁶

Dr Jim Cairns MHR, 1975

*‘Love, work and knowledge are the well-springs of our life.
They should also govern it.’⁹⁷*

Wilhelm Reich, 1942

The media raised the sexual appeal of Junie Morosi to a mythic status. But as was hinted at in many accounts of the scandal both Junie Morosi and Jim Cairns did not shy away from the attention. Indeed the only people to write prolifically about the societal implications were themselves. The way they interacted with the hostile media was remarkable, and their personal political discovery can be read into the intricate responses that were misunderstood by the majority of the public. The mythic power of Morosi was created by her sexual allure, but also by the political movements that she introduced Cairns to, at a time in his life where he was questioning the ability of parliament to effect social change. The most important influence was the work of Wilhelm Reich, a twentieth century psychologist who wrote many papers about the

⁹⁵ ‘Jim Cairns’s trek to political irrelevance’ in *The Age* (11/8/1977).

⁹⁶ Jim Cairns, Parliament Hansard: House of Representatives Hansard, 9 July 1975, p.3634.

⁹⁷ Wilhelm Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm* (New York, Pocket Books publishing, first published 1942), P-title page.

need for love, understanding and sexual liberation from repression in society to eliminate violence. By introducing Cairns to Reich, Morosi developed his intellectual engagement with counter-culture movements, but also challenged existing orthodoxies around marriage and politics, and tested what sort of intellectual exchanges between men and women were acceptable in the workplace. What amazes scholars today and possibly created anxiety in 1975 Australia is that the Treasurer of the national government at the age of 62 was still attempting to discover himself and learn more about the working of society or how to change it for the better.

Background of Dr Jim Cairns

James Ford Cairns (Jim) was born in Carlton Victoria in 1914. His father was absent during his childhood after he enlisted in the AIF (Australian Air Force) in 1915, and despite living through the World War never returned to Australia.⁹⁸ Cairns's childhood therefore differed from the nuclear family norm; he lived with his mother Letty and grandparents in a very adult and modest environment. His early life and influences have been documented at length by both biographers and himself. He lived a very rural life, himself describing his inability to make real friends because 'I rode my pony in the morning and as soon as school was over I got on my pony and rode him away again three miles out of town.'⁹⁹ By 1931 his family struggled because of the great depression, having the National Bank foreclose on his family home. This personal impact from government economic policy was enough to politicise the

⁹⁸ Strangio, *Keeper of the Faith*, p10.

⁹⁹ Jim Cairns in Strangio, *Keeper of the Faith*, p14.

young Cairns into understanding and forming opinions about the nature of the government.

By 1935 he had become a constable in the Victorian police force, a role that utilised his athleticism and gave him more opportunity for development. He was put on a shadowing squad, which caused him to seriously question the ethics of working for the force. Nonetheless he performed his duties well and received numerous commendations. This time he indulged in his love of athletics, harbouring ‘legitimate aspirations for the 1940 Olympics’.¹⁰⁰ Cairns met his wife Gwen Robb in 1938. She had moved to Sydney after an annulled marriage with two sons, when she met Cairns at a sport competition. They married very soon after and later he adopted her children as his own.¹⁰¹

1940 was the year that saw Cairns return to his education, enrolling at the University of Melbourne for a Diploma of Commerce, widening his reading. He became a tutor in economic history at the University of Melbourne and the next decade for Cairns was consumed by campus politics, debate, education and political growth. By the end of his life he had written over 18 books and countless pieces for all kinds of publications.¹⁰² This period was described by many as the time when his views became ‘dangerously radical’.¹⁰³ In 1951 he travelled to England for a year to study on scholarship at Oxford University, and by 1954 was completing his PhD. He saw himself primarily as an educator and this was the mindset he brought to his involvement with the ALP.

¹⁰⁰ Strangio, *Keeper of the Faith*, p30.

¹⁰¹ Strangio, *Keeper of the Faith*, p31.

¹⁰² Cairns, *Australian Biography* (Recorded May 22, 1998).

¹⁰³ Strangio, *Keeper of the Faith*, p74.

With all his worldly life experience in working class areas, as an athlete, a constable, an academic and tutor, and a life constantly shaped by and invested in politics and political thought he came to the Labor party with an ideology out of step with the mainstream and often in conflict with party policy. However, after joining he steadily gained more prominence within the Victorian branch of the ALP and won pre-selection for the federal seat of Yarra after the 1955 split devastated the Victorian Labor Party stability.

During his time in opposition, he remained a political activist and cemented his image as a man of peace during the Vietnam War protests and moratoriums. Whitlam even noted in his memoirs an event where Cairns had written to the US intruding on his delicate negotiations to denounce their involvement in Vietnam, using strong language naming the US administration ‘murderers and maniacs in the White House’.¹⁰⁴ His main success during the campaigns against the Vietnam War was in his ability to communicate complex issues to large groups, brought about by his training as an academic and educator. ‘He travelled, he spoke, he wrote. His appeal was to the conscience of individuals’.¹⁰⁵

In the 1960s Australia was restless after over two decades of Liberal government. The Labor party watched the influence of Gough Whitlam grow, embodying hope for a Labor victory. Cairns, rising to prominence through his activism in opposition, came to lead the left wing of the party and vowed to keep Whitlam honest in his intentions. Ormonde argues that Cairns was weary of Whitlam’s star power, ‘Whitlam, in

¹⁰⁴ Whitlam *The Whitlam Government 1972-1975*, p43.

¹⁰⁵ Ormonde, *A Foolish Passionate Man*, p79.

Cairns's view, embodied many of the characteristics which were anathema to Labor leadership: elitism, arrogance, intellectual snobbishness and, above all, a transcending assumption of his own destiny to lead the party rather than to serve it.¹⁰⁶ As the leader of the left faction in the parliamentary caucus, Cairns challenged Whitlam's leadership twice, first in 1966 when he was clearly defeated, then again in 1968 when he lost by only two votes. Cairns therefore established himself as an important player when they formed government in 1972. In government he initially became Minister for Overseas Trade and Minister for Secondary Industry, until 1974 when put forward by the left he defeated Lance Barnard to become the Deputy Prime Minister - leading to him being pressured to take the role of Treasurer. His colleagues had mixed opinions of his performance as Treasurer, primarily because at this time he began the personal transformation for which many blamed Junie Morosi.¹⁰⁷

Cairns met Junie Morosi in 1974. At the time, Cairns engaged with those around him in a 'self-regulated and repressed' way, something he attributed to the isolation he sought as a child which he acknowledged had created an 'austere, inward-looking kind of self-denial' which he said: 'made people think I was unselfish and sincere and this became for me a favourable political image'.¹⁰⁸ Morosi admitted in her book that it was this political image that drew her to him saying, 'I found him to be one of the most sincerely humane men I had ever met... He was, it appeared, also in need of the opportunity to clarify his own thoughts and perhaps my avid interest stimulated this process.'¹⁰⁹ Morosi was the one to instigate their first meeting, having read Cairns's

¹⁰⁶ Ormonde, *A Foolish Passionate Man*, p92.

¹⁰⁷ Such as Uren, *Straight Left*, p 246. And Sexton, *Illusions of Power: the fate of a reform government*, P62.

¹⁰⁸ Cairns in Strangio, *Keeper of the Faith*, p 16.

¹⁰⁹ Morosi, *Sex Prejudice and Politics*, p30.

work *The Quiet Revolution* and greatly admiring his approach to politics. Her experiences in Grassby's office with 'an avalanche of migrant problems' made her recognise the importance of structural social reform and she saw that Cairns intellectually engaged with this need in ways no other politicians could.¹¹⁰ They talked for over half an hour, and he was intrigued by her interest in his ideas and her offer to help with his research. According to Cairns:

What I learned in 1975 from her and from her alone, was psychology. She'd been a student of Reich and she understood the nature and significance of repression, and how repression diminishes, eliminates self-esteem, how it distorts it into a reaction against the forces that diminish it, and you become aggressive. The process is a cultural process of human relations in which the first ten or fifteen years of life are vital. Unless you understand the theory of the formation of human character and behaviour you can understand nothing. She was the only one who brought that to me.¹¹¹

Their friendship grew quickly from that first meeting, and because of her naivety in entering the Canberra political scene with such confidence and perceived arrogance, gossip started to spread whenever they were seen in each other's company. The political halls of Canberra were not used to such an influence and could only treat her with suspicion. As mentioned above, Cairns recognised that Morosi's importance to him lay in her ability to discuss the works of Wilhelm Reich: 'Her main value to me was telling me how important Reich's four or five books are...It was as it has been with everybody. With me it was words, it wasn't organic contact so much that influenced me. She was an excellent conversationalist, a first rate teacher.'¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Morosi, *Sex Prejudice and Politics*, p26.

¹¹¹ Cairns, *Australian Biography* (Recorded May 22, 1998).

¹¹² Cairns, *Australian Biography* (Recorded May 22, 1998).

The Influence of Wilhelm Reich

The influence of Wilhelm Reich profoundly affected the way Morosi and Cairns viewed their relationship and politics. Wilhelm Reich, a medical graduate from the University of Vienna, became Sigmund Freud's assistant and vice director of his psychoanalytic polyclinic. His most infamous works include *The Function of the Orgasm* (1927), *Character Analysis* (1933) and *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (1933). Reich's controversial political life saw him join the Austrian Communist party in 1928, which brought him into conflict with Freud, but he was expelled from it in 1934. He moved to the US in 1939 where his pioneering work on sexual repression led him to believe he discovered energy unique to sexuality. He termed it 'Orgone energy', believed that it was physical and could be observed in sexually excited frogs, and as a concrete property could be collected in the Orgone Energy Accumulator.¹¹³ He spent years of his life investigating the characteristics of this energy, trying to harness the therapeutic powers to see if it could be used to cure illness like hysteria or cancer.¹¹⁴ The state of Maine, after receiving complaints about the accumulators being fraudulent, ordered a federal injunction to destroy both his Orgone accumulators and most of his works mentioning Orgone energy. He refused to attend court and was sentenced to prison, where he received psychiatric treatment but died in 1957.¹¹⁵

Reich was very controversial throughout his career, and in many countries his books were banned. He caused anxiety because his research diverged from what was considered appropriate practice for patient/therapist relationships by using unorthodox

¹¹³ Paul Robinson, *The Sexual Radicals*, (London, Granada Publishing Ltd, 1969), P 56-7.

¹¹⁴ Robinson, *The Sexual Radicals*, P 56-7.

¹¹⁵ Robinson, *The Sexual Radicals*, P 63.

methods. His confronting analysis of sexual relations polarised the society in which he was working, a societal anxiety that was replicated by Australian responses to Cairns's interest in Reich: 'In some sense Reich divided the world into those who were for him or against him.'¹¹⁶ By looking at the early life of Cairns, and his recognition of the lack of affection in his youth and his inability to relate to women until his marriage to Gwen, it is easy to see why he became interested in the philosophy of Reich: 'In Reich's conception, the actual past, especially the unresolved past, lay caged both in the body, in the tensions of the muscles, which expressed a person's set towards life, as well as in his mental and spiritual attitudes.'¹¹⁷ Reich had the belief that this lack of openness and affection in youth created armour around individuals that kept a person from being themselves. His focus was to pursue what most people would deny or repress, and he redefined the term love that he saw as essential for healthy interactions:

Reich judged [negative impulses] to be distorted reflections of an original, rational anger at humiliating and crippling experiences which the patient as a child had dared not express. The therapy strove gradually to distinguish the murder from this anger, to release the anger and thereby reach the underlying capacity for love.¹¹⁸

According to Ormonde, this new obsession with sexual politics was where Cairns's views diverged from 'conventional' radicalism. 'His challenges to economic individualism, to jingoistic patriotism, and to social authority, were understood and respected, if not always accepted, by his political colleagues. But when Cairns came to the view that all social reforms would fail unless the sexual issue was confronted,

¹¹⁶ Leo Raditsa, *Some Sense About Wilhelm Reich*, (New York, Philosophical library inc. 1978), P19.

¹¹⁷ Raditsa, *Some Sense About Wilhelm Reich*, P27.

¹¹⁸ Raditsa, *Some Sense About Wilhelm Reich*, P31.

he was once more on his own.¹¹⁹ He saw the sexual repression of individuals as a product of societal control ‘the basic conformities in human and sexual relations are always the product of the peer group, the ones who start the rumours, who make the telephone calls. The ‘brown mice’ are always at work. That’s how people are disciplined. You don’t need police or tanks.’¹²⁰

This self-discovery was exceptional because it occurred at a time that he was at the peak of his conventional power. The Australian people and the media obviously believed that as Treasurer he had more important issues of inflation, unemployment and the economy to be dealing with rather than formulating ‘nutty’ politics about sexuality and relationships. Ormonde documented the importance that Reich’s psychology played in the development of the Morosi relationship:

Because Cairns came to his vision at a time of his developing friendship with a beautiful woman, Junie Morosi, the view was widely ridiculed as the rationalization of an infatuated man. Most people felt it had nothing to do with politics. Such criticism underestimated Cairns’s capacity to seize a new idea and pursue it to its limits. Cairns’s relationship with Morosi was disastrous for his political career, but it became his doorway to a new social vision and a new way of life...Cairns’s discovery of the importance of sexuality in the lives of individuals and of societies provided him with a key to understanding his society and himself.¹²¹

Cairns in hindsight addressed the disillusion he felt with the office of the Treasury and the powerlessness he felt in affecting progressive societal change through the parliamentary system. In an interview for the Australian Biography project in 1998 he clarified his thoughts by saying:

Two things happened in the Morosi time. The failure of the Whitlam government and it failed badly. I could see nothing in that future - in the Whitlam government, and beyond that again, because of the Morosi factor,

¹¹⁹ Ormonde, *A Foolish Passionate Man*, p4.

¹²⁰ Cairns in Ormonde, *A Foolish Passionate Man*, p4.

¹²¹ Cairns, *Australian Biography* (Recorded May 22, 1998).

there was no alternative. I couldn't have succeeded Whitlam. There was no way through parliament.

The constant mentions of sex, constant discussions of Morosi being sexually dangerous, or the referencing to sexual liberation being at the heart of social reform encouraged the public to make assumptions about their relationship. Society was used to accepting sex as linked to relationships or marriage, or a sinful pleasure or indulgence, shown sneakily in advertisements or alluded to in popular culture. Hearing the Treasurer of the nation talk in a new way, liberally using the word 'love' to every relationship, and discussing sex without shame at the same time that a beautiful and sexually aggressive woman entered his life doubtlessly led many people to the conclusion that he was a man overcome with lust and love for a woman and they must have had a physically intimate relationship.

This created many complications, because Cairns was a married man with two adopted sons and a very devoted wife. Yet if we look closer at the type of relationship that Cairns describes as having with his wife Gwen it seems more complex. Gwen Cairns nee Robb and Jim were engaged after only three days of courtship. Ormonde says of the initial match 'it was a marriage of opposites: Jim studious, undemonstrative, intellectual, superficially unemotional, an outsider; Gwen affectionate and fun loving, someone who delighted in having people around her but who never fully shared Jim's intellectual pursuits.'¹²² Her devotion to Cairns was indisputable. She shared with him a lot of the work in the communities that Cairns represented and they became well loved by the electorates. She travelled with him on overseas government trips, and in December 1974 she accompanied him to visit Darwin after the devastation of Cyclone Tracey. The images of empathy and

¹²² Ormonde, *A Foolish Passionate Man*, p.25.

competence that Gwen and Jim Cairns displayed in that time (Cairns was acting Prime Minister) captured the nation and made many see him as an alternative Prime Minister. The most tragic expression of her devotion was during a home invasion where Jim Cairns was brutally attacked in 1969 and Gwen threw herself over her husband to guard him from the attackers.¹²³

According to Tom Uren, Gwen was a very courageous woman. She was content with living her professional experiences through the career of Jim: 'Jim was the basis of her politics - if you liked or supported Jim, she liked you.'¹²⁴ However this relationship seemed to some to be too dependent, Uren also mentions their interactions when Jim would be sure to phone her twice a day. Whitlam who was anecdotally quoted in Liberal MP Peter Howson's diary took this analysis further. Howson said: 'Gough was interesting on the subject of Gwen Cairns, Jim's wife, saying that she exercises a sort of 'mother' approach to Jim. He consults her on every action that he's about to take, and the relationship between them is much more 'mother to son', on the surface, than husband and wife.'¹²⁵ Putting this relationship in the context of his new sexual liberation is revealing, because Gwen continued to believe in his quest for truth and knowledge but at the same time was obviously affected by the Morosi affair, which tested their marriage. Cairns admitted at times the true effect his desire to seek political solace in alternative philosophy had on Gwen, stating 'I do know it's not possible to do what you have to do for yourself without hurting somebody.'¹²⁶ He was very analytical and honest about his

¹²³ Ormonde, *A Foolish Passionate Man*, p.111.

¹²⁴ Tom Uren *Straight Left*, p246.

¹²⁵ Peter Howson, *The Howson diaries; the life of politics*, (Ringwood Vic: Viking Press, 1984), p.461.

¹²⁶ Jim Cairns in Strangio, *Keeper of the Faith*, p353.

relationship with Gwen, which was bound up in duty and sacrifice recognising that '[she] has not changed and that makes it hard' for his own political growth.¹²⁷ After reconciling their marriage in later years Gwen disclosed to a journalist how she felt Cairns's issues with his upbringing had caused the need for personal discovery:

Gwen Cairns certainly thought that the rigidly austere upbringing her husband experienced within the Ford household had a bearing on what she discreetly described as 'the rebellion in his older years'. She suspected the rebellion is ultimately aimed at his mother: '[Jimmy] thinks that people should be able to show affection... it was almost like he said [to his mother]: 'I'll do it whether you like it or not'.¹²⁸

She was not the first to make this connection between his childhood and later liberation. Cairns had internalised the abandonment by his father which was kept a secret from him until he was middle aged, and he still felt socially stunted by the very puritan Methodist upbringing which promoted 'the virtue of hard work and austerity, and shunned the sins of the flesh'.¹²⁹ The growth that he was seeking was personal transformation and he was jolted into yearning for this when confronted by Morosi who would claim 'You espouse freedom for everyone else but you deny it to yourself'.¹³⁰ He disclosed details about the pure image that had defined his political life until the scandal in an interview setting out his early experience with girls 'I think I wasn't game somehow or other. I never took a girl out until 1936... I didn't succeed, but I was then twenty-two. Now I'm sure, Gwen was the first one I had any sexual relations with.'¹³¹

¹²⁷ Jim Cairns in Strangio, *Keeper of the Faith*, p384.

¹²⁸ Strangio, *Keeper of the Faith*, p375.

¹²⁹ Strangio, *Keeper of the Faith*, p17.

¹³⁰ Ormonde, *A Foolish Passionate Man*, p 189.

¹³¹ Cairns, *Australian Biography* (Recorded May 22, 1998).

Sexual Liberation

In contrast to this controlled and conventional relationship he had with Gwen, Morosi had an entirely different view of relationships and marriage. She wanted him to cast away the behavioural patterns of associating sexual interaction with ethics, duty and self-sacrifice. Tom Uren described one instance when she made her views on sex evident, discussing her different and confronting approaches to sexuality; ‘Her perception of relationships was very different from what I had been used to. I remember her saying to me, ‘Tommy, you Anglo-Saxon men look at sex so differently from we Asians.’’¹³² As pointed out in Chapter One Morosi thought of traditional forms of marriage as almost prostitution, and regarded the nuclear family ideal that the social fabric of the Australian society was based upon as unnatural. She stated in her book:

In Australia I observed first-hand another aspect of the industrial society - the nuclear family. I must confess this was a most disturbing experience. I could not understand how all my new friends seemed to think that this was the ideal situation; one man, one woman and a few children against a sometimes hostile world. They did not seem to notice the sterility of their alienated relationships... They did not seem to be aware consciously of the lack of interaction and inter-relations, or the lack of what I can only describe as growth and life, teeming and turbulent as that may be at times.¹³³

Despite advances in women’s rights, accessibility of the pill, and the influence of women in the workplace, the statistics of the 1970s show that the average age of marriage for a woman was 21, with children born within the first two years, a reminder that ‘for many younger Australian women sexual respectability and

¹³² Uren, *Straight Left*, p243.

¹³³ Morosi *Sex, Prejudice and Politics*, p46.

marriage remained powerful aspirations.¹³⁴ Morosi's critique of the average woman's lifestyle while interesting and progressive was dismissive and elitist to other woman's choices. The life changing influences of psychology and philosophy that were liberating to Cairns and herself seemed to many to be irrational. It attacked a very entrenched way of life for most families.

To compare this scandal once again to the scandal of John Gorton and his secretary Ainsley Gotto which occurred in 1969, this point identifies a fundamental difference. John Gorton and Ainsley Gotto were conservatives of the Liberal party, a party known to be fierce advocates for the nuclear family and the role of the woman as bearer of children and domestic ruler of the home.¹³⁵ The 1969 scandal was a sensation because by employing the young woman on his staff and listening to advice from the 'girl' rather than from his ministers, Gorton was betraying the standards of the party and the conservative conventions of those that voted for him. With Cairns, it was no secret that he was a progressive from the left, aiming to change society and confront social norms. His interaction with Morosi was not just a betrayal; it undermined the average family's existence and represented a breakdown in the family value rhetoric that underpinned the political landscape.

Cairns was very aware of the psychological dimension of his relationship to Morosi, and it seems became fascinated with an understanding of himself, a pillar of the Reich philosophy being one can only reach beneath their armour by understanding their capacity to love. Because of this, there are numerous examples of Cairns analysing his

¹³⁴ Le Masurier, 'My Other, My Self; Cleo Magazine and Feminism in 1970s Australia', *Australian Feminist Studies* 22:53 (2007), P199. Statistics from Summers, *Damned Whores and Gods Police*, p.488.

¹³⁵ Freudenberg, *A Certain Grandeur*, p122.

childhood, understanding the consequences of having an absent father and the benefits of strong female role models: 'I hardly even knew a patriarch in all that time'.¹³⁶ Most of all, he recognised and dwelt upon the nature of his relationship with his mother and how this impacted on his life.

You see, my mother had syphilis, which she got from my father. It wasn't treated for many years. She knew she had some illness. I don't know if she was ever told what it was, but she was afraid of passing it on to me. We always shook hands. I never got close to my mother, and I suppose if that doesn't happen to you in the first ten years, it's never likely to happen.¹³⁷

This self-discovery caused Cairns to write and think a lot about the nature of parenthood and the need for love and affection at young ages, another point that Morosi was able to draw out in his thinking. Her second book *Tomorrow's Child*, dealt entirely with the philosophy of parenthood, and Cairns again wrote the introduction as he had for her first book. This need to educate and develop academia on the issue of love at young ages was without a doubt connected to his inchoate feelings of childhood.

All of these new influences on the way that both Morosi and Cairns were viewing the world inevitably put pressures on the way that they interacted with the media speculation. After attempting to change his interaction and perspective on the world and creating a space for Morosi professionally so she could fulfil this personal and educational need, they realised they had stumbled across a very sensitive issue. Recognising this, they took it upon themselves to confront it head on, to dare the media and the public to take issue, and to continue giving interviews or fodder to the media in a hope that they would understand the delicate political transformations they

¹³⁶ Cairns in Strangio, *Keeper of the Faith*, p16.

¹³⁷ Cairns, *Australian Biography* (Recorded May 22, 1998).

were experiencing. He had stated before 'I push for things that are not yet popular', and their crusade became directed at the unfair treatment women faced in the workplace.¹³⁸ He approached this event in his life in the same way that he had approached politics, by using it as a catalyst to educate and inform people, something Morosi was comfortable with when she responded 'it's not me, Junie Morosi, the person he is fighting for. I stand for a principle. I've become a cause, and as he himself says, he's always been one for causes.'¹³⁹

The scandal actually enhanced his personal development because it made him realise the importance of gender politics, and the way that the oppression of women formed the basis for all inequality in society. In the introduction to Morosi's book Cairns stated:

When Junie Morosi started to work for me early in December 1974, I began very soon to realize that I had overlooked something which might be vital to social change...It was the place of women in politics. In public life. It was only in these few months that I saw how much women were dominated by men and how much women expected and accepted it... I began to see that social discrimination against women was far worse than economic, and might in fact be the basic cause of all discrimination.¹⁴⁰

Also in that year Cairns published his own book *Oil in Troubled Waters*, a response to the loans affair. Both this and Morosi's book were released in close proximity to the events they depicted in order to capitalise on the interest in their lives: they could use their fame to disseminate their opinions. Cairns openly admitted in the introduction to his book that so much had been written about them that he could not answer most of

¹³⁸ Cairns in Ormonde, *A Foolish Passionate Man*, p1.

¹³⁹ Morosi in 'Junie Morosi's own story part two' in *Woman's Day* (February 24, 1975), p29.

¹⁴⁰ Cairns in Morosi, *Sex Prejudice and Politics*, p4.

the damaging half-truths, but that his book was an attempt to answer the criticisms.¹⁴¹ Later in 1979 he published a book called *Growth to Freedom* that attempted to explain his growth and change.

Standing behind Junie at this point was entirely consistent with the politics and ethics he had promoted throughout his life. He saw that he had a right to employ her and a right to personal discovery just as she had a right to accept employment wherever she wanted. Cairns defended her in parliament: ‘I am not going to be influenced by newspaper campaigns which have an element of the scurrilous and an element of the irresponsible. I suggest to honourable members that if I had chosen a man or even a woman who was not good looking, perhaps nothing would have happened.’¹⁴² He responded to every media request with thoughtful political discussion on the inequality of women, for instance when he was asked to respond to suggestions that the job was not suited to a married woman he said: ‘I think a tremendous amount of unhappiness is caused within marriages by one person or another being too restrictive of the other. I think when a woman has to give up a considerable amount of her life in having children and that sort, then when the time comes that she doesn’t have to do that any more, it’s extremely unfair not to allow her to do what she wants to.’¹⁴³

The most significant example of Cairns championing the cause was at the Terrigal ALP Conference, where his need to promote the Morosi cause showed a severe lack of political savvy much to the dismay of his parliamentary colleagues. He and Morosi gave a private interview together to the *Sydney Sun* reporter Toni McRae. Not only

¹⁴¹ Cairns, *Oil in Troubled Waters*.

¹⁴² Cairns in House of Representatives Hansard, 5 December 1974, p4604.

¹⁴³ Cairns, in *The Sun*, ‘My love for Junie’ (Friday February 7, 1975), p2.

was the *Sun* part of a media empire with an anti-Labor agenda, but McRae was also the wife of Jack Birney, a prominent Liberal party member who would benefit from a Labor loss at the next election because he was running for a seat.¹⁴⁴ Clearly it was a hostile environment. Rather than recognising the political risk, Cairns continued to reiterate the Reichian rhetoric that could easily be misinterpreted. He was not thinking of what was best for the government; he was using the scandal to shed light on the way that workplaces must change in the future to accommodate for women. Morosi and Cairns aligned themselves politically with philosophy they thought was more important even at this inopportune time rather than just following the party line and not challenging the society to change. The quote that Cairns stated was:

We know we're being watched all the time. I don't give a damn what people say. I have stuck by Junie all the way and I intend to keep doing this... I have not changed my opinion about Junie since the day a few months ago when somebody asked me if I was in love with her. I said then it had nothing to do with the love he was talking about. Love is a word that has many meanings. I said- but I was incorrectly quoted- that love ranged from the kind of thing I might have for the Vietnamese people to the kind of thing his boss had for money. I would like to add though, that in her capacity as my private secretary, Junie must command my respect and trust. Surely you can't trust somebody in this world unless you feel something akin to a kind of love for them.¹⁴⁵

His language betrays the literature that was influencing his thinking, with a very ambiguous reference to what love is and how it should underpin all interactions with a society to allow for true self-discovery. However, what the paper printed was a front-page picture of Morosi in a swimsuit next to the headline 'My love for Junie'.¹⁴⁶ This naïve political decision that Cairns made against the advice of his media advisor Geoff Gleghorn was the last straw for the latter, who consistently felt humiliated by Cairns blatantly ignoring his instructions. This one news article caused an irreparable

¹⁴⁴ Ormonde, *A Foolish Passionate Man*, p201.

¹⁴⁵ Cairns, in *The Sun*, 'My love for Junie' (Friday February 7, 1975), p1.

¹⁴⁶ McRae, in *The Sun*, 'My love for Junie' (Friday February 7, 1975), p1.

rift between Cairns and his advisor, which ended in Gleghorn's dismissal, and created more news stories as the metaphorical body count from the Morosi affair piled up.

Morosi also used this media attention as a tool to disseminate information about the treatment of women, and to promote the politics of sexual freedom. She gave a number of exclusive interviews to *Women's Day* attempting to tell her own story. It is interesting to observe the layout and presentation of these articles, and the intended audience, which were inevitably women. There are full-page glamorous photos of Morosi posing in front of parliament house or walking away from a privately chartered plane (which also sparked controversy about whether tax-payer funds went into the extravagant spread). Captions stated 'At 41 her face is absolutely unlined, and she carries not an ounce of excess weight on that slim, beautiful figure.'¹⁴⁷ The article was written almost as a transcript of the interview, all her own words as she said them. It is obviously attempting to be sympathetic towards the treatment she had received elsewhere in the media, and attempted to put forward her own perspective. But this perspective just reinforced the different way of engaging with the world that she had from other women. She discusses freely the way men desire her, saying 'it's very difficult to explain to people who haven't experienced it, but there is this dualistic thing about me. In one way I've been pampered by men all my life. On one hand they've wanted to offer me everything and on the other to deny me everything'.¹⁴⁸ The author expanded on this reaction she received from men saying 'she is every inch a man's woman, used to getting what she wants and accepting it as a sort of 'divine right' when she does. She's aware that wherever she goes men's eyes

¹⁴⁷ Craig, 'Now! Junie Morosi tells her own story: World Exclusive' in *Woman's Day Magazine*, p4.

¹⁴⁸ Morosi in 'Now! Junie Morosi tells her own story: World Exclusive' p6.

follow her. She knows that men desire her'.¹⁴⁹ It is unclear if Morosi was saying this was wrong or if this attitude should be adopted by all women. She was merely stating the experience she had her whole life in behaving around men, and how she managed to become stronger for it and use the attraction to her own advantage, something that feminist groups would have been divided about whether it helped or hindered the cause.

The magazine covered all allegations, gave her a platform from which to clear her name of suggestions of corruption with her failed businesses, and described her reasons for wanting a career. It then comprehensively covered her private life, her marriages and what she felt about them, her sons and her love of yoga because she likes being 'very close to nature'.¹⁵⁰ Then it moved into what the public would have been very interested in, her relationship to sexuality, men and attraction. She was very explicit in her descriptions, describing what she looked for in a man; 'I have met some men who attract me sexually but not mentally. I meet other men with whom it's the reverse. I couldn't fall in love with either type, though I could have a warm friendship with both.'¹⁵¹ If she was attempting to make people take her seriously in the harsh professional environment, these very personal revelations would have engrained the negative stereotype of her importance in politics being nothing more than defined by relationships rather than competence. When describing Cairns she was very familiar and gave the impression that her friendship went beyond what would be considered regular employer/employee relations; 'with Jim Cairns I talk

¹⁴⁹ Craig, 'Now! Junie Morosi tells her own story: World Exclusive' p6.

¹⁵⁰ Craig, 'Now! Junie Morosi tells her own story: World Exclusive', p8.

¹⁵¹ Morosi, in 'Junie Morosi's own story part two' in *Woman's Day* (February 24, 1975), p27.

about humanity. I need this kind of specialist knowledge. It contributes to the many parts of me, to the range of interests that I have'.¹⁵²

Whilst historians have made the connection between the self-discovery of Cairns and the involvement of Morosi and Reich, little has been written about the anxiety that this created in the wider public. In a very flippant quote that Morosi gave to *Women's Day* she stated 'one paper called my relationship with Jim Cairns 'mental intercourse'. Mental exchange would be a better phrase.'¹⁵³ This point captures what may have been at the heart of the anxiety about women in the workforce, and the reason that the media dwelt upon their marital status. It was this intense emotional connection that they shared, a kind of relationship that Cairns could not even have with his wife. If their relationship had have been purely sexual it would have been easier for society as it was to understand. Morosi would have filled the image of the scarlet woman and Cairns the image of the unfaithful husband. But they refused to acknowledge this and Cairns set about balancing the relationship with his wife at the same time as confiding emotionally in another woman. At this point in the scandal the public was not aware of any proof of sexual impropriety. Yet somehow it seemed to be the emotional contact and not necessarily the physical contact that undermined and threatened the institution of marriage.

When the workplace was entirely male and the high profile and powerful jobs of the country remained in the male sphere, wives had no need to feel anxiety about their husbands interacting intellectually with other women. This very public 'mental' connection would have sparked fears in most households about the new kinds of

¹⁵² Morosi, in 'Junie Morosi's own story part two', p27.

¹⁵³ Morosi, in 'Junie Morosi's own story part two', p29.

interactions that men would have been having with women that were not their wives. The workplaces would have had trouble adapting to this new phenomenon and the institution of marriage would have had to change to allow for different connections, interactions and relationships with educated, strong and intellectual women.

Ultimately, Cairns and Morosi were motivated by political thought that was very new and controversial, that the media and Australian households would not have fully understood. To hear the Federal Treasurer openly and freely talking about his love for the world would have intrigued and confused many in the country, who were concerned with their own standard of living, unemployment, inflation and the state of the nation. Cairns and Morosi felt they had a higher purpose in bringing these concerns to the public. The tragedy was that the forum they chose, national parliament, would never have been appropriate or conducive to these ends.

Chapter Three

“Supergirls’ out Whitlam warns Cabinet’: The reaction from the ALP.¹⁵⁴

‘The Morosi appointment undermined Cairns’s standing in Caucus, alienated his closest colleagues, disrupted his office, imposed crushing personal strains on his private life at the peak of his public career, distracted him when his public duties required undivided concentration, broke his self confidence, transformed his personality, ruined his reputation as an idealist, provoked gross breaches of loyalty within the treasury, and led, directly and indirectly, to his political destruction.’¹⁵⁵

Graeme Freudenberg, 1977

In Junie Morosi’s book she began by changing a quote of Jim Cairns’s to say; ‘The conscientious conviction of one man *or woman* who genuinely seeks truth is more than the minds of kings or of those who claim to speak for God or for the ‘Party’.’¹⁵⁶ Her insertion of the words ‘*or woman*’ to the quote set a scene for what she saw as a battle with the patriarchy, born out of her treatment in the media, which highlighted the inequality between the sexes in Australian society. But what is also interesting is the choice of the quote itself, no doubt an attempt to highlight her own dissatisfaction with the treatment she received by the ALP after the scandal broke, and to give it credibility by acknowledging Cairns’s distrust of the factional loyalty of the party at a time when he was beginning to question the ability of the party to effect genuine change.

¹⁵⁴ *SMH*, (July 6, 1975), P7.

¹⁵⁵ Freudenberg, *A Certain Grandeur*, p319.

¹⁵⁶ Morosi, *Sex, Prejudice and Politics*, Title Page.

Morosi and the ALP

Morosi was openly disliked by the ALP. She was described as the ‘long, tall shadow’ of the Labor Party, the ‘antipodean Cleopatra’ or the ‘femme fatale’ and became a prominent symbol of the government’s destruction.¹⁵⁷ Jim Cairns recognised this when he wrote:

I began to hear that it was in the interests of the party that I should sack Junie Morosi. But I thought it was in the interests of the party to show that we were the kind of party that would stand behind an intelligent, attractive, competent woman even if she had failed in a business company, and who had a well known personal record of integrity and, of whom, after a fantastic investigation in several countries, so little that was adverse had ever been found. But I was wrong. Position, staying in office, even if not in power was so important.¹⁵⁸

Advisors, colleagues and party officials began badgering Cairns to do what was politically expedient. Cairns’s commitment to the cause he felt was important was illustrated by his refusal to give in to pressure. Not everyone shared his conviction. The disillusion and disbelief many felt as Cairns seemed to turn his back on the party manifested in their refusal to accept Morosi personally and professionally. Cairns witnessed his other staff and his parliamentary colleagues make it harder for Morosi to achieve outcomes in her job. They closely scrutinised her, watching for any mistake or change to highlight her incompetence, and observed her with unrealistic expectations. Cairns responded when asked the question ‘Was she a good office organiser’ with:

No. She wasn’t supposed to be an office organiser. The criticism that has been levelled at her is made by very jealous and envious people, who were supposed to be organizing the bloody office themselves. She wasn’t supposed

¹⁵⁷ Peter Wilmoth, ‘Junie Morosi’ in *Up Close: 28 lives of Extraordinary Australians* (Sydney: Macmillan Australia Pty Ltd, 2005), p172.

¹⁵⁸ Cairns in Morosi, *Sex, Prejudice and Politics*, p5.

to be doing that. I think at times she was a bit authoritarian - more than a bit. And I think she expressed that sometimes around the office in Canberra.¹⁵⁹

This quote shows Cairns was obviously angry with staff he saw as perpetuating the narrow sexist opinions she was receiving from other sources. Ormonde describes how relaxed Cairns's office was before Morosi brought to it skills she learnt in private enterprise; 'Cairns had been an extraordinarily accessible politician.'¹⁶⁰ In some ways his accessibility was a detriment to a fully functioning office. Morosi appears to have put in changes designed to increase efficiency, changing the furniture and placing her desk at the entrance to Cairns's office and controlling access to Cairns. All of these changes built up antagonism with a hostile staff that already resented Morosi's authority and her lack of relationship with the party to which they were loyal, because they appreciated the old regime. In essence, the changes Morosi made to the office which some thought made it 'look like an advertising agency' were relatively normal practises for a private secretary to implement.¹⁶¹ Ormonde said it best by concluding; 'The problem was that no one could accept Morosi as a normal private secretary.'¹⁶²

Gough Whitlam did not explicitly voice his concern at the beginning of the scandal. In 1972 when the government was first elected, it instituted changes to the number and appointment of personal staff to give ministers more autonomy. According to RF Smith 'the length of time since the last change of government had allowed knowledge and understanding of transitional procedures to become dim. Moreover among leading members of the governing party, perceptions of the capabilities and roles of

¹⁵⁹ Cairns, *Australian Biography* (Recorded May 22, 1998).

¹⁶⁰ Ormonde, *A Foolish Passionate Man*, p199.

¹⁶¹ Ormonde, *A Foolish Passionate Man*, p199.

¹⁶² Ormonde, *A Foolish Passionate Man*, p199.

the public service were mixed.¹⁶³ Therefore, with a limited pool of Labor expertise to draw from, a burning desire to start reform right away and an increase in the numbers of advisers, some politicians made ill-advised appointments. Whitlam refrained from intervening in staff decisions by ministers, stating about the Morosi appointment in question time:

I rely upon the discretion of my ministers as to whom they appoint. I do not presume to vet appointments. I have had no reason to cavil at any of the appointments. But if anybody thinks that he has good reason to raise these matters, I believe that the proper and decent thing to do is to raise them in correspondence.¹⁶⁴

Whitlam took seriously any allegations about Morosi, with paper trails of correspondence where he investigated any issue of improper conduct - such as her business dealings with the NSW commission or the allegations of her preferential treatment with Commonwealth employee accommodation. He made sure the government was complying with any legislative issues, but publicly stayed relatively silent on the political fallout that it was causing for the moral perceptions of his government. Some years later he said to a newspaper that in hindsight he should have put a stop to the situation much earlier than he did, 'I believe that the campaign which was mounted on the Morosi issue at the end of 1974 was without foundation and without justice. I would think I was still reacting against the injustice of the media campaign against Cairns and Morosi. The silly statements that Cairns made at the end of the Terrigal conference in 1975 should have produced a decisive reaction from me [they were] grossly inept and damaging. It was my fault and my job to call him into

¹⁶³ Smith, R. F. I. 'Ministerial Advisers: The Experience of the Whitlam Government.' *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. 2 (1977), p.135.

¹⁶⁴ Whitlam, House of Representatives Hansard, 5 December 1974, p4604.

line and I didn't.'¹⁶⁵ Whitlam also observed that Cairns seemed to 'revel in the publicity', showing that Whitlam did not understand the tactic of Cairns which used publicity as a way of gathering support for his cause.¹⁶⁶ What is also interesting is the way that Whitlam glossed over the intensity of the affair in his memoirs about his years in government published in 1985.¹⁶⁷ In fact, the Morosi affair is not mentioned at all. This very obvious omission gives the impression that he resented the disproportionate media attention it got in the years leading up to the Dismissal, and that he felt it inconsequential and irrelevant to what was important at the time.

Like Whitlam, Cairns's other parliamentary colleagues Tom Uren and Graeme Freudenberg agreed that the treatment Morosi received from the media was unfair and unwarranted. Freudenberg admitted that the appointment of Morosi was above board: 'None of these appointments was improper, unprecedented or unconventional. The political consequences were not foreseen and could not reasonably have been foreseen.' He went on to add 'when everything has been said on the Morosi controversy, the inescapable conclusion remains: in the final analysis, it was sexist. She was the most disturbing thing - a woman with influence.'¹⁶⁸ Yet Freudenberg does not even try to disguise his disapproval of Morosi:

Press harassment and press hypocrisy there certainly was, but for people who complained so bitterly about public invasion of privacy, Morosi and Cairns courted publicity with extraordinary indiscretion... [referring to the 1975 Terrigal ALP interview with the Sydney Sun] For all its touching naivety and engaging frankness, Cairns's interview was perfectly calculated to restore the Morosi affair to the front pages in the most embarrassing and ludicrous way. It was this kind of conduct which enraged some of Cairns's firmest defenders

¹⁶⁵ Gough Whitlam, interviewed by Peter Bowers, 'Whitlam reflects on Whitlam' in *Sydney Morning Herald* (3 Dec, 1982), p.7.

¹⁶⁶ Whitlam, interviewed by Bowers, 'Whitlam reflects on Whitlam' in *Sydney Morning Herald* (3 Dec, 1982), p.7.

¹⁶⁷ Whitlam, *The Whitlam Government, 1972-1975*.

¹⁶⁸ Freudenberg, *A Certain Grandeur*, p324.

and made Morosi the object of unforgiving hatred in the Labor Party - not least among its women supporters.¹⁶⁹

The internal functions of the ALP at this time were under great stress because of the tensions leading up to the Dismissal. The party was still coming to terms with changes brought in by Whitlam's leadership designed to modernize and improve the operations, prompted by the infamous 'faceless men' story that highlighted how party practises had fallen behind the times.¹⁷⁰ Nonetheless, this scandal tells us about the principal that the party still prized: loyalty. The response showed the party trying to be accepting of Cairns whose loyalty record was outstanding, but this was limited. Union officials such as George Slater began stating publically: 'Dr Cairns must make a choice. Either he continues to defend Junie Morosi or he defends the best interests of the ALP.'¹⁷¹ Public polling showed that up to 47% of Labor party voters either thought that her appointment was wrong or they were undecided, illustrating the tension within party ranks.¹⁷² What is also clear is the party had difficulty in accepting women in the workforce. The ALP was always inextricably linked to the union movement in Australia, and this movement had its own complex history of accepting working women.¹⁷³

Women within the party also seemed to have a negative response to Morosi, although on-the-record statements are difficult to uncover. It is hard to find primary resources

¹⁶⁹ Freudenberg, *A Certain Grandeur*, p322.

¹⁷⁰ John Faulkner & Stuart Macintyre, *True Believers, The Story of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party*, (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 2001), P102.

¹⁷¹ George Slater, Trade Union leader quoted in Ormonde, *A Foolish Passionate Man*, p202.

¹⁷² Morgan Gallup poll no.56. 1975.

¹⁷³ Faulkner & Macintyre, *True Believers, The Story of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party*, P161. And Rae Cooper, *Party Girls, Labor Women Now*, (Sydney, Pluto Press, 2000), P54.

in party records of the opinions of women, because so few women were in positions where their statements would have been recorded, and few women at this time held public office for Labor. One can also speculate that records of internal dissent would never have been created or released. In a piece written about the Labor party and women for a Labor journal *The First Thousand Days of Labor*, the author Mary Gibbons refers to the feminist credentials of Dr Cairns, but despite it being published around the time the scandal was in full swing, there is no mention of Morosi's treatment.¹⁷⁴ It seems that Morosi created this resentment because she had no loyalty to the party, would not listen to those in charge, and had no time for the way things were done amongst the rank and file.

There was an interesting dynamic in the way many from the party responded. They first acknowledged the harassment and sexism that was thrown at Morosi and denounced the media for their lack of scruples, yet at the same time engaged in a kind of 'double speak' in which they said one thing and thought another. The party found other reasons to demonise Morosi, recognising the cause but still detesting the influence and changes she brought out in their hero Cairns. Tom Uren was guilty of this, writing in his autobiography 'I also strongly disapproved of Jim's appointment of Junie Morosi. I think that any objective observer analysing Cairns's political contributions and judgement will recognise a complete transformation that took place after his relationship with her.'¹⁷⁵ He also recognised 'although Jim created a lot of problems for himself, the attitude of the press towards his relationship with Junie was

¹⁷⁴ Mary Gibbons, 'Women Under Labor', *The First Thousand Days of Labor Vol 1* (Public policy & Interest groups international relations, compiled by Roger Scott and Jim Richardson, 1975).

¹⁷⁵ Uren, *Straight Left*, p243.

deplorable.’¹⁷⁶ This attitude of justifying dislike of Morosi in spite of her treatment by the press manifested in other ways, such as her structural exclusion from the party operations, or ostracising her from the political social scene.

This ‘double speak’ served another purpose, allowing those politicians to seem supportive of feminism. Feminist thought was progressing during this period, but change was slow. However, political players like Uren and Freudenberg would not have wanted to be seen promoting views that were becoming outdated, indeed commentators now have said ‘the threads of sexism and fear of the exotic that informed that period of history now look faintly absurd.’¹⁷⁷ Cairns seems to have been aware that society’s attitudes towards women would change, and hindsight would allow his political stance to be proven correct. He would never have wanted to compromise his legacy as a progressive in favour of short-term political gain. In that sense, he would have seen himself as a martyr for the cause, taking the right stance on an issue that history would later vindicate. This significant issue raises something inherent to the history of public political life, the historiographical issues associated with writing history about politicians who have been actively involved in the shaping of their own memory or legacy.

A Politician’s influence over history

‘Politicians are malicious, violent and deeply disrespectful when it comes to history. There is little more frightening than a politician with an interest in history. That

¹⁷⁶ Uren, *Straight Left*, p245.

¹⁷⁷ Wilmoth, ‘Junie Morosi’ in *Up Close: 28 lives of Extraordinary Australians*, p171.

interest will rarely, better said never, be in history's interest, but in the politicians own interest.'¹⁷⁸ This quote, despite coming from a politician, conveys the depth of the historiographical problems the political profession creates for the writing of history. Essentially, politicians are painfully aware of the history making nature of their actions. They are acutely aware of any impact they had on the course of history, and make every effort to have that benefit their legacy. They write memoirs that flatter their opinions and point of views. Some like Peter Howson write diaries as events occur, all the while with the intention that the material would be published after the events.¹⁷⁹ This does not mean the sources are not useful, but it does give the historian the task of critically analysing how the politicians are portraying themselves. Freudenberg acknowledged this when his work *A Certain Grandeur* was published, writing on the title page 'On none of these events do I pretend neutrality or impartiality; but if holding strong views were a disqualification for writing contributions to history, very little worthwhile would be written.'¹⁸⁰ This legacy building was succinctly pointed out in the biography of journalist Alan Reid, when the writers observed, 'He thrived in a world in which journalists rely on politicians as the primary source and subject of their stories and where politicians rely on journalists as an important resource as they try to impose their own slant on events and determine their outcome.'¹⁸¹ This manipulation of history was not only retrospective, it occurred with scheming to determine opinion through the media and the wider public. Despite Cairns claiming not to be an egoist with ambition for power, he still understood as a scholarly man the importance of performance, and the power in how issues and policy

¹⁷⁸ Kim Beazley, Curtin memorial lecture 1997.

<http://john.curtin.edu.au/jcmemlect/beazley1997.html>

¹⁷⁹ Howson, *The Howson diaries; the life of politics*.

¹⁸⁰ Freudenberg, *A Certain Grandeur*, back cover.

¹⁸¹ Fitzgerald, *Alan 'the red fox' Reid*, p.2.

would be perceived. Cairns was guilty of crafting his memory, wanting to be perceived as having consistent politics and not wanting to 'sell out' his beliefs. Therefore, he published book after book aimed at giving his perspective on issues for which he was criticized. The introductions he wrote in Morosi's works put forward his considered opinion as to why the public created so much interest in the Morosi scandal, and as he got older he happily gave many interviews reflecting on his life and how it was shaped and changed.

A Distracted Cairns

Whatever the approach to Morosi, Cairns's parliamentary colleagues could not help but notice and comment on his complete personality change. Whitlam, who does not mention Morosi throughout his book still recognised a change in his interactions with Cairns: 'I soon found, however, that Cairns was an unstable rock on which to found a policy.'¹⁸² Uren acknowledged how betrayed many of Cairns's comrades from the left felt, 'People who had put Cairns on a pedestal couldn't understand their relationship and many in the left thought he had deserted us.'¹⁸³ Morosi became the scapegoat for those in disbelief about the way Cairns was turning his back on the party. Many saw her as imposing her beliefs and encouraging him to become disillusioned with the ALP. At this time he was critically engaged with the machinery of the party, and had previously respected the wishes of the Victorian branch executive. But he began to question the machinery and operations of the party, the win at all costs attitude, and he was also scarred from a pre-selection battle for the seat of Melbourne in 1968. As

¹⁸² Whitlam, *The Whitlam Government; 1972-1975*, p190.

¹⁸³ Uren, *Straight Left*, p245.

Tom Uren put it, 'In the end, Jim was deeply disillusioned with the ALP itself. As far as Cairns was concerned, there were some awful hypocrites.'¹⁸⁴

This turn away from his traditional ties with Labor and the appearance of a change in his personality was seen as a reason for his missteps in parliament. According to many, the distractions that Morosi provided at the height of his influence when he should have been most focused led him to mistakes that cost him his respect and career. Journalist Clem Lloyd wrote;

A distracted Cairns was involved in a series of statements which amounted to misleading the parliament. Whitlam demoted him first from the Deputy Prime Ministership and Treasury portfolio, and then from cabinet altogether. Caucus approved of Whitlam's drastic if belated response.¹⁸⁵

Lloyd is not the only commentator to link Morosi and the loss of confidence in the government. Freudenberg also draws a direct link to Morosi and snowballing issues that led to the Opposition blocking supply in the Senate. When Justice Menzies passed away in 1974 there was a vacancy on the High Court that Whitlam wished to fill with Lionel Murphy. Murphy had previously been drawn into the Morosi affair because he had employed her in his department before she moved to the Treasury, and he had publicly spoken out in her support. According to Freudenberg;

The appointment would have been announced in the first or second week of December except for allegations made in the Senate of his involvement with Junie Morosi. Whitlam immediately saw that to announce the appointment in such an atmosphere would only fuel suspicions of impropriety... This delay was the first fruit of the Morosi controversy... It is very probable that had the announcement been made in December in a calmer atmosphere it would have been made before the disastrous Queensland election and the Premier of NSW, Tom Lewis, would not have been able to take the extraordinary action of refusing to appoint a Labor senator to replace Murphy. It was this first

¹⁸⁴ Uren, *Straight Left*, p247.

¹⁸⁵ Lloyd 'Edward Gough Whitlam' in Grattan, Michelle (ed.) *Australian Prime Ministers* (Sydney, New Holland Publishers, 2000).

breach of convention which led step by step to the Dismissal of the Whitlam Government.¹⁸⁶

The opinion of the affair by those in Canberra and in the ALP was not patient or understanding of Cairns and Morosi's goals. They refused to observe the intricate political transformation that Cairns was going through, and only saw him being shut away by Morosi who was encouraging his disenfranchisement with the party. They saw a sixty-year-old man obsessed and in love with a beautiful and exotic woman, and saw that obsession affecting the achievements for which he had worked his whole life. For them there was no speculation about their intimacy. People on the inside assumed without question that affairs occurred, but accepted it because of a culture wherein personal indiscretions were known but not reported. They were not annoyed that Cairns may have been sexually indiscreet, but more that he was being unashamedly public. Uren discussed in his book how he let them use his flat in Canberra so they could be together, and how he directed Cairns to behave in a way that their relationship could not be easily observed.¹⁸⁷ He went as far as saying 'Cairns really fell in love with Morosi and I don't think he had ever really been in love so intensely before.'¹⁸⁸ Without incriminating himself, Uren even betrayed the idea that extra marital relationships were commonplace so long as they were discreet, saying 'I'm no angel and I don't want to be hypocritical, but I was always discreet and never paraded my friendships in front of the press gallery.'¹⁸⁹ This double standard only further enraged Cairns and contributed to his thinking about the place of women in society. He observed that; 'it is accepted that men can have sex with women other than their wives as long as it is casual. If ever it should even appear to

¹⁸⁶ Freudenberg, *A Certain Grandeur*, p324.

¹⁸⁷ Uren, *Straight Left*, p244.

¹⁸⁸ Uren, *Straight Left*, p244.

¹⁸⁹ Uren, *Straight Left*, p244.

happen, and then be associated with loyalty, affection or love - that is going too far. This offends the social mores of universal male promiscuity denied absolutely to women.¹⁹⁰

Many Labor and Left comrades of Cairns may not have cared that Morosi was employed in his office or thought that the media treatment was out of proportion. They did, however, have reservations about Morosi, and hatred of her control over Cairns. They were anxious that their relationship was too intense for what would be considered appropriate or acceptable and that she had the power to change the way he interacted with the world.¹⁹¹ With Morosi around, trust in Cairns's decisions plummeted. Mungo McCallum wrote about how she took control of the appointment book and regulated who was able to see Cairns. 'Other staffers and Treasury officials became concerned that Cairns was not talking to the right people and that Morosi was letting far too many of the wrong ones in.'¹⁹² Frustrated colleagues began suspecting corruption or favouritism when people sent to Cairns by Morosi's husband David Ditchburn received appointments when others did not.

This affair was not the official reason for Cairns being dismissed from the ministry by Whitlam. Cairns had become embroiled in the 'Loans affair' that scandalised the government as well. The Loans Affair mainly concerned the Minister for Minerals and Energy Rex Connor who sought to borrow \$US4 billion from Arab sources to

¹⁹⁰ Cairns in Morosi, *Sex Prejudice and Politics*, p5.

¹⁹¹ Anecdotally shown in McCallum, *A ramble through the Australian political landscape with Mungo: the man who laughs*, (Sydney, Duffy & Snellgrove, 2001), p272.

¹⁹² McCallum, *Mungo: the man who laughs*, p272.

fund infrastructure projects.¹⁹³ The Arab markets had become an attractive source different from the conventional money markets because oil prices from 1973 created a large investment pool. This loan was not authorised by the official Loans Council and the Opposition claimed the government's action in seeking the loan was deceitful. Connor mediated his dealings with this new market with a shady character called Tirath Khemlani, a Pakistani businessman who became a media personality as much associated with the failure of the Whitlam government as Morosi. Cairns was drawn into the controversy when he signed letters for George Harris, President of the Carlton Football club, to make loan inquiries on behalf of the Australian government. The Opposition consistently suggested that improper dealings were occurring with these negotiations, and publicly called for inquiries. The government tried to keep the record clear by submitting all the documentation to the parliament. But the lack of some information concerning the letters Cairns signed led to allegations that he misled the parliament. Connor and Cairns were both dismissed from the ministry, and Cairns became the only federal Treasurer to never hand down a budget. He and Morosi subsequently published their books. Ironically, he was publicising Morosi's book on the day that the government was dismissed by the Governor General.¹⁹⁴ He continued representing his seat of Lalor until August 1977, turning to look for societal change in alternative movements and writing many books about his political discovery.¹⁹⁵ The announcement of his retirement from parliament confirmed his transition into the new age lifestyle movements, as he wrote 'I want to work in the future to try to help people become more aware of the causes of their own limitations, meaninglessness and powerlessness... I ask those who understand how I feel to join

¹⁹³ Ian Hancock, 'The Loans Affair; the treasury files'. ANU *The Treasury records*, 1974, National Archives of Australia.

¹⁹⁴ Freudenberg, *A Certain Grandeur*, p391.

¹⁹⁵ Ormonde, *A Foolish Passionate Man*, p239.

me in ridding ourselves of self-imposed oppression and limitations so that we may be able to establish the social life we all know we need.’¹⁹⁶

The intensity of the speculation that occurred in the media, the House of Representatives and the Supreme Court gave the impression that the public had a right to know the truth of the relationship between them. What this sideshow actually did was disguise the real issues, which were more alarming. The obsession with the details prevented a discussion of the treatment Morosi received, or a critical look at why she represented such a threat to their values or way of life.

Overall, the ALP had a very unique reaction to the affair, one that was quite different to the media or the average household. They essentially spoke out in defence against the media campaign, but at the same time targeted Morosi for other, more personal reasons; for her audacity in assuming she had a place in the party machine, for what they saw as her negative impact on a minister whose sole focus should have been electoral success. Players like Whitlam felt the need to give Cairns the autonomy over his choices of staff and believed that the media attention was unjustified. In hindsight however, he realised the brutal nature of the media vendetta against the government, using the scandal to undermine its morality and chasing stories to drag out the intrigue. Other parliamentary colleagues of Cairns believed Morosi was a bad influence, changing his personality and pushing him to make bad decisions that were a detriment to his political career. Yet according to Ormonde: ‘he approached the end of his seventh decade with the excitement and enthusiasm of a man still in the process of self-discovery. He was used to the idea that his countrymen thought he was talking

¹⁹⁶ Ormonde, *A Foolish Passionate Man*, p239.

nonsense.¹⁹⁷ After defamation cases and confessions of truth, the crux of the issue had not changed, nor was the reaction of his colleagues any more justified; it further highlighted the double standards in the political sphere that forbade women entry to the boys club of politics.

¹⁹⁷ Ormonde, *A Foolish Passionate Man*, p5.

Conclusion

*'Scandal is gossip made tedious by morality'*¹⁹⁸

Oscar Wilde

Portrayals of Junie Morosi have created the image of another woman in history using her feminine wiles to corrupt a larger than life man. The ALP, like the crew of Odysseus tying him to the mast of his ship to prevent him being drawn near the power of the Sirens, tried to 'add to the bonds' that held Cairns fast to the party and the government.¹⁹⁹ But when his choices were clear, they were all too quick to perpetuate the idea of Morosi as a modern day Siren, leading him by desire towards his political destruction. It is an image that draws on ancient traditions and ingrained attitudes towards strong and complex women. Morosi easily fulfilled a predetermined archetype as interfering, overtly sexual, and ultimately corrupting.

Junie Morosi was a modern woman for her time. Her approach to sex and marriage was rare, so the men in her life did not overshadow her. She may have come across as selfish or vain, but that extroversion allowed her to be brave in pursuing her own pleasure in the face negative criticism.

Dr Cairns similarly carved a place for himself in history as a progressive reformer with a deep capacity to care. His response and approach to the drama unfolding around him was not to cave in to demands from the media or his party to sack Morosi.

¹⁹⁸ Oscar Wilde, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, 1892, Act III.

¹⁹⁹ Homer, *The Odyssey*, p158.

He stood behind her and attempted to tell Australia that everyone had the right to be employed, that everyone had the right to privacy and that everyone had the right to self-discovery and change. His approach would surely have inspired some and confused others, but in doing so he left a memorable impact on Australian political history.

In 1980 Morosi took a defamation case to court against radio station 2GB and presenter Ormsby Wilkins for the misrepresentation of her character. In 1975 Morosi became pregnant with her fourth child and her first to husband Ditchburn. What was said, prompting her to take the matter to court was:

Hers is the most notorious woman's name in the country and now that she's to have a baby there will be a spate of dirty jokes about her, and a variety of speculations as to who is the father, because everybody knows that Junie Morosi is an immoral adventurer...adventuress... who has slept with a variety of notable politicians, and most recently has been sleeping with Jim Cairns. In fact, of course, nobody knows any such thing.²⁰⁰

The case was dismissed, because it was argued that Mr Wilkins was merely summing up rumours that other people had disseminated rather than voicing an opinion of his own. Nonetheless, these nasty comments were made about her character in very public forums, and with the cases in court Cairns and Morosi were forced to answer personal questions under oath. It was reported in the *SMH* the next day some of the questions that Cairns was forced to answer, including 'did you ever hold hands in public?' or 'did you ever kiss in public' to which he answered, 'Yes, I may have greeted her at an airport and given her a kiss. That doesn't mean romance.'²⁰¹ He was also asked; 'Did she say this love was in the context of a whole human relationship'

²⁰⁰ David Rolph, *Media Law; Cases, materials and commentary*, (Melbourne: Oxford university press, 2010), p239.

²⁰¹ Jim Cairns, in 'Cairns denies romance with Junie Morosi', *SMH* (1980).

which he answered ‘yes. It was not only with me but a number of other people; she was trying to explain what love meant’ evidently having to clarify the Reichian influenced responses about the nature of love that both he and Morosi used in defence of the media.²⁰² Cairns continued:

I think she [Junie] was saying that in any kind of human relationship sex is involved either positively or negatively, mostly negatively. She was not implying there was any sexual relationship between us but the media was implying it.²⁰³

In 2002 Cairns eventually admitted to having had physical relationship with Junie Morosi, 28 years earlier. The headlines were the following: ‘Junie and me: Cairns concedes a very real kind of love’, ‘Cairns admits sex, and breathtaking hypocrisy’ ‘Cairns and Morosi? How the truth emerged, 27 years on’.²⁰⁴ An article in the SMH wrote:

Why did Dr Cairns now think his admission a mistake? ‘Because it would be all over the newspapers.’ Why, then, did he admit it? ‘It’s true, I suppose.’ Why hadn’t he admitted it before? ‘Because nobody asked if I’d been to bed with her.’²⁰⁵

Clearly, while there was speculation, those making assumptions were too caught up in the complexities of why or how to confirm if their relationship had been sexual. The point was to some degree irrelevant - it was the perception they gave that shook the foundations of the society rather than the truth of the situation. Gwen Cairns who died in 2000 from lung cancer was not affected by the confession; in spite of her image as the long suffering wife they had reconciled their differences and celebrated their 61st

²⁰² Cairns, in ‘Cairns denies romance with Junie Morosi’, *SMH* (1980).

²⁰³ Cairns, in ‘Cairns denies romance with Junie Morosi’, *SMH* (1980).

²⁰⁴ ‘Junie and me: Cairns concedes a very real kind of love’ in *SMH* (17/09/2002), p2. ‘Cairns admits sex, and breathtaking hypocrisy’ in *SMH* (20/09/2002), p13. ‘Cairns and Morosi? How the truth emerged, 27 years on’ in *SMH* (21/09/2002), p15.

²⁰⁵ ‘Junie and me: Cairns concedes a very real kind of love’ in *SMH* (17/09/2002), p2.

anniversary together. Once again, almost 30 years after the initial scandal, the Cairns Morosi affair was front-page news.

Rather than proving the pundits right for their speculation and questionable ethics in using the scandal for their own political purposes, the admission merely illustrated how insignificant and inconsequential the truth really was. The media and the public of 1974 Australia came to the reaction and opinions that they did without the evidence, highlighting their own insecurities and anxieties about their society. The scandal has also earned its place in case law history of Australia as one of the first media defamation lawsuits.

Morosi gave an interview to *The Australian* in 1996, 20 years after the events of 1975. She was living in a cooperative in Canberra, had separated from her husband and had a lot of time to reflect and forgive. But even after all that time, she noted how her name still represents something dangerous and scandalous:

A few months ago in an article entitled 'Women we love to hate', it was said I was a threat to every Australian home. I suppose with my present state of understanding I can see where they are coming from. Any independent woman who is not going to pretend to be inferior or really believes she is not inferior is a threat.²⁰⁶

When repeatedly asked about the nature of her relationship with Cairns, Morosi replied; 'I've maintained from the first time I was asked that question that the issue here is my right to my private life and to my professional life. That were I a man, that would not be an issue, and therefore it is not an issue whether I've gone to bed with

²⁰⁶ Morosi in Wilmoth, 'Junie Morosi' in *Up Close: 28 lives of Extraordinary Australians*, p170.

Jim Cairns or not. Or anyone else for that matter. I've never answered because it will take away the actual focus, trivialise it.²⁰⁷

By side-stepping the question of whether she had been intimate with Cairns and turning it on its head to say that she should have the right to have done what she liked just as a man would have, she directly contradicted and challenged the chaste view of female sexuality and morality. In many ways, if she had simply been the scarlet woman and mistress of Cairns the public would have better understood their motivation.

Whether or not commentators thought the treatment of Morosi was sexist is no longer important. What has become history is that the story fascinated the media and represented a cultural shift for a society learning to accept women in the workforce. According to Morosi; 'If there's anything I will be remembered for it is to say it is my right to go to bed with who I want to go to bed with, and you will judge me on my professional conduct, which is professional. The whole world is saying this now. In those days [that view] was perhaps a little ahead of its time.'²⁰⁸ Things have certainly changed today where women, while still not immune from gendered criticism, have taken on senior roles. Not just as advisors, but as Ministers and leaders in the Australian government.

Morosi's views were indeed ahead of their time.

²⁰⁷ Morosi in Wilmoth, 'Junie Morosi' in *Up Close: 28 lives of Extraordinary Australians*, p175.

²⁰⁸ Morosi in Wilmoth, 'Junie Morosi' in *Up Close: 28 lives of Extraordinary Australians*, p178.

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