Soak up the Goodness

Discourses of Australian Childhoods on Television Advertisements, 2006 - 2012

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I declare that this thesis is the result of my own research, that it does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree of diploma at any university and that it does not contain materials previously published, written or produced by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed: …………………………...

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Abstract

Childhood is represented on Australian television advertising so frequently as to be commonplace. Traversing childhood, cultural and media studies disciplines, this thesis works to disrupt and unsettle taken for granted and exclusionary cultural assumptions about childhood that emerge through contemporary television advertisements. I conduct social semiotic and discourse analyses across a corpus of 330 advertisements spanning 2006 to 2012, considering the ways the Australian childhood subject is discursively produced through the advertisements. The television advertisements are found to construct Australian childhood subjectivities in ways that are limiting in terms of race, space, gender and social class.

Considering the role of consumption in the reproduction of subjectivity in the contemporary neoliberal context, the advertisements come to be read as addressing viewers as agentive actors exercising choice and aspiring to formulate subjectivities through consumption. In this sense, the advertisements work to encourage agentive viewers to consume in order to achieve idealised yet exclusionary Australian childhood subjectivities. The exclusionary discourses are employed and idealised by advertisers to secure consumption; however, it is also argued that the advertisements simultaneously reinforce and naturalise exclusionary understandings of Australian childhoods through their reiteration.

From a post-structuralist perspective which considers cultural truths to emerge through discourse, I argue that the limited representations of Australian childhoods on television advertisements produce and foreclose cultural ways of understanding Australian childhood. Throughout the thesis, I work to challenge representational foreclosures of Australian childhood subjectivities within the advertising texts, in order that cultural truths about Australian childhood subjectivities might be unsettled and unjust representations challenged.

Such a critique of limiting discursive representations of Australian childhood *matters*, I contest, because unjust and exclusionary discourses of Australian childhood can sustain symbolic and performative disadvantage for Australian children and adults alike, particularly those who continue to be excluded from public recognition in a nation that presumes to be inclusive and egalitarian.

Introduction

Narratives of Australian childhoods are commonplace and pervasive in Australian television advertisements to the extent that they might be unremarkable. However, when they go uncritiqued and unchallenged, dominant understandings about what constitutes the notion of childhood can come to be naturalised as common sense and unquestionable (Robinson & Davies, 2008; Jenks, 2005/1996; Matthews, 2007; Corsaro, 2005). This thesis draws upon over 330 television advertisements produced between 2006 and 2012 that feature narratives of Australian childhoods, examining how television advertisements are complicit in the semiotic and discursive production of public discourses of Australian childhoods in ways that are exclusive and exclusionary in terms of spatiality, gender, race and social class. Advertising and consumption discourses, I will be arguing, produce Australian childhoods in ways that are unjust; and this needs to be continually critiqued and challenged in order that such unjust constructions are not (or no longer) naturalised as unquestionable truth.

By considering the role of consumption in producing subjectivity, I examine how consumers are positioned by advertisements as needing to consume in order to achieve idealised yet exclusionary Australian childhood subjectivities (Rose, 1999; Miller & Rose, 1997/2008). This consumption narrative is particularly pertinent within contemporary neoliberal

societies (Rose, 1999; Harris, 2004) in which agentive citizens are increasingly relying on

consumption, private corporations, and the assistance of private non-government expertise

in order to achieve personal goals. As Harris argues in her discussion of neoliberalism,

> Deindustrialization, privatization, economic rationalism, and deregulation have all shifted the relation between the individual and society from citizen-state to consumer-corporation. Individuals are encouraged to exercise their citizenship responsibilities and rights in relation to privatized service providers rather than the state. (2004, p. 91)

In this neoliberal context, agentive consumers turn increasingly to consumption to formulate

subjectivities that are both personally and socially meaningful (Harris, 2004; Rose, 1999).

Through Rose, I consider consumption to be an act that will be undertaken by agentive

citizens seeking ways of formulating meaningful identities. Idealised ways of doing

subjecthood, Rose argues, are framed through advertisements as personally but also socially

desirable and achievable through consumption. Recognition of what is a *normal* and

successful and therefore *desirable* model of subjecthood is produced through advertising.

Rose argues,

> The technologies of mass consumption, as they took shape over the course of the twentieth century, established a new relation between the sphere of the self and the world of goods … Advertisements now tried to link goods to individual satisfactions … The images they deployed identified persons through the commodities they purchased: commodities appeared to illuminate those who bought them, to have the power to transform purchasers into certain kinds of person living a certain kind of life. Consumption technologies … establish not only a 'public habitat of images' for identification, but also a plurality of pedagogies for living a life that is both pleasurable and respectable, both personally unique and socially normal. (1999, p. 86)

Throughout this thesis, dominant neoliberal consumption discourse is examined as an

influence in the production of particular idealised yet exclusionary images of Australian

childhood on advertisements. I will be arguing that advertisements consistently incite

agentive viewers to consume in the pursuit of socially ideal and exclusionary Australian

childhood subjectivities. Such a narrative has the effect of linking access to identity to

economic means, inasmuch as purchasing power becomes a necessary prerequisite for attaining an idealised identity formation. If a person cannot afford to formulate their identity through purchasing products, then identity formations remain out-of-reach for the economically marginalised, therein exacerbating their marginalisation. Exclusionary narratives of Australian childhood recur across the corpus, revealing how advertisements situated within neoliberal consumption discourse naturalise discourses of Australian childhood that are both unjust and consistently uncontested. Furthermore, it seems, the advertisements appeal to the most likely future consumer demographic—privileged middle-class white families with disposable income. Through speaking to them, the advertisements often place privileged characters as protagonists within the narratives, which works to reinforce their centrality in national advertising discourse.

Childhood

The indisputability of dominant western ideas about childhoods gains currency via the symbolic proximity of childhood to naturalness (Jenks, 2005/1996). This proximity can position the subjectivities that children are pictured enacting as intuitive and instinctive. However, I take up the idea that childhood is a social and cultural category, which is contextually formed and open to definitional change. This perspective is a common thread that runs through recent post-structuralist and childhood studies literature (James & Prout, 1990; Jenks, 2005/1996; Matthews, 2007). Such a perspective begins with the premise that there is no true, unadulterated version of childhood waiting to be found. Rather, assumptions about true and natural childhood subjectivities emerge in cultural contexts and through dominant cultural discourses. As will be discussed in Chapter 1, definitions of childhood have changed over time, most notably from conceptions of childhood as evil in the middle ages to childhood as good and natural in contemporary times (Ariés, 1962/1973; Cunningham, 2006; Robinson & Davies, 2008). From such a perspective, childhood can be

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understood as defined through dominant cultural ways of speaking about and imagining the concept, which naturalise some spatial, gendered, raced and social classed versions of childhood as recognisable and desirable while also excluding others from cultural recognition.

In recent years, debates about Australian childhoods have not been far from the public eye (van Kriekin, 2010). Recent public debates have been framed around balancing the rights of Australian children to be heard and participate in public life on the one hand, and on the other, the pressing desire to protect children from adult and liberal ideological corruptions (van Kriekin, 2010). At present, national discourse continues to feature fierce debate over the impact of same-sex parenting on children's gender roles, and culture wars over the importance of the ideal of the heteronormative nuclear family to normative childhood growth. The nation has also witnessed a sharp growth in refugee children calling Australia home, and an increasingly multicultural Australian childhood demography (McCarthy & Vickers, 2012; van Kriekin, 2010). Concomitantly, concessive Australian governments have justified intrusive Indigenous policies as necessary in response to the *Little children are sacred* report into child abuse in remote Indigenous communities (Stringer, 2007; van Kriekin, 2010). Permeating these current national debates is a public discourse that continues to work to protect a distinctively western childhood ideal of innocence and naturalness (van Kriekin, 2010)—an ideal that is implicated in the production of gendered, racialised, spatialised, and social classed standards about what natural and innocent Australian childhoods should look like, and what versions of childhood are undesirable.

In light of these concerns, this thesis's examination of discourses of Australian childhoods on television advertisements is a timely critique of the commonplace and ongoing naturalisation of exclusionary visions of the ideal Australian child in public discourse. As commonplace features of the nation's mediascape, television advertisements over and again

feature narratives about Australian childhoods going about their daily business. They are persistent in their productions of narratives of Australian childhoods, and have a broad reach across the national demography—they are regularly watched by Australians spanning across age, gender, social class, race, spatial and cultural backgrounds (Hogan, 2009). As Hogan puts it,

> Television is perhaps the most pervasive and invasive of the mass media. Its multisensory messages demand the audience's attention in a ways that other broadcast and print media cannot. Furthermore, … television messages on free-to-air broadcasters are directed toward a [broad] audience. These messages, therefore, offer clues as to which values, experiences, and ways of life are assumed to be shared by the mass (usually national) target audience. (2009, p. 177)

Television advertisements make notions of identity and difference socially and culturally recognisable. However, television advertisements do not merely represent social concepts; they also produce and make recognisable social ideals. As media texts, they "help to structure social relations" (Stokes, 2003, p. 143) and are a means by which "values and ideals are reproduced culturally" (p. 144). They produce identity categories and ways of being and seeing as recognisable and even desirable within a cultural context (Hogan, 2009). In this sense, television advertisements can work to *produce* (Foucault, 1990/1978) and *naturalise* Australian childhood ideals through the ongoing, banal (Billig, 1995), commonplace deployment of narratives of Australian childhoods.

Furthermore, as elaborated upon in Chapter 2, commercial television advertisements have as a primary function the goal of securing future consumption, primarily through positioning the products on offer as personally and socially beneficial for the consumer, so that they might succeed in a society that increasingly relies on consumption as a way of realising personal and social success (Rose, 1999). The subject of consumption is understood in this thesis as a subject whose identity is in part formed through consumption habits (Miller & Rose, 1997/2008; Certeau, 1984/2002). In this context, advertising serves the function of

promoting wares, ideas and their associated cultural values to agentive viewers, while also naturalising advertised cultural ideals as desirable and normative. The demographics that the advertisements appeal to are generally those with greatest purchasing power—middle-class white families with disposable incomes.

The intersection of childhood and television advertisements has been a hotbed of scholarly interest in recent years, traversing the disciplines of childhood studies, media studies and cultural studies (Robinson & Davies, 2008; Bang & Reece, 2003; Gilmore & Jordan, 2012; Lewin-Jones & Mitra, 2009; Li-Vollmer, 2002; Merskin, 2004; Sieter, 1995). Within the literature that examines childhood and television advertisements, scholarly attention has predominantly been concerned with the ways advertisements influence children's perceptions of gender, race and social class. Such studies commonly involve interviews of children after they have watched advertisements (Lewin-Jones & Mitra, 2009; Johnson and Young, 2002). Less has been said, however, about the ways that advertising texts produce narratives of Australian childhoods, and how these narratives might function in sustaining dominant discourses of both childhood and 'Australianness'. This study, therefore, takes as its focus an interest in the complex and contextually contingent concept of childhood (Jenks, 2005/1996), in order to examine the ways that television advertisements produce discourses of Australian childhood. Discourses are understood here as regular and repeated ways of representing and speaking about social categories that produce those social categories as recognisable (Foucault, 1972). Thus, this is a textual discursive analysis of the ways the category of Australian childhood is produced. It is not a study of audience perception of advertisements nor a study about advertisements targeted at children per se. Rather, it is a study concerned with representational practice and the discursive work of television advertising texts. A focus on texts rather than textual respondents, I argue, can open scholarly space within the recent literature on childhoods for the discussion of the ways

television advertisements can delimit and develop cultural ways of understanding and interpreting Australian childhoods. In this sense, I do not focus on textual producers or respondents—my concern remains on the discursive production of categories of childhood. Such an approach, I hope, will contribute to scholarly debate about the role of media discourse in the production of what I will argue are exclusive and exclusionary models of Australian childhoods, and the foreclosure of non-normative ways of seeing and doing the category of Australian childhood.

The research question guiding the study is:

> How do the discursive and semiotic elements of Australian television advertisements produced between 2006 and 2012 function in the construction of Australian childhoods?

To address this research question, research objectives have been formulated:

a) Map the range of advertisements produced between 2006 and 2012 that feature children within Australian contexts;

b) Identify key themes and social categories through which notions of Australian childhoods are represented in the advertisements;

c) Analyse the visual, written, sonic and motive elements through which meanings about Australian childhoods are constructed in advertisements during this period.

In order to answer the research question and achieve these objectives, the study employs discourse analytic (Foucault, 1972; Stokes, 2003; Willig, 2008) and social semiotic (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; van Leeuwen, 2005) methodologies. Discourse analysis and social semiotics are complimentary methodological approaches that analyse discourse and text respectively (Yell, 2005). Discourse analysis is concerned with examining the ways discourses emerge through regular and sustained naming of a social category (Willig, 2008), while social semiotics is concerned with examining the ways social signs (camera angles, colour schemes, postures, words, etc.) produce texts (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). As discussed in greater detail in the methodology chapter, discourses emerge when interrelated

texts regularly and repeatedly produce a social category. With this in mind, I use social semiotics to examine the meanings of individual texts, and discourse analysis to examine how interrelated texts can regularly produce cultural meanings that form discourses. In this sense, social semiotics examines meanings at the level of the text, which enables nuanced analysis of the discursive work of television advertisements. (van Leeuwen, 2005).

Data for the study is drawn from a broad selection of television advertisements archived in online databases and traditional archives. Advertisements have been collected that span a six year period, 2006 to 2012, so that a significant number of advertisements could be collected that might show how television advertisements produce Australian childhoods in exclusive and exclusionary ways. Advertisements were access from the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA) and YouTube, with 2200 Australian television advertisements found that fitted within the time period. Of those advertisements, 330 feature childhoods. Themes were then developed from the advertisements by grouping advertisements that featured similar narratives (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Carabine, 2001). During this initial data synthesis stage, four spatial themes were identified: rural Australian childhoods, suburban Australian childhoods, Australian childhoods on beaches and billabongs, and Australian childhoods at school. Spatial themes were selected because they emerged as dominant within the advertisements, wherein Australian childhoods are consistently constructed as connected to particular territories of the nation—suburbs, rural locales, beaches, and so on. These four spatial themes formed the basis for the four analysis chapters, as detailed in Chapter 3.

Cutting across all four spatial themes identified, Australian television advertisements were found to regularly produce Australian childhoods as ideally middle class, white and heteronormatively gendered. In this sense, across all four spatial themes, television advertisements regularly and repeatedly constructed Australian childhoods in exclusive and exclusionary ways. The broader neoliberal consumption discourse, in which advertising

functions as a way of aligning material products to identity formations (Rose, 1999), often contributes to the sustenance and naturalisation of such exclusionary narratives of Australian childhoods inasmuch as such exclusionary versions of Australian childhoods are consistently framed not only as desirable, but also as achievable through consumption of advertised products. In this sense, the exclusionary discourses of Australian childhood are used to secure future consumption, and simultaneously, naturalised as personally and socially desirable ideals. The corpus of advertisements, then, as situated within a broader neoliberal consumption discourse, contributes to the production of particular, exclusionary, Australian childhoods, by rendering them recognisable, ideal and consumable ways of doing Australian childhood, while simultaneously foreclosing other, unrepresented, subjectivities from recognisable notions of Australian childhood.

Theoretical framework

The study is guided by a broadly post-structural orientation, which is concerned with the power of language and social signs to produce social concepts (Barker, 2000; Smith & Riley, 2009). In particular, a Foucauldian archaeological approach to discourse is utilised, which understands social truths to be produced through discourse (Foucault, 1972; Jager & Maier, 2009). The regular and repeated reiteration of a concept in interrelated texts, Foucault argues, forms dominant and powerful cultural understandings, or "regime[s] of truth" (Foucault, 2002b, p. 131). From this perspective, when Australian television advertisements regularly produce Australian childhoods in similar and systematic ways, discourses of Australian childhoods emerge which make ways of doing Australian childhoods recognisable and truthful. In this sense, understandings about Australian childhoods garner and maintain their status as truth through continual reiteration in discourse, and not by reference to a stable and universal definition of the category.

Also central to Foucault's theoretical approach is the recognition that discourses do not only foreclose possible ways of constructing subjectivities; they are also productive (Foucault, 1990/1978). Discourses emerge through regular and ongoing repetition of meanings through multiple interrelated texts. This argument is also taken up by Judith Butler (1990, 1993), whose notion of performativity highlights that subject positions, when repeated and reiterated over and again, can come to be naturalised as truthful and believable to the point that they are presumed to be intrinsic. Butler's notion of performativity highlights how discursive reiteration of meanings leads to the production of "the semblance of the natural" (Butler, 1997, p. 159), in which the performative constitutes "the doxa that counts as reality" (p. 159). Television advertisements' repeated narratives of Australian childhoods can be read, then, as integral to the *performative* production and naturalisation of the discursive truth of Australian childhoods.

Other post-structural theorists have influenced the thesis, particularly Sara Ahmed and Nikolas Rose. Ahmed's (2004) contribution is her theory of the sociality of emotion. Ahmed's work is employed to examine how texts "name or perform different emotions" (2010, p. 13) such as nostalgia and happiness to convey messages about, and produce as desirable, particular versions of Australian childhoods. Rose (1999/1990), meanwhile, is central to my understandings of consumption and advertising. As is highlighted in Chapter 2, Rose discusses the role of the language of expertise in advertising, and its prominence in neoliberal societies in which citizens are tasked with the job of self-governing. Experts provide agentive viewers with advice as to how to achieve idealised subject positions—primarily, through consumption. Rose sees advertisements to persistently use 'expert' language to link the hopes and desires of viewers to products in order to mobilise agentive viewers to buy products in order to secure a desired self-image. Rose's work shows how

expert language can rhetorically produce exclusionary subjectivities as ideal, healthy, and presumably truthful.

As already noted, rural, suburban, water, and educational spaces appear frequently as motifs in advertisements featuring children. As a result, 'space' also emerges as an ongoing theoretical concept in the thesis. As noted, each chapter focusses upon a different spatial theme of Australian childhoods—rural, suburban, coastal, and school spaces. Consistent with the theoretical orientation employed in the thesis, my theoretical approach to space is informed by post-structural spatial theorists (Gregson & Rose, 2000; Massey, 2005; Thrift, 2004). From a post-structuralist perspective, I consider space to be produced through discourse (Bartley, Hubbard, & Kitchin, 2004). Language and social signs give spaces and their inhabitants meaningful identities, *producing* them through representation. This is perhaps best explained through reference to some of the dominant spatial discourses of nation: rural spaces are consistently produced as wholesome and safe (Valentine, 1997), suburbia as dangerous and unfriendly for children (Jones, 2002), and Australian beaches as white and heteronormative (Perera, 2009). From this theoretical perspective, then, it can be read that discourse produces Australian childhoods within spaces in ways that make Australian childhoods meaningful and recognisable within their specific spatial, and indeed national, contexts.

Significance

The pervasiveness and subsequent naturalisation of discourses of Australian childhoods in contemporary television advertisements makes the critical examination of Australian

childhood discourses timely and appropriate. Advertising texts and their associated consumption discourses, I will be arguing, continue to marginalise some childhood subjectivities from recognition as Australian, and this has implications for the marginalisation of some real "flesh and blood" (Hogan, 2009, p. 1) *children* from full participation in national public life. That is to say, the continued naturalisation of exclusive and exclusionary childhood subjectivities on the basis of race, gender and social class *matters* because marginalisation and foreclosure of non-normative childhood subjectivities within public discourses entrenches and sustains symbolic and performative disadvantage. As Hanson (2000) puts it,

> The power of the media to represent and imagine certain groups can and does have material *effects* upon the members of those groups … it is important to recognise that representations of particular groupings can actively obscure difference and diversity particularly in relation to identity. We can think of children as one such important example … (p. 147)

The critical examination and deconstruction of discourses of Australian childhoods is of importance, I believe, if society is to work towards imagining more inclusive and socially just understandings of Australian childhoods. ""It is only by challenging the dominant media," Butler writes, "that certain kinds of [non-normative] lives may become visible or knowable." (2009, p. 51). In this sense, a post-structuralist politics that critiques exclusionary practices introduces "strong normative commitments of equality and invites a more robust universalising of rights" (Butler, 2009, p. 29). Deborah Youdell (2006) highlights the importance of such discursive work in her post-structural analysis of schooling subjectivities. She argues that a post-structural analysis "not only enables us to better understand the endurance of particular configurations of educational inequalities, it also … seeks to displace prevailing discourses" (2006, p. 33) so that society can constitute subjectivities more inclusively.

Following Butler's theory of performativity (1990; 1993), which understands that discursive change involves ongoing repetition, the disruption of dominant discourse that this thesis works towards requires *ongoing* political action. This post-structural analysis, then, functions as a part of a "performative politics" (Youdell, 2006, p. 40) that aims to disrupt exclusionary discursive practices. This dissertation's ability to disrupt normative discourse garners its performative power as a part of a broader scholarly project (Lee, 2000) in the disciplines of childhood, cultural and media studies, where exclusionary notions of childhood (Buckingham, 1994; Taylor, 2010; Valentine, 2004; Walkerdine, 2001) and Australianness (Elder, 2007; Hogan, 2009; Kociumbus, 1997; Perera, 2009) are destabilised and challenged. Here, then, I work with a recognition that academic scholarship, such as that which is undertaken in this thesis, is part of an ongoing critical project with aspirations for a more inclusive and critically aware social, scholarly and political discourse.

Scope of the thesis

As already mentioned, the study has been guided by a Foucauldian archaeological approach (Foucault, 1972; O'Farrell, 2005). Foucault's archaeological methodology involves the analysis of the ways the texts constitute discourses. It examines interrelated texts from within a time frame in order to examine how a concept is dominantly perceived at a specific time and place (Foucault, 1972). He uses the term 'archaeology' to indicate that texts from a point in time are a collective archive, somewhat like an archive of artefacts located in an archaeological dig (O'Farrell, 2005); they are interrelated and reveal what was happening at a particular point in time. An archaeological approach was selected for this thesis because of my ongoing concern about the exclusionary discursive practices of television advertisements. By examining interrelated texts produced in a similar time frame, I can explore how they collectively produce discourses of Australian childhoods within a specific national period. This archaeological approach has determined what has been foregrounded

as the focus of analysis, as well as what has been omitted. In striving to highlight the exclusionary discursive practices of a broad range of television advertisements, I chose not to examine advertisements based on type or target audience: I consider all television advertisements featuring narratives of Australian childhoods to contribute to the discursive production of Australian childhoods—not just ones targeted at children. Similarly, comparisons to the textual practices of other mediums such as film, online and print advertising are not within the scope of the thesis, as my focus remains on the capacity of television advertisements, as banal everyday media texts, to produce discourses of Australian childhoods. Thus, my political and scholarly project of examining the exclusionary practices of advertisements has guided my decision to select and examine a broad range of advertisements. Here, then, the explicit focus of this thesis is a Foucauldian archaeological one: a focus on the ways multiple texts produce broad discourses of Australian childhoods (Foucault, 1972).

Similarly, in order to employ a Foucauldian archaeological approach, I have made distinct decisions about types of analysis which have been included, namely semiotic and discursive analyses (Yell, 2005). Within post-structural scholarship, discursive and social semiotic analyses are the most common form of textual analyses to conduct (Fürsich, 2009). Their value is in their considered, prolonged and engaged textual focus on narrative. In this sense, discourse and social semiotic analyses "overcome the common limitations of traditional quantitative content analysis such as limitation to manifest content and to quantifiable categories" (Fürsich, 2009, p. 240). Such a textual analysis "allows the researcher to discern latent meaning, but also implicit patterns, assumptions and omissions of a text" (p. 241). In this sense, the selection of analytical approaches has been guided by conventions within Foucauldian archaeological research.

My textual analysis leaves outside of the scope of this thesis audience reactions, readings and subversions of textual narratives. As is frequently highlighted within cultural studies texts (Rose, 1990; Yell, 2005; Philo, 2007; Barker, 2000), audiences are agentive, thoughtful and intelligent readers of texts. They have the capacity to read, analyse and subvert dominant textual meanings, and to make texts meaningful to themselves. As Fursich (2009, p. 243) posits, "the acceptance of polysemy influenced two distinctive methodological ideas in cultural studies the possibility of multiple readings within a text and the variety of interpretations of the audiences".

Nonetheless, dominant meanings and discourses can be identified. Within discourse analysis, a discourse is read to be produced through multiple discursive reiterations which produce a cogent narrative. The more frequently such a narrative occurs, the more likely it will be that the dominant narrative is reinforced (Fairclough, 1995). In this sense, in order to determine the production of dominant discourse, a text is examined in relation to a broader corpus, as it is through the corpus and not the individual text that the discourse is produced (Yell, 2005).

A study of audience reactions to texts would certainly offer important insights; in particular, subversive readings from the minority groups excluded by textual narratives could certainly proffer insights into the material and embodied lives of those who are discursively removed from the frame of Australianness (Hogan, 2009). Whilst such an approach brings forth its own questions and can reveal important insights into the material effects of exclusionary discursive practices, it was my determination to examine the texts as a broad, context-specific corpus (Fursich, 2009) that led to the discourse analytic approach presented in this thesis. Nonetheless, I work in conversation with similar works that involve audience studies (Hogan, 2009; Lewin-Jones & Mitra, 2009; Larson, 2001), as this thesis complements, rather than rejects, such an approach.

I hope that the limitations of the scope of this thesis makes for a modest and achievable research goal—the analysis of the ways advertisements, situated within neoliberal consumption discourses, produce exclusionary discourses of Australian childhood to secure future consumption.

Thesis structure

Chapter 1 explores literature on childhood and national identities from the interrelated disciplines of childhood studies, cultural studies and media studies. It begins with a discussion of key literature on the changing category of childhood in western discourse from the work of Philippe Ariés (1962) through to the new sociology of childhood discipline (Corsaro, 2005; James & Prout, 1990; Jenks, 2005/1996; Matthews, 2007). It also considers cultural studies and related post-colonial approaches to discourses of nationhood (Billig, 1995; Hage, 1998). These sections feature discussions about extant media studies of childhood and nationhood on television advertisements with which this thesis works in conversation. The chapter concludes with discussion about how this thesis advances the scholarly debate about childhoods and television advertisements which traverses the interrelated disciplines of childhood, cultural and media studies.

Chapter 2 examines the post-structuralist theoretical framework that informs this thesis, with reference to four influential theorists: Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, Sara Ahmed and Nikolas Rose. All four theorists are informative for post-structuralist discourse analyses, while offering unique perspectives on the issues of subjectivity, power and discourse. Foucault explains the power of discourse to produce claims to truth. Butler, Ahmed and Rose offer post-structuralist understandings about the discursive construction of gender, emotionality of texts, and neoliberal consumption respectively. The chapter then concludes with a discussion of post-structuralist approaches to space (Bartley et al., 2004), which

inform each chapter's analysis of the production of Australian childhoods within the spaces of the nation.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodological traditions, methods of analysis, and data collection procedures that structure the thesis. It discusses discourse analysis (Willig, 2008; Graham, 5005; Stokes, 2003) and social semiotic (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Hodge & Kress, 1988; Halliday & Hasan, 1989) methodological approaches, as well as specific methods employed within each methodological tradition. The chapter then turns to discussion of the data collection and synthesis procedures from archival practices through to the development of themes and selection of exemplary texts for deconstruction (Carabine, 2001; McKee, 2011). The chapter concludes with a reflexive discussion of my gendered, raced and social classed privilege, wherein I examine how my work can function in relation to feminist and black scholarship (Ahmed, 2007).

Chapters 4 through 7 examine the four key themes that have been identified across the corpus of television advertisements. Each chapter explores a different spatial theme: rural Australian childhoods, suburban Australian childhoods, Australian childhoods on beaches and billabongs, and Australian childhoods at school. Across each chapter and spatial theme, I examine the advertisements' narratives as they are situated within neoliberal consumption discourses, which position consumption as a way for agentive viewers to achieve personal and social advancement. I highlight ways Australian childhoods are produced within these narratives in exclusionary ways. The normativity of whiteness, traditional and heteronormative gender conventions, and middle class performatives are consistently employed in the production of the Australian childhood subject, with few exceptions, which are highlighted along the way.

Chapter 4 focusses on the construction of rural Australian childhoods on television advertisements, as they are situated within neoliberal consumption discourse. It explores exemplary advertisements that feature narratives of Australian childhoods both living in and travelling through safe and wholesome rural Australian spaces. It is argued that rural Australian children are frequently rhetorically framed as wholesome white, middle class, heteronormative and gendered subjects, who are the gatekeepers of Australian authenticity having grown up in the 'natural' and ostensibly homogenous spaces of rural Australia. Non-normative Australian childhoods remain excluded from discourses of rural Australia, while white, middle class and traditionally gendered subjectivities retain their authenticity within discourses of Australianness through their proximity to natural and ostensibly authentic Australian rurality. Consumption of the advertised products is positioned as a way in which agentive consumers can celebrate, endorse and work towards achievement of idealised rural Australian childhood subject positions.

Chapter 5 examines the production of suburban Australian childhoods on television advertisements, exploring representative advertisements featuring narratives of Australian childhoods in the suburban home, backyard and streetscape. In these advertisements, tensions between the unnatural space of the city and natural childhoods are navigated through narratives of the grassy suburban backyard as a touch of nature for children to preserve their naturalness, the middle class suburban home as a refuge from the city beyond, and the middle class suburb as a white middle class community sanctuary. These spaces preserve their appropriateness for natural children through their construction as homogenous, white, middle class, and gendered locales that are free from the corruptions of the city streets beyond. The necessity for protection of Australian children's naturalness in these spaces leads to discourses of increased surveillance and the need for appropriate consumption habits so that suburban children might grow up to be ideal middle class

Australians. Central to these narratives is a neoliberal consumption discourse in which correct consumption choices are necessary for suburban children to become appropriate Australian childhood subjects. These advertisements' narratives are found to exclude non-normative notions of Australian childhoods, and performatively entrench middle class white performatives as ideal within the space of the Australian suburbs.

Chapter 6 turns to an exploration of the production of Australian childhoods on the spaces of beaches and billabongs. In this chapter, representations of Indigenous and white Australian childhoods are explored. It is argued that Indigenous Australian childhoods are consistently produced as authentically outback childhoods, whereas white Australian childhoods have spatial privileges throughout the nation, and particularly upon beach spaces. Achievement of idealised white beachgoer childhood subjectivities is sold as contingent on the consumption of advertised products such as tourism getaways to the beach. In this sense, neoliberal consumption discourse continues to frame narratives of Australian childhoods inasmuch as consumption is framed as necessary for achieving idealised subject positions. Furthermore, the advertisements are found to placate a socioeconomic hierarchy in which wealthy white Australians who are seen as a credible target consumer demographic are positioned as protagonists while Indigenous people, a perceived non-consumer demographic, come to be framed as consumable spectacles. Differentiated territorial representations of Aboriginal and white Australian childhoods sustain whiteness as the privileged norm across the nation, marginalise urban Indigenous Australia childhoods from discourses of Indigenous authenticity, and sustain supposedly common sense notions of Australia's beachscapes as spaces for white cultural performatives.

Chapter 7 turns to advertisements featuring Australian childhoods at school, wherein two themes are identified: anti-scholarly larrikin working class Australian childhoods and scholarly white middle class Australian childhoods. I argue that white. Gendered and

middle-class Australian students are idealised, while non-normative Australian childhood subjectivities continue to be excluded within school spaces. Furthermore, correct consumption choices are framed as central to the achievement of exclusionary, successful and discursively idealised Australian schooling subjectivities. This is particularly pertinent in a privatised educational climate characterised by competition, individualisation, and school choice. By consuming correctly, the child can fit within cultural frames as an ideal Australian childhood subject at school, while also achieving success in a competitive educational climate. I also consider the production of sexualised childhood subjects in the school playground, arguing that childhood sexuality *can* be found in discourses of schooling through advertisements, and that heteronormative notions of childhood sexuality are entrenched as desirable within the school playground. Like the rural, suburban, outback and beach spaces explored in the previous chapters, I argue in Chapter 7 that normative notions of Australian childhoods as ideally white, middle class, heteronormative and traditionally gendered continue to be entrenched in discourses of schooling, contributing to the performative sustenance of exclusionary understandings of Australian childhood.

The final chapter concludes the thesis with reflections on the thesis argument, its limitations and directions for future research. It explains the ways my argument that Australian childhoods are normatively produced as white, heteronormative, traditionally gendered and middle class speaks through each chapter and spatial theme, while also reflecting on some exceptions that were identified. I highlight here the role of neoliberal consumption discourses in framing the exclusionary narratives, wherein those with economic agency are positioned as able to achieve and celebrate exclusionary Australian childhood subjectivities through correct consumption choices. I then consider the ways exclusionary media practices can symbolically and performatively entrench disadvantage through exclusion of some children from recognisable notions of nationhood and collective belonging. I turn towards

the end of this final chapter to how the thesis can contribute to scholarly debates about Australian childhoods traversing childhood, cultural and media studies. Lastly, I offer potential future directions for analysis of discourses of Australian childhoods.

The central concepts of this study—childhood, national identities and television advertisements—are explored in varied academic disciplines, namely childhood studies, cultural studies, and media studies. As a result, an interdisciplinary approach is employed in the review of the literature. However, these disciplinary fields and their relative bodies of literature are not isolated and irrelevant to one another. To locate the thesis as interdisciplinary is to consider the literature available in all three categories of analysis in order to develop a web of academic discourses with which the thesis can work in dialogue. The thesis is thus situated as traversing the spaces of childhood studies, cultural studies, and media studies.

In this chapter, I provide an overview of what I see as the key conceptual terrain of childhood, national identity and representation literature. The childhood studies literature considers childhood to be a complex social category constructed through varied factors including religious, economic, policy and institutional contexts (Ariés, 1962; Cunningham, 2005). Widely considered the foundational text for this discipline, Ariés' *Centuries of Childhood* (1962) considers childhood as a historically constituted category of the human existence. Growing government and media attention to child abuse and poverty in the 1980s

(James & Prout, 1990) led to growth in academic attention to childhood studies. Since the 1980s, a large body of literature has emerged which builds on Ariés' work by focusing on the ways childhood is constructed in discourse (James & Prout, 1990; Cunningham, 1995; Jenks, 1996; Jenks, James and Prout, 1998; Matthews, 2007; van Kriekin, 2010). Within this body of literature it is argued that, if childhood comes to be constituted through discourse, childhood is a category that comes to be known not as a result of universal and unchanging laws but in various ways depending upon discourses and contexts through which the concept is formed (Matthews, 2007). Such a stance problematizes universalising definitions of the childhood condition as progressing in linear developmental stages (Jenks, 1996), and instead frames constructions of childhood as discursive strategies which emerge as a result of cultural and historical contingencies—particularly within prevalent economic, political, cultural and religious discourses of the times (Ariés, 1962; Cunningham, 1995). There is a significant body of literature in media studies that engages with childhood studies to examine the representation of childhood in television advertisements. These interdisciplinary studies have primarily examined representations of children's race (Gilmore & Jordan, 2012; Bramlett-Solomon & Roeder, 2008; Holland, 2004; Sieter, 1995; Li Vollmer, 2002; Bang & Reece, 2003), gender (Lewin-Jones & Mitra, 2009; Larson, 2001; Johnson & Young, 2002), and sexuality (Brooks, 2008; Walkerdine, 1999; Taylor, 2010; Merskin, 2004) on television advertisements. This literature is of particular relevance to this study's examinations of the ways in which Australian childhood can come to be known in television advertisements, as it provides the foundations for which the constructedness of childhood can be explained in relation to broader media practices.

A study that examines children's national identities requires engagement with not only literature on childhood, but also literature on national identity formations. In the second half of this chapter, I explore literature on national identities that emerges out of post-colonial

studies (Anderson, 1983; Billig, 1995; Edensor, 2002), critical whiteness studies (Moreton-Robinson, 2005) and cultural studies (Ashcroft, Griffith & Tiffin, 1989; Chatterjee, 1995). Particularly formative for the approach I employ is Anderson's (1991/1983) acclaimed text *Imagined Communities* which argues that the development of the mass printing press and the daily newspaper at the turn of the capitalist age was central to the proliferation of discourses of national identities across a nation-state (Anderson, 1983). Building on Anderson, scholars have explored how national identities are proliferated in banal ways (Billig, 1995) such as through popular culture and television (Edensor, 2002). Some Australian media studies from the 1990s and 2000s have examined the ways national identities are constructed in television advertisements (Lang, 2010; Hogan, 2009' Prideaux, 2009), and these are explored in this chapter.

By tracing the key relevant literature in each discipline, I situate this thesis as working with and building upon the most recent developments in each scholarly field. In the media studies and childhood studies literature, explorations of children's *national identities* in television advertisements are largely absent relative to explorations of gender (Johnson & Young, 2002), sexuality (Merskin, 2004; Walkerdine, 1999) and race (Sieter, 1995; Li Vollmer, 2002). Similarly, in media studies literature focussed on national identities, the figure of the child is largely absent. Through examining discourses of childhood national identities in television advertisements, this thesis works to draw connections between each scholarly field and extend extant knowledge in each.

Conceptualising childhood

In the discipline of childhood studies, Ariés' *Centuries of Childhood* (1962) is consistently cited as the formative text. In it, Ariés argues that social perceptions of childhood change over time, and, that contemporary ideas about childhood are relatively new. Ariés' text

explores medieval portraiture of children in order to analyse the ways the concept of childhood has changed over time. Medieval art, he claims, did not depict children but rather little adults (Ariés, 1962). Children in medieval portraiture were identical to adults in mannerism, expression, and dress. The small people's faces appeared aged, their clothing reflected that of adults, and their mannerisms were mature. He uses the example of medieval paintings of Madonna and Child, arguing that Jesus' features were adult in all ways but size (Ariés, 1962). Children, he argues, were not considered a special category of humans in medieval times, but were treated similarly to adults. Childhood was not the complex category tied up with ideas of innocence and fragility that it is today. People became workers at approximately seven years of age, and were concomitantly considered by society as adults (Ariés, 1962). The transition from infancy to adulthood had no special period of transition and maturation towards adulthood. Therein, Ariés (1962) argues that the absence of an innocent and cossetted version of childhood in medieval times was because the young person's value in society was necessarily that of labourer.

According to Ariés (1962), it was not until the 16th and 17th Centuries that upper classes considered childhood as a special period of life. This shift emerged due to improved economic circumstances that afforded families the luxury of time and finances to pander their children. Upper class mothers began to spend their lay time working on their children's emotional, intellectual, and physical development. During the 17th Century the aristocratic class began to send their children to secular and formalised schooling rather than to work. Ariés (1962) claims that it was not until much later, in the late 19th Century, that the burgeoning British middle classes had the time and economic resources to perceive their children as more than economic units. Middle class parents became benefactors who steered their children through the intermediary stage between infancy and adulthood. Societies

oversaw a decline in child labour and instigated universal and compulsory education for children.

Ariés' (1962) basic thesis is easily criticisable, particularly on the grounds of methodology (Pollock, 1983). Ariés' selection of data is sporadic and inconsistent (Hendrick, 1995); in particular, he overlooks significant medieval poetry and religious writings on childhood (Orme, 2001, as cited in Hendrick, 2009). Pollock's work on the history of childhood (1983) is perhaps the most widely cited critique of Ariés (Aitken, 2001; Hendrick, 2009). In her work, Pollock disputes Ariés' thesis through the provisions of medieval diary extracts that contradict Ariés' thesis. Through her work, Pollock argues that the parent-child relationship is more universal that Ariés suggests. Pollock argues, instead, that childhood was a well-established category throughout the middle ages. She also argues that affection for offspring is an innate facet of parenthood, drawing on examples of affectionate primates. Aitken (2001), however, defends Ariés from Pollock's (1983) criticisms, arguing that Ariés emphasises developments in awareness of the *nature of childhood* rather than developments in *affection for childhood*. He also highlights that Pollock's examples are drawn primarily from the British aristocracy and is therefore entirely consistent with Ariés' timeline of developments in the category of childhood—wherein the concept of childhood developed in the upper classes earliest.

Ariés' approach did, however, influence subsequent scholars who *were* interested in changes in affection for childhood (deMause, 1976; Stone, 1977; Shorter, 1975; Anderson, 1980; Cloke, 2004). The argument that affections for childhood have changed over time came to be known as the 'sentiment approach' to childhood and families (Anderson, 1980; Cloke, 2004). The sentiments approach builds on Ariés' arguments that childhood is a changing social category, and in particular argues that families gradually came to be *more emotionally*

attached to their children since the 16ᵗʰ Century (Anderson, 1980; Shorter, 1975; Cloke, 2004). Clarke (2004) outlines the broad understandings of the sentiments approach:

> What they [the sentiments scholars] all argue is that the key change which arrived with modernity was a shift in the way people *felt* about children – an alteration in their emotional meaning and significance. This shift was broadly one from indifference or neutrality to high valuation. (p. 6)

What is striking about the texts within the sentiments scholarship (Shorter, 1975; Stone, 1977; Flandrin, 1976) is that they all generally agree that sentiments for childhood developed from very detached to highly affective. What they disagree on is the chronology of changing sentiments towards childhood, and they provide differing evidence for changes in family sentiments—from demographic data (Shorter, 1975) to personal diaries (Stone, 1977). While some highlight linearity in the emergence of sentimentality (Shorter, 1975; de Mause, 1976), others highlight ebb and flow over the centuries and across social classes (Stone, 1977; Flandrin, 1976).

Representing the argument for linearity, Shorter (1975) names three outcomes of the gradual emergence of the sentimental family over the 16ᵗʰ and 17ᵗʰ Centuries: *courtship*, or the increased importance of romantic love in marriage; the *prioritising of the child's welfare* by the mother; and the *privatisation of family affairs*. He cites demographic data as evidence for these arguments, which shows gradual increases in premarital pregnancies, the shortening of the age gap between husband and wife, and increased rates of breastfeeding. Central to Shorter's (1975) argument is a tangible change in "affection and inclination, love and sympathy" (p. 15) within the family unit. Shorter loosely hypothesises the causes of this shift, citing "capitalism, anonymous urban life, and the great tides of rationality and secularism" (p. 13) as potential causes. In the characteristically humble tone that courses through his work, however, he is quick to equivocate: "This book will not supply definitive answers to these questions" (1975, p. 14). Stone (1977), on the other hand, is more confident

in his explanation of developments of family sentiments, arguing that sentiments emerged in fits and starts, often emerging first with the bourgeois then filtering into the masses. Primarily using diary entries as his evidence, he argues that family sentiments developed with chronological overlaps and occasional regression. 16th Century families were centred upon broad kinship rather than nuclear family groups. Deaths were frequent and consequently emotional attachment was minimal (Stone, 1977; Flandrin, 1976). Roughly between 1580 and 1640, with the increasing power of British nationalism, nuclear families came to be aligned to the Crown rather than kinship—however, romantic attachments between husband and wife had not yet gained currency. In the next major turn in the development of the family, "affective individualism" (1976, p. 7) took hold from the latter half of the 17th Century, beginning with romantic love's increasing currency within the bourgeois. Bourgeois families came to embrace the liberal ideal of the individual pursuit of happiness, therein changing understandings of childhood and marriage from detached social necessity to sentimental, affectionate ideals.

The sentiments approach that Ariés inspired (Stone, 1977; Shorter, 1975; Flandrin, 1976) is vulnerable to similar critiques to that of Ariés in terms of archival weakness. Anderson (1980), for example, highlights how the work of the sentiments scholars is generally based on very few historical documents. He argues, "Any attempt to build a coherent picture from this assemblage of random information is bound to be tentative and involve leaps of imagination" (p. 27). He is particularly scathing of Stone's analyses of British sentiments towards childhood, arguing that he shows "scant regard for possible regional … differences in behaviour" (p. 27). Scholarly book reviews in the years following publication of key sentiments texts are just as critical. Berkowitz, when discussing Stone's argument that romantic family ties emerged as dominant only in recent centuries, postulates: "One wonders when Stone last considered the role of emotive love in shaping the vision of human

achievements presented in the psalms, Dante, Ptrarch, Johannes Secundus, or the Goliardic cycle" (1979, p. 400). Vann's review of a Shorter's thesis similarly finds that his data is "astonishingly arbitrary" (p. 113), arguing that no data presented in the text "gives any support to his idea that there was no romantic love in traditional society" (p. 113). It seems, then, that Ariés and the sentiments scholars developed divisive arguments about changing ideas about childhood since the 15th Century. Their great contribution nonetheless was the notion that childhood is *not* a universal and unchanging category of existence. Thus, despite the valid criticisms levelled at Ariés and the sentiments scholars (Hendrick, 2009; Pollock, 1983; Anderson, 1980), these texts remains influential forbearers for subsequent scholarly perceptions of childhood as a changing, contextual and socially constructed category. This theoretical understanding of childhood was taken up in the early 1980s by Postman (1983), whose argument is divisive yet still frequently cited—that the concept of childhood is *disappearing* in contemporary times.

Postman (1983) claims that the distinction between childhood and adulthood began to blur in the second half of the 20th Century as children attained increased access to adult knowledge through the media. In *The Disappearance of Childhood* (1983), Postman builds on Ariés' argument about the emergence of childhood as a special category. Postman (1983) argues that increased literacy in the British middle class during the 18th Century drove the development of childhood as a unique category of existence. Prior to the growth of a literate middle class, children and adults had equal access to knowledge about such topics as sexuality and violence. As the ability to read spread throughout the adult world, knowledge was recorded in books which were only accessible to literate adults. Printed texts gave adults unprecedented control over children's access to knowledge, and childhood innocence could be prolonged (Postman, 1983). However, with the emergence of visual media such as television in the second half of the 20th Century, children again were able to access adult

information without the mastery of reading. The argument that media is corrupting childhood is twofold: in the first instance, media is providing children access to adult knowledge; in the second, it is producing images of childhood in which children appear sexualised and adult-like. As Postman puts it, there is evidence of "the merging of tastes and style of children and adults" (1983, p. 114). Therein, he argues that the boundaries between childhood and adulthood have begun to blur again.

Postman's focus on childhood disappearing means that he misses the ways in which television does, in fact, *produce* the distinct category of childhood constantly (Holland, 2004; Sieter, 2002)—every time children are pictured in nuclear family units on television programs (Holland, 2004), or when they show the child's point of view about society and schools, or when children are framed as innocents in news programs (Holland, 2004), the category of childhood *is being produced*. Postman omits the fact that images of childhood as a distinct category of existence saturate television images, differentiating childhood from adulthood in multifarious ways—spatially, symbolically, socially, and so forth. Or, as Corsaro (2005) puts it, the category of childhood "never disappears even though its members change continuously and its nature and conception vary historically" (p. 3). The point that television might *reframe* some aspects of childhood rests on more stable ground: texts are consistently challenging dogma about social categories (Stokes, 2003). But the social category of childhood can change without disappearing (Corsaro, 2005; Ryan, 2008), a point Postman seems not to realise, or at least not to accept.

Postman's work, then, has significant shortcomings, particularly from the perspective I advocate here—that television *produces* discourses of childhood as a distinct social category. I find more convincing arguments in the 'new sociology of childhood' discipline that emerged in the mid-1980s through to the 2000s (Ambert, 1986; Adler & Adler, 1986; Matthews, 2007; Corsaro, 2005; James & Prout, 1990). The literature out of the new

sociology of childhood paradigm works to examine how childhood *does* come to be produced as a distinct category of existence in contemporary social discourse (Matthews, 2007).

New sociology of childhood

Much has been said about the growth in attention to studies of childhood among sociologists and cultural studies scholars in the latter half of the 1980s (Matthews, 2007; James & Prout, 1990; Kehily, 2008). Some attribute this growth in academic attention to increased media and government discussion about child abuse and poverty in the 1980s (James & Prout, 1990; Walkerdine, 1999). As Walkerdine states, "huge anxiety about children and the status of childhood erupt[ed] at the end of the twentieth century" (1999, p. 3). Rose (1999), meanwhile, argues that the 1980s was a time when the welfare state was being rapidly dismantled and the onus for the health of children was shifted from the state to individual parents, inciting increased attention in government, education and media circles to the task of responsible parenting (Rose, 1999). Sociological and cultural studies scholars in the late 1980s thus turned to the discipline of childhood studies to understand the ways in which childhood was framed in public discourse, and the discipline of childhood studies flourished.

The scholarly attention to childhood studies which burgeoned in the late 1980s utilised Ariés' idea that childhood is a social and historical construction that changes over time, and built on his work by re-doubling efforts to understand the fluidity of social conceptions of childhood across various contexts (Ambert, 1986; Adler & Adler, 1986; Alanen, 1988). The 'new sociology of childhood' (Matthews, 2007) literature from the late 1980s saw children as a marginalised group worthy of examination. Scholars such as Alanen (1988) argued that academics should consider children "as significant members" (p. 53) of social life. Through sociological analysis of childhood, she argues, scholars can consider how children are

"enmeshed in on-going everyday struggles" (Alanen, 1988, p. 65). They should be recognised not as 'becoming adults', but as political and social actors in their own right (Alanen, 1988). To this end, research around this time focussed on children's perspectives of their social worlds (Ambert, 1986; Adler & Adler, 1986 Kitzinger, 1990).

Whether the burgeoning work on sociology of childhood during the late 1980s and 90s should constitute a new paradigm can be disputed—Ryan (2008) argues that the idea that a new paradigm has emerged might merely be a result of "a group of determined researchers" who "worked diligently to publish synthetic reflections upon its emergence" (p. 553). The work of the new sociologists has significant overlaps with that of Ariés and the sentiment scholars inasmuch as the focus is squarely on the socially and historically produced category of childhood (Jenks, 2005/1996; Corsaro, 2005). Whereas Ariés and the sentiments scholars focussed on the *historical* aspects of childhood, the new sociology work can be considered to examine *contemporary* childhood as a similarly historically contingent, produced in the moment, and constantly fluctuating in meaning (Matthews, 2007). For Ryan, who highlights the similarities between Ariés and the new sociology of childhood paradigm, "this road was traveled [sic] prior to recent efforts to post a flag for a new paradigm" (Ryan, 2008, p. 574). From Ryan's perspective, then, the new sociology of childhood paradigm is perhaps not so much a new paradigm as it is Ariés' social perspective on childhood coming back into vogue. To me, however, what makes the new paradigm relevant and exciting is that it introduces the insights of historians of childhood (Ariés, Shorter, Stone, Anderson) to education, media and cultural studies disciplines (Kehily, 2008), in order to highlight how educational institutions, the media, and society, produce the category of childhood in the present day.

Prout and James (1990), who are surely two of the "diligent" and "determined" new childhood scholars who Ryan (2008, p. 553) refers to, consolidated the aims of the new sociology of childhood by proposing a list of unifying features of this new paradigm. Their

work came to be seen as a "manifesto" (Jenks, 2005/1996, p. 29) for sociological approaches to childhood. Their key points include: childhood should be understood as a social construction; there are multiple possible constructions of childhood in discourse; childhood constructs intersect with other social constructs such as social class, gender and ethnicity; children's perspectives are important subjects of analysis; children are agentive; ethnography is a useful method for childhood studies; and childhood studies is active in the reconstruction of the category of childhood itself (Prout & James, 1990). Whilst all of these points are not necessarily evident in all analyses within the field of childhood studies, these key themes function as summative points about the ethic of childhood studies. That is to say, the childhood studies discipline has come to be seen as a political project that interrupts taken for granted and normative views of childhood as a category of people who are passive, peripheral in social life, and unchanging across contexts, time and cultures. Their key points are frequently cited within childhood studies literature (Jenks, 2005/1996; Matthews, 2007) as points which summarise and underpin the paradigm of childhood studies.

Also key to the new sociology of childhood literature is Jenks' (2005/1996) influential model for conceptualising discourses of childhood. Jenks introduced the terms *Dionysian* and *Apollonian* to describe social constructions of childhood. Jenks (2005/1996) argues that two mythologies of the universal subject of the child have been culturally dominant. These are the innately evil, or Dionysian, child and the innately good, or Apollonian, child (Jenks, 2005/1996). Using Ariés' (1962) historical work on shifting sentiments towards children, Jenks (2005/1996) considered the dominant discourse of childhood prior to the 19th Century as a discourse which viewed children as evil. Jenks coined the term 'Dionysian' for discourses of the evil child because, like the Greek god Dionysus (the "prince of wine, revelry and nature" (2005/1996, p. 63)), the ostensibly evil child "loves pleasure, it celebrates self-gratification and it is wholly demanding" (p. 63). The self-centred, self-

serving Dionysian child sees everything around it as peripheral in relation to itself, it sees itself as the centre of all things, and uses its surrounds purely in the pursuit of self-gratification.

Jenks (2005/1996) labels the alternative view—that the child is innately good—as the Apollonian view of childhood. The Apollonian model is named after the Greek god Apollo who is "the heir to sunshine and light" (2005/1996, p. 64). Jenks explains that this ostensibly pure child is worshipped and admired for its innocence, its angelic beauty, its endearing laughter and its enjoyment of its world (2005/1996). Encouraged to laugh and revel in the beauty of the world, this child's natural goodness is celebrated by admiring adults. Jenks' (1996) discussion of the Apollonian view uses the work of French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762) who viewed childhood as innately good and natural. Rousseau rejects the idea that children are corrupt at birth, but rather argues that civilisation is the culprit of corruption. While Rousseau's views came to prominence in the late 19th and 20th Centuries, Jenks argues that these views are discursive and cultural, rather than universally agreed upon. Jenks' (2005/1996) work on discourses of childhood courses throughout subsequent childhood studies literature (Matthews, 2007; Kehily, 2008; Jones, 2002), and is influential throughout my thesis, as he offers a framework for explaining two principal discourses of childhood.

Moving towards the end of the 20th Century and the beginning of the 21st Century, the new sociology of childhood discipline continued to grow. A significant amount of the new sociology of childhood literature traverses the disciplines of childhood studies and media studies (Kenway & Bullen, 2001; Sieter, 1995; Bignell, 2002; Brooks, 2008). Within this literature, many studies examine how children respond to media and how media targets children (Kenway & Bullen, 2001; Calvert, 2008), while others examine the construction of discourses of childhood within the media more broadly (Sieter, 1995; Bignell, 2002; Brooks,

2008). The studies on children's reactions to media generally argue that scholars should listen to children's perspectives to better understand children's relationships with media (Buckingham, 2003; James & Prout, 1990). Alongside this work, the literature on constructions of discourses of childhood within media focusses on how broader discourses of childhood are employed, constructed and reaffirmed through images, text and words (Sieter, 1995; Robinson & Davies, 2008a; Bignell, 2002; Brooks, 2008). This thesis is situated in conversation with the second body of literature. It is to this literature to which I now turn, and specifically, studies which focus on childhood on television advertisements.

Representation of childhood in television advertisements

Recent media studies of representation of childhood in television advertisements include studies about racialised children (Gilmore & Jordan, 2012; Bramlett-Solomon & Roeder, 2008; Holland, 2004; Sieter, 1995; Li Vollmer, 2002; Bang & Reece, 2003), gendered children (Lewin-Jones & Mitra, 2009; Larson, 2001; Johnson & Young, 2002; Neto & Furnham, 2005), and sexualised children (Brooks, 2008; Walkerdine, 1999; Taylor, 2010; Merskin, 2004). Examining some influential texts within this literature, I want here to engage with the ways extant literature informs my thinking on the topic of representation of childhoods on television.

A focus on **gendered** children in television advertisements can identify differentiated language and activities across boys and girls (Larson, 2001; Neto & Furnham, 2005; Johnson & Young, 2002; Lewin-Jones & Mitra, 2009). Normative childhood gender roles remain recognisable in television advertisements in the 21st Century (Larson, 2001; Johnson & Young, 2002; Lewin-Jones & Mitra, 2009). The range of literature out of this scholarship has highlighted the *breadth and subtlety* of semiotic indicators of gender in advertisements—variously examining aspects such as language use (Johnson & Young,

2002), narrative (Larson, 2001), and production techniques (Lewin-Jones & Mitra, 2009). Johnson and Young's work (2002), for example, finds that boys use verbs that are agentive, active and competitive while girls use verbs that express feeling. Therein they find that, given "verbs and their associated words contain a rich semiotic map that provides clues to the nature of agency" (Johnson & Young, 2002, p. 471), the language of children in television advertisements insinuates that boys are afforded more agency and active roles than girls.

Similarly, Lewin-Jones and Mitra (2009) focus on the ways production techniques reveal gender differences. In a comparative study of advertisements targeted at boys and girls, they find that advertisements targeted at boys feature *shorter scenes* and more *fast-paced cuts between scenes*, revealing the action role afforded to boys. By contrast, they find that girls' advertisements feature slower *fade-away* and *dissolve* transitions, suggesting a softer and calmer connotation in girls' advertisements. Similarly, music and voiceovers were found to be louder in boys' advertisements, while music and voiceovers in girls' advertisements were found to be softer, indicating a difference in the roles expected of boys and girls. Boys are to be active, girls to be passive.

What is perhaps most characteristic of the research on gendered representations of childhood on television advertisements is the persistent return to considerations of the implications of such research for child viewers. Lewin-Jones and Mitra (2009), for example, interview children while they watch advertisements, whilst Johnson and Young (2002) are concerned with ways of teaching children media literacy (also: Larson, 2001). Such a focus might be considered, for the most part, on *children* rather than *childhood*. That is to say, the focus is not specifically on implications for childhood in a broader sense—in the sense that Ariés and the sentiments scholars advocate. Although (specifically semiotic) insights into the textual construction of childhood in advertising emerge throughout the works highlighted

here (Larson, 2001; Johnson & Young, 2002; Lewin-Jones & Mitra, 2009), these texts do not highlight the ways advertising texts contribute to the discursive sustenance of the category of childhood. In this sense, the ways advertisements entrench and sustain commonplace discursive *understandings of childhood* continue to be under-examined. The focus generally remains on the semiotic relevance of television advertisements to children.

Another major focus within the literature on childhood representation in advertising is the topic of childhood **sexuality** (Brooks, 2008; Walkerdine, 1999; Taylor, 2010; Merskin, 2004). Some such studies lament that sexualised representations of children in media undermine the desirable innocence of childhood (Merskin, 2004; Brooks, 2008; Giroux, 2004). Merskin (2004), for example, argues that childhood innocence is undermined by media depictions of children in sexualised poses. Girls look up both seductively and submissively at cameras and their submission to the camera reinforces a normative patriarchal worldview. The mainstream use of such sexualised representations, Merskin laments, "sets new standards for what is acceptable" (2004, p. 128).

Clearly, this point is well taken and easily justifiable—a moral stance against the hyper-sexualisation of childhood in advertising imagery is indeed important (Merskin, 2004; Brooks, 2008). What is concerning here, however, is how such a critical stance works to naturalise the imaginary of childhood innocence as something that is truthful. A post-structuralist perspective, however, resists a tone of lament and distress in order to engage with debates about discourses of truth and power rather than advocating solid truths about the innocence of childhood. Taylor (2010) is informative here. In her work, she highlights that the fanfare about sexualised media undermining children's innocence should be reframed as debate about differing discursive models of childhood. That is to say, the sexualisation of childhood should not be responded to by an insistence on a return to a more pure and truthful model of childhood innocence, but rather a turn towards feminist ideals of

disrupting heteronormative and patriarchal power structures which fetishize sexualised representations of childhood.

Thirdly, a focus on **racial** representation of children in television advertisements can reveal the ways children are represented differentially depending on their racial appearance (Gilmore & Jordan, 2012; Bramlett-Solomon & Roeder, 2008; Li Vollmer, 2002; Bang & Reece, 2003). Sieter's (1990; 1995) work on racial representation of children in television advertisements is consistently cited as influential. Sieter's (1990; 1995) position is informed by a critical whiteness studies lens concerned with the production of whiteness as a social norm—a perspective I discuss in detail later in this chapter. Sieter argues that a critique of racial disadvantage requires a focus on the "positive stereotypes" (1990, p. 32) of whites just as much as negative stereotypes of non-whites.

Sieter (1990; 1995) argues that white children are frequently depicted in positions of power because it appeals to the dominant white viewers' presumed desires for an idealised white only world. Non-white children are represented in limited and non-agentive ways that often appeal to tokenistic visions of multiculturalism that ostensibly appeal to white viewers. Children who are non-white are not represented as heterogeneous, but rather as one minority group. She argues: "advertisers fail to register the tremendous range of differences *among* Hispanics, *among* Blacks, *among* Asians, *among* American Indians" (1990, p. 34). Further, Sieter argues that non-white children are often depicted in public spaces while white children are often depicted in private spaces, so as not to upset white viewers' "utopian vision of home" (1990, p. 36). Accordingly, non-white children are "orphaned" (1990, p. 36) and "relegated to the status of neighbourhood kids" (p. 36) in television advertisements. The relegation of minorities to public spaces is symbolic of nostalgic fantasies for a past where white only spaces were widely endorsed and imagined as "free of minority problems" (1990, p. 36). She also finds that non-white children are positioned as mundane, passive 'outsiders'

in advertisements. White children, on the other hand, are commonly placed in the foreground, with central roles, looking directly at the camera.

The strength of Sieter's work is clear—she has been widely cited as formative in studies of racial representations of childhood on television advertising (Li Vollmer, 2002; Du Bois, 2004; Gillmore & Jordan, 2012), and the critical whiteness perspective she advocates remains influential within the literature. Following Sieter, more recent scholars (Li Vollmer, 2002; Bang and Reece, 2003; Gilmore & Jordan, 2012) find similar results to her well into the 21st Century. Bang and Reece (2003), for example, examine the ways racial groups are framed within narratives. They argue that children of minority races are consistently represented in minor roles, despite proportionate representation. In this sense, frequency of appearance does not equate to positivity of representation.

Thus, a critical whiteness approach has proven valuable in extant literature on racial representations of childhood. Indeed, this approach has proven informative for my own research on racial representations of childhood on television advertisements. Particularly, in Chapter 6, this approach is taken for an examination of Indigenous and white Australian childhoods. The thesis, then, works in conversation with the literature of Sieter (1990) and many who cite her (Li Vollmer, 2002; Du Bois, 2004; Gillmore & Jordan, 2012) in their examinations of racial representations of childhood.

This section has considered extant literature in childhood and media studies with which this thesis works in conversation. I have explained that the extant literature does important work in highlighting the ways advertisements can influence children's understandings of the social world, while less is said about the ways *discourses* of childhood emerge through advertising texts in ways that are exclusionary and unjust. The extant literature has also lacked discussion of national identities or the ways advertisements produce a sense of

children's national belonging. My work thus works to open a discussion with the extant literature on exclusionary discourses of childhood, particularly in relation to nationhood. The second half of the chapter examines extant work on national identities in the media.

Conceptualising national identity

In this second half of the chapter, I want to examine some key literature on national identities coming out of media, cultural and post-colonial studies. In particular, I highlight here the post-colonial text of Said titled *Orientalism* (1978), and the media studies text of Anderson (1991/1983) titled *Imagined communities*, and examine their influences on more recent scholars such as Billig (1995) and Edensor (2002). Using these texts, I want to situate my work in conversation with literature that argues that media texts such as television advertisements play an important role in producing national identity discourses. Following this discussion, I highlight relevant recent studies of Australian national identities in advertising.

Post-colonial and cultural studies' conceptualisations of national identities

The discipline of post-colonial studies has been influential in conceptualising the power struggles inherent in discourses of national identities. Post-colonial theory concerns itself with examining the ongoing effects of imperial European nations' colonisation, invasion and settlement on non-European lands such as Australia (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1989; Bradford, 2007; Hiddleston, 2009). Cultural, economic, political and social subordination and marginalisation of Indigenous and non-European peoples in colonised lands since European colonisation is found by post-colonial theory to be the subject of ongoing struggle.

Eurocentric nationalistic narratives in post-colonial states are examined and disrupted by post-colonial theory in order to identify the ways in which the effects of colonisation live on in the centuries after initial European colonisation.

Said's *Orientalism* (1978) is a key post-colonial text that strives to understand the effects of colonial discourses of nationhood on Indigenous people. Said's work sits particularly comfortably with post-structuralist theories of discourse as it focusses on how discourse is implicated in the production of power-knowledge within a colonised territory. Indeed, Said draws extensively on Foucault's work on power-knowledge in *Orientalism*. Said focusses on how western scholars and mainstream cultural discourses often represent the Orient in detrimental and condescending ways. European scholars, Said (1978) argues, construct a discursive division of the world into two groups: the east and the west. This division is constructed in discourse, he argues, in a way that frames Oriental people as uncivilized, passive, exotic and inferior. Defining themselves as the opposites to the Orient, Westerners came to understand themselves as superior civilised beings (Said, 1978). As anthropological reports and romanticised literature about the uncivilised and innocent Orientals spread in the West, an image of inferior Oriental peoples became naturalised within post-colonial national discourses. Westerners use the notion of the uncivilised east to explain away colonial ambitions under the guise of civilising missions.

Said's work is formative, but also left (indeed, perhaps *created*) space for further elaboration. His focus on what might be called *high culture* such as literature and opera leaves space for examination of the ways post-colonialism presents itself in the everyday practices of the contemporary nation—in media, on television, in conversation, and so on. Subsequent scholars examined here have gone some way in filling this scholarly space (Anderson, 1991/1983; Billig, 1995; Edensor, 2002). Writing after Said, Anderson's (1991/1983) theory of imagined communities has emerged as formative for the examination

of national identities in media. *Imagined communities* (1991/1983) investigates the link between the rise of national identities and the rise of the printing press. In this text, Anderson argues that national identities have arisen as a result of the broadcasting mediums of print capitalism. With the emergence of newspapers, Anderson (1991/1983) argues, the literate masses are connected to the daily narratives of the nation. By reading newspapers, a vast number of people in a nation—the majority of whom would never be in direct contact with one another—can receive the same information about the nation each day. Each community is not organic, then, but imagined. Through newspapers and literature, the people of a state are brought together not in person but through the act of reading, so that they imagine themselves as linked in thought and character. Therein, Anderson (1991/1983) argues that national identities are constituted by representation practices. Broadcasting mediums, among which television is one, are integral in informing the population of a sovereign state about dominant national identities of that state. While Anderson focusses on newspapers and some popular novels, his theory that national identity is constituted through representation in mass broadcasting is equally as pertinent for studies of contemporary broadcasting systems such as television (Edensor, 2002; Fg, 2009).

Since its inception, Anderson's theory of imagined communities has been taken up by many critical race and post-colonial scholars in order to examine how national identities might be proliferated in colonised nations (Bhabha, 1990; Hague, 2004). Anderson's thesis has paradoxically been both employed and criticised by post-colonial theorists (Hague, 2004). As Homi K. Bhabha spells out in the opening to *Nation and Narration* (1990), Anderson's discussions about the role of discourse in linking together the people of a nation is crucial for understanding how national subjectivities emerge and spread, yet does not fully highlight the fluidity of national identity formations. Following Anderson's theory of imagined communities, Bhabha considers the effects of discourse in producing fluid, half-formed

conceptions of nationhood. As new ways of perceiving the nation emerge in discourse, national discourses change and multiply. For Bhabha, national identities are always in the process of being made. Importantly, this notion holds open the possibility for more inclusive notions of national identities to emerge in the future; but, Bhabha is quick to stress that any conception of nationhood inevitably excludes in the moment of definition. Here, Bhabha's Foucauldian influences are evident: "the 'other' … emerges forcefully within cultural discourse" (1990, p. 4).

Furthermore, Anderson's focus on the relationship between capitalism and national identities, scholars such as Said (1993) and Chatterjee (1993) argue, broadly overlooks coloniser-colonised power struggles within colonised nations. Importantly, Anderson's lifetime focus has been on the global south—particularly Indonesia—which is a key site of post-colonial struggle, yet he largely overlooks the relationship between coloniser identities and Indigenous identities. In light of this, post-colonial theorists have built on his thesis of imagined communities extensively to examine how colonial discourses within media can construct broader discourses of Eurocentric national identities in colonised territories (Chatterjee, 1995; Brennan, 1995). Through examination of the ways national identities in media texts legitimise colonial power, colonialism can be revealed as living on well after colonial invasion (Perera, 2009; Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1989; Bradford, 2007).

Discussing how discourses legitimise colonial subjectivities in *The empire writes back*, for example, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1989) argue that national identities in post-colonial nations continue to be formed in ways that are reliant on a colonial past. Post-colonial national identities come to depend upon "some of a post-colonial country's most deeply held linguistic and cultural traits" (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1989, p. 16). This leads to recognition that a post-colonial nation's identity formation is an "offshoot" (Ashcroft, Said & Tiffin, 1989, p. 16) of the colonial identity. In this sense, they argue, the colonising nation

can be read as "the origin" (Ashcroft, Said & Tiffin, 1989, p. 16) of settler national identities. Discourses in post-colonial nations, then, can reveal the ways colonial power is reaffirmed and reconstructed within mainstream post-colonial culture. *The empire writes back*, like Said's *Orientalism* before it, is heavily informed by a Foucauldian theory of discourse and power, which gives it a significant linearity from Said's earlier works. As I noted earlier, a disappointment from *Orientalism* is the lack of focus on contemporary and audio-visual texts. In this book, of which Said is one of the authors, a look at more (post)modern literature provides an important move towards analysis of post-colonising practices of late 20th Century literature, whilst not yet providing sustained engagement with post-colonising discourses within audio-visual texts.

Examinations of national identities in media and cultural studies continue to rely heavily on post-colonial and cultural theories of race and nationhood (Billig, 1995; Edensor, 2002; Pridaux, 2009). Notable among these scholars is Billig whose text *Banal nationalism* (1995) argues that national identities are proliferated in banal and commonplace ways. To Billig, national identities are "near the surface of contemporary life" (1995, p. 93). They are not primarily proliferated through grand, flag waving gestures but rather are naturalised through persistent yet mundane daily reminders—on news reports, in political speeches, on passports, et cetera. The key to a national narrative is that it must be consistently upheld lest it be undermined by small threats from social fringes. He argues that:

> Banal nationalism operates with prosaic, routine words, which take nations for granted, and which, in so doing them, inhabit them. Small words, rather than grand, memorable phrases, offer constant, but barely conscious, reminders of the homeland, making 'our' national identity unforgettable. (Billig, 1995, p. 93)

National language, drivers' licences and passports, political speeches and accents, phrases and mannerisms, all contribute to national identity (Billig, 1995). Despite the depth of his insights, Billig does not tease out the idea of national identities in popular culture, but rather

in political and government culture. Billig's work (1995) focusses primarily on official state-sponsored documentation and political rhetoric. To build on Billig's (1995) observations, Edensor (2002) argues that popular culture is equally important in the proliferation of banal nationalism. He argues that "advertising, films, pulp fiction and other popular cultural forms" (p. 13) all do daily discursive work in reinscribing national identity in discourse. More than in news reports and politicians' rhetoric, nationalism is reinforced and sedimented in societies through cultural forms including popular music, television shows, films, and television advertisements.

What is also worth noting here is the work of critical whiteness studies (CWS) both overseas (Dyer, 1998; Clarke & Garner, 2009) and in Australia (Moreton-Robinson, 2002, 2005; Hage, 1998; Pugliese, 2002). CWS opens theoretical space for discussing the normative power of whiteness and white perspectives in the west by turning to a critique of whiteness from scholars of both white and non-white racial backgrounds. CWS is generally characterised by two interrelated propositions: firstly, that white people garner significant privilege and power through being identified as white; and secondly, that white privilege is garnered through the production of whiteness as a social norm (Clarke & Garner, 2009). These propositions are premised on the idea that whiteness garners a degree of authority that non-white racial groups do not. I do not intend to use 'non-white' here as a homogenous category but as a signifier of the multiple and heterogeneous racial categories that do not constitute the white norm.

CWS also works to highlight the ways in which whiteness is produced as an invisible category of race (Clarke & Garner, 2009). When whiteness takes the place of the norm, it is a category that is unremarkable and unremarked in everyday popular discourse. By contrast, non-white identities *are* remarkable and highly visible, meaning that the racial backgrounds of non-white people tend to be more conspicuous. In this sense, whiteness tends to be

produced as colourless and *raceless*, whereas non-white identities tend to be produced as always coloured (Clarke & Garner, 2009; Ahmed, 2007).

However, the critical whiteness studies literature also has the problem of focussing too often upon whiteness as a homogenous and sometimes universal category (Pugliese, 2002). Whiteness, Pugliese highlights, is also a historically contingent category. Pugliese shows how whiteness has been "literally conferred and assigned" (2002, p.) to varied ethnic groups in Australia's history—his focus being on Italian ethnic groups whose categorisation as white or non-white continued to be debated throughout much of the 20th Century. Others, too, have subsequently examined "what constitutes 'Australian' whiteness" (Randell-Moon, 2006, p. 25), and the ways differing ethnic and Christian denominations including Irish Catholics, Scots and Eastern Europeans have been produced as white or non-white over the history of Australia (Randell-Moon, 2006; Stratton, 2004). Thus, as these Australian critics have shown, CWS runs the risk of imagining whiteness as a homogenous and stable categorical norm.

I also want to look here at what I consider to be some of the key Australian literature on critical whiteness and post-colonial studies in Australian national discourse—namely, Hage's *White nation* (1998) and Moreton-Robinson's *Talkin up the white woman* (2000). These are not the only important texts in Australian critical whiteness studies; indeed, with Moreton-Robinson, Ahmed's black feminist critique of whiteness in Australia is particularly stimulating (Ahmed, 2004; 2007), as are Perera and Pugliese's investigations of the territorial whiteness of Australia (Perera, 2009; Pugliese, 2002; Perera & Pugliese, 1997). However, what I want to do here is look at what is, for me, two key texts that are both influential within Australian critical whiteness studies and formative in my thinking on the white privilege in Australian discourse.

Hage's *White nation* (1998) problematizes the notion of multiculturalism in Australia, arguing that it is promoted and debated from a comfortable position of white power. White multiculturalism, he argues, is "not necessarily about excluding/destroying otherness but about regulating the modality of its inclusion" (p. 174). He criticises academics' consistent naval gazing at right-wing racists, arguing that a focus should be placed on how multiculturalism in Australia is itself regulated by whites concerned with their own privilege. Here, he draws a distinction between what he calls 'good white nationalists' concerned with promoting multiculturalism on white terms and 'evil white nationalists' who are anti-multiculturalism. Both positions, he argues, are focussed on fantasies about a white nation. Good white nationalists fantasise about a tolerant white nation; evil white nationalists fantasise about an exclusively white nation. Both positions, however, maintain whites as the participants in debates about the role of multiculturalism in Australian discourse, positioning non-white Australians as people to be acted upon.

Hage's (1998) critique of whiteness as the privileged and agentive position within Australian discourse, and the racist premises of Australian white multiculturalism, has been widely cited amongst subsequent literature. *White nation* was published around the same time as the works of Indigenous feminist Moreton-Robinson (1998; 2000). Moreton-Robinson brings an Indigenous perspective to bear on white national fantasies which Hage (1998) does not. In this sense, she draws forward debate about Australian national discourse through a contribution from uniquely Indigenous scholarship. What she offers in drawing debate forward is a focus on Aboriginal voices within critical debate about Australian discourse. She offers an Indigenous critique of the whiteness of feminist (2000) and nationalist (1998) discourses, as well as critique of the centrality of white concerns over the maintenance of white privilege in the land rights disputes of the 1990s and 2000s.

Moreton-Robinson's work on Indigenous land rights (1998; 2007) is particularly informative for an exploration of the ways whiteness is centralised in Australian discourse. She examines the ways public discourses of Indigenous ownership centralise white interests, arguing that white interests are often described as *national* interests, therein decentring issues of Indigenous justice. "White politicians", she contests, "will talk about White interests but will couch the discussion in terms of the Australian people in general, or the interests of the nation, as a way of normalising whiteness and making it appear natural" (p. 14). In this sense, Australian national discourse continues to position whiteness at the centre of national concerns. Thus, Moreton-Robinson's explorations of national discourse provide further critique of the normative role of whiteness in Australian public texts.

The literature that I have examined here on Australian national discourse highlight the ways national discourses in Australia work in exclusionary ways, particularly in ways that privilege white colonisers' identities. Post-colonial studies and CWS both bring into question the inherent racism of national identity formations both overseas and in Australian discourse. What I want to do now is turn to an examination of some media studies literature that has explored Australian national identities in television advertisements, with which I hope to converse.

Australian national identities in television advertisements

There has only been a small amount of studies over the past decades that have examined discourses of Australianness in television advertisements (Jakubowicz, 1994; Hogan, 2005, 2009; Prideaux, 2009; Lang, 2010; Dickenson, 2012; Khamis, 2012). Of the studies that do have this focus, with perhaps the exception of Hogan's work (2005; 2009), little has been said about the regularity of representations of Australianness across a substantial corpus of recent television advertisements. Studies of Australianness in advertisements generally put

at the centre of their concerns branding strategies and brand histories (Jakubowicz, 1994; Prideaux, 2009; Lang, 2010) rather than the broader discursive work that images themselves do. As I have already stressed in the introduction, my Foucauldian *archaeological* concern is on the regularity and contradictory aspects of representations across images themselves. In this sense, I strive not to dwell upon brands—my concern remains on *discourse*.

Prideaux's (2009) study is representative of what I mean here by the preoccupation on brands. Prideaux examines Australian television advertisements' representations of Australianness and categorises advertisements according to how well brands are established in the Australian marketplace. Using the theory of banal nationalism (Billig, 1995), Prideaux argues that "strategies used by companies in their advertising cause them to become participants, either actively or as an unintended by-product, in the broader national discourse" (2009, p. 633). She highlights that brands that are well established in the Australian marketplace generally use nostalgia for an Australian past in order to highlight their longevity in the nation—brands like Arnotts and Vegemite. More recent brands, however, are explicit in trying to build nationalist credentials by focussing on their Australianness in the present—they often use images of girls in bikinis on the beach and pictures of Uluru to sell themselves as emerging brands committed to the nation.

Another study by Lang (2010) focusses on a particular *type* of branding—brands focussed on men and Australian masculinity. Here, again, it is evident that the focus is less on regularity across a broad corpus, but on the relationship between a specific type of branding and nationhood. In his study, Lang (2010) argues that national identities are reinscribed in advertisements in order to target a particular market segment: nationalistic, heteronormative and masculine males. Wild animals, he argues, allude to Australia's dangerous landscape, and the abuse of those animals represents a masculine conquering of the Australian land. Wild animals are thus often shown in advertisements being killed and tamed by Australian

men. Lang draws on advertisements such as the Solo 'Man Can' campaign that shows a man tackling a shark to prove his masculinity. Again, with a focus on brands, this study has limitations in critique of broader discursive formations of nationhood in television advertising.

Khamis' work on tourism advertising in Australia highlights the problems associated with selling a unified national image. Examining Tourism Australia and AusTrade campaigns, she finds that the image of Australia in advertisements selling Australia to potential tourists contradicts and undermines the image of Australia that AusTrade wants to project for the development of economic relations. Australian tourism advertisements, Khamis finds, generally project an image of Australia that is Anglo, laid-back, warm and welcoming. Such an image, however, can also frame Australia as not particularly clever, savvy or cosmopolitan nation. The discursive image of Australia in tourism advertisements, then, is found not only to reflect a narrow notion of Australianness, but also contradicts narratives of Australianness that are projected in trade-related advertising campaigns that attempt to sell Australia as the 'clever' country.

Khamis' (2012) explorations of Australian identities in tourism advertisements again focusses on a more narrow corpus than my own, but does highlight the ways advertisements contribute to the production of a discursive imagined community. Through tourism advertisements, the world sees Australian identity through a frame that emphasises the stereotypical, masculine, Anglo character. Like Edensor (2002), Khamis is highlighting the potentialities of everyday advertising texts to limit and produce the discursive potential of nationhood; however, nationhood, she finds, is a concept that she argues is "messier and more unpredictable than any brand message can possibly capture or convey" (p. 61). In Australian tourism advertising, the image of Australia is dominantly laid-back and warm. But as Khamis highlights, it is also an image that contradicts images of the nation in other

types of advertisements, such as the AusTrade advertisements that try to re-frame Australia as a more cosmopolitan nation. Such contradictions highlight the complexity and multiplicity of the discursive Australia projected in advertising discourse.

Hogan's (2009) study of national identity in Australian television advertisements is perhaps more closely concerned with the regularity of images and narratives of national identities on television advertisements. Hogan's is also the most comprehensive recent study of Australian national identities in television advertisements. Hogan (2009) explores the ways in which advertisements represent national identities, using them as a way of exploring the ways discourses of national identity can be exclusionary. Hogan (2009) recorded advertisements from television on various days throughout the year then selected advertisements from the corpus that contained discourses of national identity. Advertisements considered in Hogan's study as containing discourses of national identity were ones which featured: "the social relationships, values and ethics of the national community; the nation's material and symbolic culture; the nation's physical environment; and its everyday leisure activities" (Hogan, 2009, p. 177). The values, ethics, culture and leisure activities of the national community were drawn from dominant mythologies, which Hogan outlines towards the beginning of her thesis. Hogan focuses on the ways gender and race are constructed in the advertisements. Hogan found through her content analysis of the television advertisements that 84% of the advertisements featured only white characters. In the 16% of advertisements that did depict ethnoracial others, only 17% of them cast ethnoracial minorities as participants in national culture. In the other circumstances, the ethnoracial others were cast as 'spectacles', for example as athletes, dancers, or as third-world peoples (Hogan, 2009). Where gender was represented in the advertisements, males were more often depicted participating in contemporary Australian culture (by a ratio of 3:1)

and traditional Australian culture (12:1). Males were more often depicted in leisure activities (4:1) and females were more often depicted conducting domestic tasks (4:1).

Hogan (2009) also asked research participants to view a selection of advertisements in her corpus and fill out a Likert scale. She found a trend that advertisements featuring only female characters were considered less Australian by viewers than ones that featured male characters (Hogan, 2009). Hogan (2009) argues that this reflects dominant discourses of national identity that construct the authentic Australian as a male. The research participants also tended to rate advertisements featuring only white participants as more Australian than ones featuring ethnoracial others. The one advertisement that was considered 'really Australian' (Hogan, 2009, p. 127) that did feature ethnoracial others featured multiculturalism as the core value being sold in the advertisement. Hogan critiques this exemplary advertisement, claiming that the depiction of white people welcoming East Indian people into the home was central to the construction of the advertisement as multicultural. She argues:

> Without the presence of a white character to mark them [non-white characters] as Australian, many viewers commented that the advertisements seemed foreign or could have been anywhere. The presence of non-white characters alone was not enough to convey an image of multiculturalism to viewers. (Hogan, 2009, p. 127)

Hogan's study can act as a springboard for much of my analysis. She has conducted a content analysis of Australian television advertisements, identifying advertisements that contain discourses of national identity. She has then explored the ways gender and race are constructed within those advertisements, arguing that the discourses of Australian national identity produced in advertisements are exclusionary and marginalising. What is of particular note about Hogan's (2009) work, too, is that she dwells less on brands and more on discourses—in this sense, this dissertation works more closely with Hogan's analysis of regularity of discourse, than with those preoccupied by branding and market segments.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to explore what I have seen as key literature on childhood and national identities from the interrelated disciplines of childhood studies (Jenks, 1996; Matthews, 2008; James & Prout, 1990), cultural studies (Pugliese, 2002; Hogan, 2009) and media studies (Anderson, 1991/1983; Billig, 1995; Edensor, 2002). Some other literature which discusses discourses of childhood gender, class and spatialities has been relevant to specific themes in my analysis chapters, and for this reason, I have chosen to place such conversations later within the dissertation. In this sense, I have been selective in my discussions here, focussing on key literature on childhood and national identities that overviews key theoretical ideas, and particularly, literature that has been particularly informative for my thinking about childhood and nationhood.

I have also highlighted here the ways my examinations differ from and respond to the extant analyses of childhood and national identities on television advertisements. Namely, I want to bring to the debate insights into the broader discursive work that television advertisements do—the ways they regularly produce Australian childhoods in ways that are inclusionary and exclusionary. In this sense, I am applying a Foucauldian discourse analytic focus, which will highlight the ways categories of Australian childhoods emerge through their regular reiteration across interrelated texts. Thus, this work is not focussed on the ways children respond to advertisements (Larson, 2001; Johnson & Young, 2002; Lewin-Jones & Mitra, 2009) or branding differences (Jakubowicz, 1994; Prideaux, 2009; Lang, 2010), but rather turns towards the discursive work of television advertisements in producing the category of Australian childhood. With this focus, I aim to contribute to a performative scholarly politics of examining the exclusionary and unjust ways concepts of childhood and nationhood are produced, entrenched and normalised in television advertisements. Such work, I hope, can further the scholarly project of critiquing and challenging unjust media practices that

foreclose the potential for more inclusive understandings of the category of Australian childhood.

Introduction

The theoretical framework employed throughout this thesis can be broadly understood as post-structural. A post-structural theoretical framework examines the power of language to constitute its subjects (Barker, 2000; Foucault, 1972; Smith & Riley, 2009; Young, 1981). Through language, understandings of the social world are produced, reiterated and re-examined. Because language is an ongoing social occurrence, its constitutive power is also ongoing (Butler, 1990, 2009). As new languages about subjects emerge, so too can new understandings about them, so that nothing has ever reached a state of completion. As a result, post-structural thinking rejects the idea that anything can have a fixed and stable structure (Barker, 2000). The post-structural textual analysis reveals how taken-for-granted categories of existence are socially constructed by examining subjects within the social contexts in which they are represented (Threadgold, 2000). A post-structural analysis, then, is designed to displace the idea that subjects merely exist in the world external to their representation. From this perspective, television advertisements can be seen as texts that do not innocuously speak about subjects that exist in the world prior to language, but rather actively contribute to the constitution of the characteristics and potentialities of the subjects

of which they speak. As new languages about Australian childhood emerge, new cultural understandings about the social category can change also.

Post-structural analyses also take on an ethical dimension inasmuch as they examine how the constitutive power of language limits the ways in which categories can be perceived, thereby limiting the potentialities of the subject and marginalising ways of seeing and doing subjecthood that do not fit within dominant representational paradigms (Foucault, 2002a). Therein, I come to my theoretical assertion that through exploration of the discursive and semiotic features of advertisements, I can examine how the characteristics and potentialities of Australian childhood are socially constituted and limited through the very act of their representation.

Furthermore, this chapter presents and examines my theoretical approach to the purposes of consumption within the neoliberal context in which contemporary advertisements are produced. As influenced by post-structuralist theorists of consumption including Nikolas Rose (1990/1999; 1999), but also the likes of Michel de Certeau (1984/2002) and Jean Baudrillard (1970), I highlight how I approach the advertisements as texts immersed in and influenced by neoliberal rationalities of consumption, individuation and self-governance, through which viewers are positioned as rational and agentive individuals who consume in ways that influence the formation of their own personally meaningful identities. By considering this neoliberal context throughout my analyses, the discourses of Australian childhoods that emerge through the advertisements come to be read as being influenced by the individualising and self-enterprising context in which the advertisements and contemporary discourses of childhood emerge. Following Rose (1990/1999; 1999) and his work with Peter Miller (Miller & Rose, 1997/2008), then, I argue that the discourses of Australian childhoods in television advertisements should be considered in relation to the broader neoliberal context in which they are situated.

The four scholars whose theoretical work I draw upon in this analysis are Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, Sara Ahmed and Nikolas Rose. Foucault is widely considered as an influential figure within post-structural research (Barker, 2000). Throughout his work, Foucault examines how powerful actors within societies have, in particular points in history, produced normative understandings of social categories as almost unquestionable truths (Foucault, 2002b, 2002/1966). Nikolas Rose is similarly influenced by post-structuralist theory, particularly Foucault. Rose carries on with Foucault's examinations of the ways power is exercised in incitements for free-thinking people to aspire to social norms (Rose, 1999, 1999/1990). Rose's work has examined the ways the category of childhood is constructed in relation to the expertise of science and the psy-disciplines in contemporary Western societies (Rose, 1999/1990). He has also examined the power of advertising to govern the conduct of its viewers (Miller & Rose, 2008/1997; Rose, 1999/1990). Butler, meanwhile, emerged shortly after Foucault as a leading feminist scholar whose work is heavily influenced by Foucault's theoretical work (Butler, 1990). In the 1990s, she theorised that the category of gender is formed through language, and this work has widely influenced feminist understandings of the ways gender categories are formed (Brady & Schirato, 2011; Salih, 2002). More recently, her work has examined stratified media and governmental constructions of subjects of war in ways that dehumanise the Other (Butler, 2004a, 2009). Ahmed (2004; 2010) follows Butler, applying post-structural feminist theory to examinations of the social construction of emotion. She argues that emotions emerge through discourse, and that they have a constitutive effect on how social categories are ascribed value and worth. Ahmed examines the ways texts name emotions in their narratives to produce persuasive meanings.

Butler's, Ahmed's and Rose's theoretical works are strongly influenced by Foucauldian ideas about truth, power and the Subject, as they make clear throughout many of their works

(Ahmed, 2006; Butler, 1990, 2009; Rose, 1999, 1999/1990). Foucault's and Butler's ideas have often been used side-by-side particularly in feminist and queer studies (Brady & Schirato, 2011; Callis, 2009), but also cultural and media studies more broadly (Mills, 2003; Salih, 2002). Similarly, Foucault and Rose are often cited together in complementary ways, particularly in the childhood studies literature (Jenks, 2005/1996), but also cultural studies more broadly (Schneider & Davis, 2010). Ahmed's work, meanwhile, is often taken up in feminist, queer and post-colonial studies of discourse and emotion, particularly in analyses of the emotionality of texts (Pedwell & Whitehead, 2012; Piper & Garratt, 2004; Pribram, 2011).

Foucault, Butler, Ahmed and Rose provide informative post-structuralist foundations for this dissertation's analysis of the ways television advertisements construct Australian childhoods. Throughout this chapter, ideas about language, power, knowledge and the Subject are examined through the lenses of the four theorists. I begin in this chapter with an examination of Foucault's theoretical work on history, truth, power and the Subject. Secondly, I explore Rose's work on neoliberal consumption discourses, examining how he theorises subjectivity in relation to consumption. Rose also offers theoretical examinations of how childhood is produced in relation to neoliberal consumption discourse and advertising. This discussion of Rose's work also involves a critique of Rose's theoretical approach to advertising by examining how others have perceived the rhetorical and literal strategies of advertising in differing ways. I then turn to Butler's examinations of performativity, desire and the Other. Lastly, I discuss Ahmed's post-structuralist theory of the sociality of emotion, examining the ways she sees emotions such as happiness as making normative judgements about the value of various subject positions.

The final thing I do in this chapter is turn to post-structuralist theories of space (Massey, 2005; Murdoch, 2006; Thrift, 2004). I take this turn in order to explain the ways my thinking

about space in the analysis chapters are influenced by my theoretical perspective. The four analysis chapters examine childhood in different spaces of Australia, and therefore, the spatiality of Australian childhoods consistently re-emerges in my analyses. In the theoretical overview of post-structuralist notions of space, I explain the ways space can be read as performative (Gregson & Rose, 2000; Gulson, 2007; Tyler & Cohen, 2010), discursive (Bartley et al., 2004) and relational (Murdoch, 2006; Thrift, 2004).

Michel Foucault

Foucault's work primarily examines how relationships of power in particular points in history can come to construct particular ways of knowing and being as recognisable, legitimate and truthful (Foucault, 2002b;

O'Farrell, 2005). His scholarship emerged as a critique of structuralist and Critical Theorist searches for foundational rules about the world that exist prior to sociality and language (Barker, 2000; O'Farrell, 2005; Smart, 2002). Theories of pre-existing order to the world are undermined by Foucault, who chooses to reject theories that assume that a stable truth can be located external to the representational practices that define truth (Foucault, 2002a). Instead, Foucault changed the object of inquiry from a search for truth to a search for the relations of power that govern which knowledge(s) constitute truth. Therein, he asserts that any and all knowledge does not exist external to the regimes of power that regulate how it can be spoken about (Foucault, 1975, 1989/1961, 1990/1978, 2002/1966).

Foucault's theoretical work has influenced scholarship in a broad amount of academic fields, including fields with which my work engages such as cultural studies, childhood studies and media studies. Cultural studies has paid significant attention to Foucault's work. As Bratich, Packer, and McCarthy (2003) argue, "the arrival of Foucauldian thought to cultural studies reshaped the ways cultural studies defined its problematic around culture and power" (p. 3).

This can be exemplified by the cultural studies work on national identities explored in the previous chapter, such as Said's work on *Orientalism* (2007/1978) which is heavily influenced by Foucauldian notions of power and knowledge. Similarly, in media studies, Foucault's concepts of discourse and power have reinvigorated understandings of the role of media in producing, broadcasting and naturalising cultural knowledge(s) across societies (Yell, 2005). The Foucauldian notion of *discourse* is particularly influential in media studies, which often focusses on the ways media texts are both influenced by and influencing of cultural discourses (Yell, 2005). Thirdly, in childhood studies, the new sociology of childhood scholarship has inflections of Foucauldian thought throughout, particularly in the works of Jenks, who dedicates an entire chapter of his text *Childhood* (2005/1996) to the influence of post-structural thought on understandings of truths about childhood as discursive.

Across his expansive body of work, some central Foucauldian concepts emerge, including the Foucauldian concepts of discourse, the discontinuity of history, the linguistic constitution of knowledge as truth, the role of power in the production of truth, and the role of power in the production of socially normative subjectivities (Dreyfus & Rainbow, 1983; Fendler, 2010; O'Farrell, 2005; Smart, 2002). His approaches to these concepts, and the ways they inform my examinations of the Australian childhoods on television advertisements, are outlined herein.

The Foucauldian concept of discourse is a central aspect of Foucauldian scholarship and integral to Foucauldian methodologies. To this end, Foucault's concept of discourse is outlined extensively in the methodology chapter. However, the concept is also used in this chapter, so a short explanation is required before I begin. When discussing **discourse** throughout this dissertation, discourses are understood as the broad culturally and historically defined ways of speaking about social concepts (Foucault, 1972). Discourse is

a concept that enables and constrains, as well as reinforces and challenges, ways of knowing and being that are culturally recognisable. Discourse, to Foucault, is not only formed through language, but also all semiotic signifiers that convey meaning (Foucault, 1972). The concept of discourse is fully articulated in the methodology chapter, with reference to his discussion of the concept in his archaeological methodology text *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972).

As a historian, Foucault was interested in the ways history unfolds. When he began his writing, dominant understandings within French philosophy about history were influenced by a modernist focus on revealing how history unfolds in a manner of progressive refinement of thought, as if each era were a small triumph for the progress of reason (Foucault, 2002b, 2002/1966; Smart, 2002). Foucault rejected this progressive notion of history and sought to undermine its logic by examining the ways historical moments are consequences of power relations and cultural contexts as opposed to an unfolding grand historical narrative. As Foucault states, he does not rely on "the great biological image of a progressive maturation" of society through history (Foucault, 2002b, p. 113). Foucault asks of the grand historical meta-narrative,

> How is it that at certain moments and in certain orders of knowledge, there are these sudden take-offs, these hastenings of evolution, these transformations which fail to correspond to the calm, continuist image that is normally accredited? (Foucault, 2002b, p. 114)

Foucault proposes a conceptualisation of history that does not map progress of humankind as a grand narrative, but rather as transformations of dominant ideas. This is not to confuse the discontinuity of history with incoherence, "On the contrary, it is intelligible and should be susceptible of analysis down to the smallest detail" (Foucault, 2002b, p. 116). This non-progressive notion of history constitutes one of Foucault's key ideas and paved the way for his thinking about the sociality of knowledge and truth. By contextualising knowledge

within its historical moment, he places it within the discourses in which it is formed in an effort to reveal the formation of knowledge through, rather than prior to, discourse. When new ways of representing social categories emerge, dominant understandings about those categories can change.

Foucault's analyses, therefore, have a keen interest in placing the social categories under analysis within their historical contexts. Foucault describes the historical aspect of his work as archaeology (1972). Foucauldian archaeology involves a cross-sectional analysis of the linguistic constitution of social categories at a particular point in time (Foucault, 1972). It involves the study of "artefacts of a given time" and trying to "make sense of how all of those artefacts fit together" (Fendler, 2010, p. 38). While an archaeological dig might examine the pottery, books, artwork and architecture of a moment in time preserved in the earth, Foucault's archaeology examines the texts of a particular point in time to examine the ways in which they form knowledge through language. When Foucault's work is applied to present-day texts, he names his analysis the "history of the present" (1975, p. 31) in order to remind his readers that his work is intended to examine the ways even contemporary social categories are constituted within a particular point in time and are susceptible to change in the future.

This thesis employs a Foucauldian archaeological methodology in the examination of texts. Foucauldian archaeology has influenced my selection of texts inasmuch as the advertisements under analysis have been selected over a 6-year period in order to constitute a cross-section of Australian television advertisements at a specific moment in history. It thus situates the texts within their historical contexts and contemporaneous discourses such as neoliberal consumption discourse and current affairs, in order to examine how the category of Australian childhood comes to be formed in discourse in the history of the

present. Methods of archaeological analysis are outlined in the methodology discussions in the next chapter of this thesis.

Building upon his view of history as non-progressive, Foucault sees understandings about *truth* as changing and evolving with changes in dominant discourses over time. Thus, central to Foucault's work is his rejection of the structuralist idea that there is a truth about the world and the nature of existence waiting to be uncovered through the progress of reason (Fendler, 2010; Foucault, 2002b; O'Farrell, 2005; Smart, 2002). For Foucault, truth is not fixed and foundational, but rather *discursive*: produced through discourse. When a way of knowing is established in discourse as dominant at a particular point in time, Foucault labels it a "regime of truth" (2002b, p. 131) in order to highlight how prevailing cultural ways of knowing are capable of distinguishing what is apprehensible as true and what is apprehensible as untrue. He argues:

> Each society has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth—that is, the types of discourse it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances that enable one to distinguish true and false statements; the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true (Foucault, 2002b, p. 131)

Foucault uses his theory that knowledge (as truth) is produced through discourse throughout his works, but he produced one particular text –*The Order of Things* (2002/1966) – to explicitly describe this theory. *The Order of Things* was received by French scholarship as "a challenge to the reigning intellectual approaches" (Fendler, 2010, p. 82) of the 1960s, primarily due to its striking rejection of notions of progressive history and its refusal to search for an underlying and truthful structure of the world. In this text, Foucault examines how truth was formulated through language over three different periods of history – the Renaissance, the Classical Age and the Modern Age. Foucault concerns himself with examining prevailing epistemes, or *structures of thought*, within each period of history

(Foucault, 2002/1966). In his analysis, Foucault explains that epistemes regulate what could come to be known as truth in varied fields of knowledge, from economics to natural sciences to general grammar. Over time, prevailing epistemes transform, and with these transformations come changes in ways of coming to know truth within multiple fields of knowledge.

In the Renaissance when the prevailing episteme considered resemblance between objects to be a sign of an object's true purpose, it was not untrue that walnuts could cure headaches because they are shaped like brains (Foucault, 2002/1966). When the episteme of the Renaissance gave way to the episteme of the Classical Age, ways of formulating truth within various fields of knowledge also changed. Classical thinking was predicated on comparison rather than resemblance, so that objects of knowledge were examined by their differences not their similarities. Comparisons would involve ordering objects by their properties in order to define them. Thus, what was considered scientifically or botanically or grammatically true in the Renaissance would come to be untrue in the Classical Age. Truth had changed because privileged ways of ordering and understanding the world had changed. Transformation in the dominant Western episteme occurred once more, when in the Modern Age "the shift of language toward objectivity" (Foucault, 2002/1966, p. 422) meant that direct comparison and ordering was no longer considered a valid scientific approach. The Modern age privileges the language of mathematics, norms and measurement, leading to the dominance of current scientific epistemes.

The Order of Things (2002/1966) provides some illuminating observations about how truth is constituted, and this text remains influential upon understandings of the ways truth is produced in contemporary post-structural analyses (O'Farrell, 2005). Namely, *The Order of Things* showed that truth is historically formed, that it is always contestable, and that it is prone to alteration in relation to changes in broader cultural ways of thinking. Foucault's

idea that truth is constituted within historical contexts comes to influence my approach to the concept of Australian childhoods in this thesis. That is to say, from a Foucauldian perspective, I approach the television advertisements examined as texts that produce Australian childhoods as true within a specific discursive context. Following Foucault, I am not concerned with a fundamental truth of Australian childhood. Rather, I recognise that the truths of Australian childhoods are produced in discourse at a particular historical moment. Indeed, as Ariés shows, Childhood, too, has changed over time and contexts. Thus, the dominant ways of representing Australian childhoods across the corpus of television advertisements can be read from a Foucauldian perspective as representing a *regime of truth* rather than a fundamental truth about Australian childhoods.

Foucault's *The Order of Things* (2002/1966) was a work that had not fully incorporated Foucault's later beliefs about the effects of power upon the constitution of truth. Reflecting on *The Order of Things* in an interview later in his career, Foucault lamented that "I had not yet properly isolated" the "central problem of power" (Foucault, 2002b, p. 115). Upon reflection, he asserts that his discussion of epistemes in *The Order of Things* needed to be considered in relation to issues of the regimes of power that sustain the epistemes. He reflects,

> [I now believe] it is a question of what *governs* statements, and the way in which they *govern* each other so as to constitute a set of propositions that are scientifically acceptable … At this level, it's not so much a matter of knowing what external power imposes itself on science as of what effects of power circulate among scientific statements, what constitutes as it were, the internal regime of power (Foucault, 2002b, p. 114, original italics)

Thus, Foucault came to explain knowledge (as truth) as produced by systems of power that are dominant within particular historical contexts. Regimes of power designate which knowledge will constitute truth and what knowledge will constitute untruth. Simultaneously, knowledge as truth, produced by a regime of power, also reinforces and sustains the system

of power that speaks the truth. That is to say, truth both relies upon and asserts power wherever it is spoken. Knowledge as truth is thereby "linked in a circular relation with systems of power" (Foucault, 2002b, p. 132) so that knowledge (as truth) and power sustain and rely upon one another. In this sense, knowledge and power become inseparable. This led Foucault to develop the phrase "Power-Knowledge" (1990/1978, p. 98), to indicate that neither power nor knowledge as truth can exist without the other. They are mutually dependent.

Like many of Foucault's concepts, Foucault's conceptualisation of power differed from the dogma of the day. Prevailing thought in French academic circles examined power as a repressive and top-down force exercised by the sovereign state. However, unlike the dominant conceptualisation of power, which Foucault describes as "the repressive hypothesis" (Foucault, 1990/1978, p. 15), a Foucauldian analysis examines power as not only repressive but also productive. Similarly, from Foucault's perspective, the extant model of power overlooked the ways power is exercised in banal and everyday interpersonal ways in social interactions rather than simply via state apparatuses. As Foucault argues in *The History of Sexuality Volume 1* (1990/1978), "never have there existed more centers [sic] of power" (p. 49). He calls power that is disperse and non-centralised capillary power (Fendler, 2010; O'Farrell, 2005), juxtaposing it to the repressive model of power which he believes to view power as more blunt and less insidiously exercised that capillary power. While the productive and capillary facets of power remain consistent themes throughout Foucault's work, he offers varying understandings of how power is exercised. For example, Foucault discusses the capillary effects of disciplinary models of power in *Discipline and Punish* (1975) primarily through his investigation of the panopticon. He also discusses towards the end of *The History of Sexuality Volume 1* (1990/1978) a model of power called bio-power, which was superseded shortly after by his model of governmentality (O'Farrell, 2005). There

are several models of power presented by Foucault which are not used in this thesis (including panopticism, bio-power and pastoral power), and therefore outside of the scope of this discussion. Here, I offer an explanation of the productive model of power and how it influences my approach to the representations of Australian childhoods examined in this thesis.

Foucault elaborates on his idea that power is productive in *The History of Sexuality Volume 1* (1990/1978). In this text, he examines how throughout the past five centuries, sexuality has been governed by the Church not through censorship, denial and repression, but rather through incitement of a particular type of discussion about sex. That is to say, sexuality has been governed through managing the ways in which it can be discussed. His point is that sexuality is not governed through repression and silence alone, but rather by making people speak of it in particular ways in particular contexts, such as in the confessional. In Foucault's words, "what is at issue, briefly, is the over-all 'discursive fact,' the way in which sex is 'put into discourse.'" (1990/1978, p. 11). In this sense, power has not only acted as repressive but also as productive, inasmuch as it has produced sexuality in discourse in particular ways so that certain sexualities can and must be spoken about while others are marginalised and silenced. In *The History of Sexuality Volume 1*, Foucault offers an explanation of his theory of the productiveness of power that I find particularly transferrable to this thesis:

> I would like … to search … for instances of discursive production (which also administer silences, to be sure), of the production of power (which sometimes have the function of prohibiting), of the propagation of knowledge… (1990/1978, p. 12)

Here, Foucault points out that discourses do, indeed, produce and reveal understandings about marginalised social categories within a society. The point is to understand *how and where* they are spoken about. A Foucauldian study should begin with a search for what is produced in discourse and how that takes place, rather than what is silenced, marginalised

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and repressed. Topics are spoken about in particular ways in discourse, and social categories are made knowable and recognisable through discourse. The Foucauldian task is to seek out how the knowledge about a certain subject is produced within the frame of recognition. An understanding about how knowledge is made recognisable as truth will then lead to an understanding about what is made untrue and marginal. This conceptualisation of power, like his ideas about truth, has remained influential through to the present day, with major post-structural scholars including Butler (2009) and Rose (1999) continuing to utilise Foucault's understandings of power as productive. For this dissertation, my examination consistently involves discussion of how Australian childhood(s) are made knowable through the discursive power of discourse, in order to understand how particular Australian childhood subjectivities are *incited* and *produced* through discourse, rather than merely silenced or repressed.

Power remained a key theme in Foucault's work through the 1970s and 1980s, and when he turned to questions of subjectivity, his questions remained within the field of power. He asked questions about how 'The Self' (interchangeably described as 'The Subject') is exposed to relations of power when he or she formulates a meaningful life (1987/1984, 1991, 2002a). The following section on the formation of the Self continues to examine Foucault's understandings of power, with reference to how the Self is governed into constituting itself in relation to cultural discourses. When examining the Self, Foucault developed a new concept of power which he names *governmentality* (1991). Governmentality examines the *technologies of the Self* (1988) that Subjects employ when formulating their lives, by which Foucault means the ways people formulate their subjectivities in relation to power, truth and discourse.

Consistent with Foucault's understandings of the power of language to constitute social categories, his examination of the Self sees it as produced through social discourse (Fendler,

2010; O'Farrell, 2005). The Self, for Foucault, is a self-aware and agentive entity making decisions about how to act based on information received through discourse (O'Farrell, 2005). Discourses that precede the formation of the Self produce rules of cultural intelligibility that can "structure the field of possible actions" (Foucault, 2002a, p. 343) that the Self can take up when formulating a subjectivity. That is to say, discourses can produce particular formulations of the Self as culturally intelligible, while making others less intelligible and less recognisable within social and historical contexts. Because discourse privileges some discursive formations of the Self over others, the Self is tasked with formulating subjectivities in ways that will enable access the cultural privileges associated with certain Subject positions (Foucault, 1987/1984).

Foucault explains his concept of the technologies of the self as the ways in which people come to formulate their subjectivities in relation to the discourses available to them (Foucault, 1988). His intention is to highlight that the formation of the Self is an inherently social act. He reveals the sociality of the formation of the Self in *The History of Sexuality Volume 2*, where he argues that the formation of the Self "constitute[s] a social practice, giving rise to relationships between individuals, to exchanges and communications" (1987/1984, p. 45). Therein, Foucault explains that the formation of the Self requires examination of available ways of being and constructing subjectivities that are provided socially; that is, provided through *discourse*.

Foucault introduces the term 'governmentality' (Foucault, 1991) to explain the ways social actors including governments, but also people or institutions with cultural legitimacy such as scientists, nutritionists, et cetera, can encourage Subjects to formulate their own subjectivities in particular ways that might assist them in gaining access to privileged Subject positions. He describes governmentality as the "conduct of conduct" (2002a, p. 341) to highlight that Subjects are free to choose which subjectivities to take up, but particular

subjectivities are nonetheless produced through discourse as more desirable than others, thereby influencing free Subjects into making decisions that appear to be in their own interests.

Governmentality follows from Foucault's notion of bio-power, which explains how demographic *norms* are garnered by governments in order to incite individuals to seek normalcy as a healthy and truthful ideal (1990/1978). Following on, governmentality explains how scientific norms, framed as scientific truths about how to live in ideal ways, can provide advice to Subjects about how to formulate their lives in normative ways in order to achieve desirable Subject positions (Foucault, 1991). However, he argues that even scientific norms of ideal subjectivities are in fact historically and culturally defined. As Foucault had explained in *The Order of Things* (2002/1966), science and culture are not mutually independent; what is capable of being scientifically verifiable as true is dependent upon the cultural episteme in which a Subject is historically located. So, Foucault highlights that even scientific norms that help Subjects regulate idealised ways of being are cultural ideals produced through discourse.

Foucault's examinations of the Self are important to my examinations of discourses of Australian childhoods inasmuch as a Foucauldian analysis asks questions about how constructions of idealised subjectivities within discourse can regulate the subjectivities that are culturally normative and ideal. When television advertisements produce discourses of Australia childhoods, recognisable ways of being an Australian child are formed while other subjectivities are discursively excluded from the frames of cultural recognition. That is to say, the discourses produced by television advertisements produce cultural and scientific norms that can incite viewers to make up their subjectivities in particular ways. Often, advertisements attempt to conduct the conduct of their viewers inasmuch as they aim to draw the free-thinking viewer into an economic transaction, a concept that Rose takes up in his

analyses discussed later in this chapter. Therein, this dissertation explores how powerful discourses idealise particular ways of thinking about the childhood Self as a national Subject.

Nikolas Rose

The second central scholar who comes to inform my theoretical approach is Nikolas Rose. Rose is heavily influenced by Foucault's scholarship. Building on Foucault's work, Rose examines how governmentality is used to govern and regulate free-thinking Subjects in neoliberal societies, particularly in relation to consumption. His work has been particularly influential in the childhood studies literature (Cunningham, 2006; Jenks, 2005/1996), particularly the sections from his text *Governing the Soul* (1999/1990) that outline how neoliberal governmentality is used by scientific experts, governments and advertisers to conduct the conduct of parents and children. His work is also influential to studies of advertising (Schneider & Davis, 2010), particularly his essay with Peter Miller titled *Mobilising the Consumer* (Miller & Rose, 2008/1997) which examines the role of advertising in the production of idealised norms to which agentive subjects are encouraged to aspire. With his Foucauldian (Rose, 1999/1990) examinations of childhood and advertising, Rose has come to be particularly useful theoretical scholar for this dissertation. Here, I examine Rose's contributions to the literature on neoliberal consumption, childhood and advertising. I then turn my attention to the limitations of Rose's understandings about advertising and introduce other studies that provide broader readings of the rhetorical functions of advertisements.

Rose continues Foucault's theoretical work on governmentality by examining how power is exercised in the neoliberal era that began in the last few decades of the 20th Century. He examines the ways Subjects are encouraged to make up their subjectivities by being governed "at a distance" (Rose, 1999a, p. 10) in neoliberal societies. By neoliberal societies,

Rose is referring to societies that have witnessed the withdrawal of the welfare state in the latter parts of the twentieth century, being replaced by notions of small government with less direct intervention on the lives of citizens of a nation. This withdrawal of intervention has been sold to citizens by political figures as a way of increasing the freedom of everyone through removal of the imposition of government in citizens' private affairs (Rose, 1999, 2008/1996b).

As neoliberalism has proliferated around the globe and in western nations such as Australia, Rose argues that governmentality has come to play a greater role in the government of the citizens of a nation, replacing other forms of sovereign power in many areas of public life (1999). Whereas governments with welfare state rationalities have intervened in the private affairs of citizens through taxation and prohibitive laws, neoliberal rationalities advocate allowing the sciences and the free market to conduct the conduct of the nation's citizens by convincing them to govern themselves. In the transition from welfarism to neoliberalism, governments have outsourced many of their responsibilities, such as health care and education, to the private sector, allowing private expertise to distribute social services (Rose, 2008/1996b).

Rose argues that in place of direct government intervention, neoliberalism requires citizens to govern themselves through personal choice in order to achieve self-fulfilment in their own lives (Rose, 2008/1996b). In such a context, individuals turn to norms produced by expert disciplines such as medical science and the psy-disciplines in order to learn how to formulate their lives in ways they find meaningful (Rose, 1999/1990). Private social actors such as scientists and psychologists, who claim the status of expertise, differentiate normal lifestyles from abnormal lifestyles. In so doing, they can inform people about how to manage their lives in ways that are scientifically and psychologically normative. In this context, private actors become central agents of social government (Rose, 1999; Harris, 2004). Private actors

govern citizens not by cajoling and manipulating, but rather by providing advice about how to achieve self-improvement in relation to scientifically-defined normalcy, where normalcy comes to function as "socially worthy, statistically average, scientifically healthy *and* personally desirable" (Rose, 1999, p. 76). Private experts' methods of government constitute Foucauldian methods of governmentality inasmuch as governmentality involves the use of idealised norms to conduct the conduct of free-thinking Subjects. For Rose, then, governmentality exercised by private experts has become increasingly important in neoliberal societies (Rose, 1999, 2008/1996b).

For Rose, following Foucault, normality emerges within the episteme of the time, so that normality in neoliberal times is very different from what it might be in another era. Rose argues that normality is presently formulated "in three guises: as that which is natural and hence healthy; as that against which the actual is judged and found unhealthy; and as that which is to be produced by rationalized social programmes [in the name of expertise]." (Rose, 1999/1990, p. 133). Rose theorises that governmentality enacted by experts has come to be targeted at the hopes and dreams of Subjects to become normal, and the fears and anxieties of Subjects about being abnormal (Miller & Rose, 2008/1997; Rose, 1999/1990). Experts can promise to alleviate Subjects from the fear of being abnormal, and to help Subjects achieve their hopes to become socially and culturally fulfilled by offering the correct ways of acting, correct consumption choices, correct ways to exercise, correct clothes to wear, and so on, that will help people achieve normalcy (Rose, 1999/1990). Experts who "claimed the authority of science" (Rose, 1999/1990, p. 117) have come to govern at a distance by providing strategies of:

> …managing one's self to happiness and fulfilment, through adjustment of self-images, through the remodelling of modes of self presentation by restyling behaviour, speech, and vocabulary, through learning new ways of construing situations and persons, indexed by such terms as awareness and sensitivity (p. 117)

Importantly, under neoliberal rule, Subjects are not forced to carry out the advice of experts; rather, experts provide the knowledge (as truth) about how to behave in order to become self-fulfilled (Rose & Miller, 2008/1992). By suggesting that Subjects make choices that promise scientific normalcy, Subjects are encouraged to self-govern (Rose, 1999/1990) by taking the expert advice that promises self-improvement. Governmentality, therefore, "shapes the conduct of diverse actors without shattering their formally autonomous character" (Miller & Rose, 2008/1990, p. 39). Subjects are governed "by the power of truth" (Miller & Rose, 2008/1990, p. 43), which Rose argues is determined by the neoliberal episteme that privileges scientific and mathematical norms (Rose & Miller, 2008/1992). This theorisation of neoliberal governmentality is used by Rose in his work on the government of childhood in his text *Governing the Soul* (1999/1990), to which I now turn.

In the second half of *Governing the Soul* (1999/1990), Rose examines how childhood has come to be governed at a distance by experts including scientists and psychologists in neoliberal societies. Experts produce normative ideas about childhood to which private actors, often mothers, are encouraged to aspire in the interests of their own children's normalcy. Parents are made responsible for making the correct choices for their children so that the children do not turn out abnormal. Success at being a parent becomes a matter of making the scientifically correct and normative choices. Parents are therefore required to self-govern in order to achieve personal goals for themselves and their children. As Rose (1999/1990) argues,

> Families have come to govern their intimate relations and socialise their children according to social norms but through the activation of their own hopes and fears. Parental conduct, motherhood, and childrearing can thus be regulated through family autonomy, through wishes and aspirations, and through the activation of individual guilt, personal anxiety, and private disappointment. And the almost inevitable misalignment between expectation and reality, fantasy and actualisation, fuels the search for help and guidance in the difficult task of producing normality, and powers the constant familial demand for the association of expertise. (p. 132)

Rose argues that experts developed norms about childhood and child development through the psy-disciplines of the late 19th Century and into the 20th Century. Developmental psychologists would produce norms about childhood against which children could be measured and found abnormal. With the production of psycho-social norms of childhood development, children could be individualised and differentiated. Graphs of developmental stages and ages at which particular norms of development are to be achieved were produced and provided to parents throughout the twentieth century (Rose, 1999/1990). Milestones for achievement were to be watched by parents, who were to report their child's atypical behaviours to experts in the hope that intervention would allay abnormal growth. As a result, childhood came to be "intensively governed" (Rose, 1999/1990, p. 123) and every child was made "knowable, calculable and administrable" (p. 143) in relation to norms of development.

Rose goes on to argue that the language of expertise has come to function as a way in which free-thinking, but also self-maximising, Subjects can be "mobilized" (Miller & Rose, 2008/1997, p. 115) into acting for their children's good. The language of expertise has thus come to be taken up in all manner of public discourses in neoliberal societies. One such discourse where the language of expertise is deployed, Rose argues, is media (Rose, 1999/1990). Through the use of language of expertise in media, discourses about the correct ways of doing childhood and parenthood are produced as truth. By paying attention to media, parents can glean the newest ways experts have found for people to raise their children. As Rose argues, the knowledge of how to raise a normal child "requires reading the manuals, watching the television, listening to the radio, studying the magazines and advertisements" (Rose, 1999/1990, p. 203).

Thus, Rose provides a Foucauldian theoretical examination of childhood that shows how childhood is produced by the scientific regimes of truth which are privileged in neoliberal

societies. Here, Rose is useful to this dissertation by providing theoretical understandings about how childhood comes to be produced as truth in relation to the power of the language of expertise in neoliberal societies. Indeed, television advertisements often use the language of expertise to frame Australian children in particular ways. In Chapter 6, for example, I discuss the ways Nutri-Grain constructs white Australian boys as masculine beachgoers who need 'iron' and 'fibre' for breakfast in order to meet their 'nutritional needs', so that they might grow to become ideal surf lifesavers. The use of nutritional advice in this example aligns gender norms to scientific language, concealing the discursivity of masculinity through the language of science.

Rose goes on both in *Governing the Soul* (1999/1990) and elsewhere (Miller & Rose, 2008/1997; Rose, 1999) to examine the ways advertising can utilise the language of expertise to conduct the conduct of viewers, thereby enacting governmentality. According to Rose, advertisements in neoliberal times provide information and choice to free-thinking and agentive viewers who purchase products; however, consumers will only purchase products if they appear useful for their own personal agendas. Consumption in neoliberal societies (hereafter: 'neoliberal consumption'), therefore, becomes a primary way of formulating a meaningful and normative personal subjectivity in neoliberal times. As Rose argues:

> Through consumption we are urged to shape our lives by the use of our purchasing power. We are obliged to make our lives meaningful by selecting our personal lifestyle from those offered to us in advertising, soap operas, and films, to make sense of our existence by exercising our freedom to choose in a market in which one simultaneously purchases products and services, and assembles, manages, and markets oneself (Rose, 1999/1990, p. 103)

This view of neoliberal consumption is not new, having been theorised by key post-Critical scholars such as Baudrillard (1970), de Certeau (2002/1984) and Bauman (2007). From such a perspective, the viewer of an advertisement is considered to be an agentive, free

thinking and choice-making subject capable of free will. Consumption of the products promoted in advertisements is thus formulated around choosing products that appear beneficial for the purposes of personal enterprise and self-improvement (Baudrillard, 1970; Miller & Rose, 2008/1997; Harris, 2004). Individuals use advertisements to seek out products and services that will assist them in making up their own lives in ways that are personally meaningful. This is not to suggest that advertisements have no persuasive effect on viewers, but is to suggest that viewers are not docile and easily manipulable. Instead, advertisements can act upon viewers by convincing them that consumption is in their best interests (Miller & Rose, 2008/1997; Rose, 1999/1990). Advertisements can position products within the market as products through which potential consumers can strive to achieve scientific and cultural normalcy.

Rose expands on his thesis about neoliberal consumption with Peter Miller (Miller & Rose, 2008/1997) in their essay *Mobilising the consumer*, which investigates advertisements' use of psychology in order to incite consumption. In this essay, they begin by critiquing Critical Theorist Ewan's (1976) characterisation of advertisements as tools of the social order, arguing that Ewan's view posits advertising as "a profession which treats consumers as largely irrational or foolish" (Miller & Rose, 2008/1997, p. 116). In contrast, Miller and Rose argue that advertisers often utilise psychological expertise to position their brands in ways that make them appear as desirable as possible for free thinking and self-reflexive viewers of advertisements, so that the viewers might see the products as personally meaningful. They argue:

> Psychological expertise in advertising provides a site where we explore the extent to which [advertising] has been less a matter of dominating or manipulating consumers than of 'mobilizing' them by forming connections between human passions, hopes and anxieties, and very specific features of goods enmeshed in particular consumption practices (Miller & Rose, 2008/1997, p. 115)

For Miller and Rose, advertisers seek to understand consumers' lifestyles, psychological wants, desires and anxieties, in order to position products as useful for consumers to fulfil their own personal desires; that is, to improve their subjectivities in ways they might find desirable. Often, they argue, advertisements can employ the language of expertise to help them to convince viewers that consumption of a product can help them achieve self-improvement (Miller & Rose, 2008/1997). Expertise can be deployed in the form of doctors, nutritionists and scientists who are depicted in advertisements encouraging viewers to consume in order to achieve improved health, better looks, to become better sportspeople, et cetera (Rose, 1999/1990). Importantly, to Miller and Rose (2008/1997), advertising in neoliberal societies does not manipulate viewers into consuming products and services that they didn't know they wanted before watching the advertisements, but rather attempts to mobilise consumers by positioning products and services as beneficial for viewers' personal pursuit of self-fulfilment, therein positioning viewers as in need of consumption in order to achieve self-fulfilment.

The work of Miller and Rose (1997/2008) on the ways advertisements target the self-maximising consumer contributes significantly to my understandings of the ways discourses of Australian childhoods are shaped by advertisements. By applying their work to this thesis, I explore how discourses come to be shaped as a result of advertisements' attempts to position the viewer as a person in need of personal fulfilment within the neoliberal context in which the advertisements are situated. Advertisements' constructions of identity narratives are idealised constructions—ones that attempt to tap into the desires of the viewer and that ask the viewer to reflect upon one's Self and find one's Self (or one's child) unfulfilled in relation to the normative identities of the represented participants in the advertisements (Miller & Rose, 2008/1997; Rose, 1999/1990). Through representation, "stylisations of existence represented in the mass media" (Rose, 1999/1990, p. 269) can

shape discourses of idealised social identities. Thus, using Rose, I come to the theoretical position that normative and idealised discourses of Australian childhood can come to be formed on advertisements through neoliberal consumption rationalities. In neoliberal societies, then, consumption is an important practice so that agentive citizens might secure success in a privatised, individualised and choice-oriented neoliberal context (Miller & Rose, 1997/2008; Harris, 2004; Bauman, 2007).

While Rose (1999/1990) and Miller and Rose (2008/1997) provide informative theorisations of advertising, not all advertisements employ idealised identity images, nor the language of expertise, and therefore their work on advertising cannot be used to address *all* advertisements within this study. Other post-Critical scholars have examined advertising in other ways. Beasley and Danesei (2002), for example, have a much broader theory of advertising, defining it as both the art of drawing attention to the availability of products and services, and as increasing the salience of a product within the marketplace (Beasley & Danesei, 2002). From this perspective, corporate advertising functions with a distinctly financial purpose. In this sense, commercial advertising is designed in order to position a brand or product within a marketplace in a way that makes it financially viable in the short, medium or long term. Over the years, the enormous corporate advertising industry has developed many literal and rhetorical devices in its attempts to promote brands and products to the consuming public (Beasley & Danesei, 2002; Berger, 2004; Messaris, 1997). As Beasley and Danesei argue,

> The craft of advertising today has […] progressed considerably beyond the use of simple techniques for announcing the availability of products or services. It has ventured, in fact, into the domain of persuasion, and its rhetorical categories have become omnipresent in contemporary social discourse. (2002, p. 1)

Rhetorical strategies used by advertisements are diverse and include strategies such as metaphor, synecdoche, analogy, association, humour and simile to name a few (Berger,

2004; Robitaille, 1992). Whilst a simple explanation of advertising might describe it as a way of convincing the consuming public to purchase products and services, a nightly viewing of television advertising would reveal that many television advertisements do not even mention a specific product, its price, or where one might access it. In this sense, advertising can also function in rhetorical ways such as to position a brand as compatible with viewers' cultural values or to associate a brand with favourable memories (Berger, 2004). Take, for example, the rhetorical strategy of promoting a brand by use of humour (Robitaille, 1992). A not unfamiliar narrative of a thirty second beer advertisement on television would be to feature a group of male friends, perhaps on a fishing trip, playing a practical joke on their peer that publically humiliates him (Lang, 2010). The advertisement might end with a short logo of the brand that produced the advertisement, but there is often no mention of the specific range of beer, its price or availability. While these types of advertisements are not necessarily explicit in announcing the terms of the economic transaction which they eventually hope to secure, they are certainly designed with financial ends in mind (Beasley & Danesei, 2002; Messaris, 1997). Positioning a product within the marketplace as commensurate with the presumed values of its target audience (in this case, beer drinking men), increasing its salience within the marketplace, and producing a branded identity (perhaps as light-hearted and crass in this hypothetical) are important procedures that brands undergo in their attempts to secure a competitive market share, so that when the consumer reaches the supermarket, he or she will have a positive memory association with the product.

This theory of advertising posited by the likes of Beasley and Danesei (2002) and Messaris (1997) as an image management strategy with specifically economic purposes is also limited; namely, it does not take into account non-corporate advertising such as public service announcements, political campaign advertisements and government advertisements

that do not function as incitements to economic transactions. Nonetheless, such advertisements do have similar features to commercial advertisements, using rhetorical and literal devices to achieve their goals (Sherr, 1999). Non-commercial advertisements are also designed to mobilise the viewer to do something, and in so doing attempt to conduct the conduct of viewers, whether or not they seek economic transaction or use the language of expertise. They thus have some similar features to commercial advertisements such as the use of literal and rhetorical devices to mobilise viewers to act (Sherr, 1999), while also constituting their own unique category of advertisements that is not specifically of a financial purpose.

Each of the advertising tropes outlined here – use of governmentality, use of rhetorical and literal devices for economic means, and use of rhetorical and literal devices for non-economic means, reveal the great diversity of advertisements and the need for a broad theoretical understanding of advertising (Beasley & Danesei, 2002). Thus, while I accept the post-Critical theorisation of the self-maximising and agentive consumer in neoliberal times endorsed by Rose and others (Baudrillard, 1970; de Certeau, 2002/1984; Miller & Rose, 2008/1997; Rose, 1999/1990), I also draw on understandings of the rhetorical functions of advertisements (Beasley & Danesei, 2002; Berger, 2004; Messaris, 1997; Robitaille, 1992) throughout this analysis to examine how advertisements attempt to influence viewers. For example I examine advertisements that are primarily designed to position brands within the marketplace, using Beasley and Danesei (2002) to explain how advertisements that sell brands rather than products do, nonetheless, have economic imperatives. I also examine advertisements that attempt to conduct the conduct of viewers through the language of expertise, which functions as one of many rhetorical strategies to incite viewers to act on the messages of the advertisements (Miller & Rose, 2008/1997). Thus, Rose as well as other media scholars (Beasley & Danesei, 2002; Berger, 2004; Miller

& Rose, 2008/1997) are used throughout when examining the link between advertisements'

rhetorical functions and the discourses of Australian childhoods they produce.

Judith Butler

Foucault is often critiqued for not engaging with the issues of women or feminism in a

sustained way throughout his writing (Fendler, 2010). While his work in *The History of*

Sexuality provides some strong critique of the production of women's sexuality by the

Church, the issue of gender as a social construction is not given extensive discussion.

Foucault's work does, however, undermine normative ideals including heteronormativity,

paving the way for much Foucauldian feminist scholarship in subsequent decades. Perhaps

the most well-known of these Feminist scholars is Judith Butler, to whose work I will now

turn.

Judith Butler's work gained prominence in the 1990s to become some of the most influential

post-structural feminist writing of the time. Throughout her work, Butler has focussed on

destabilising dominant binary discourses of the Subject and its Other, particularly in terms

of gender binaries. In the early 1990s, Butler articulated her theory of performativity

(explained shortly) primarily through examination of the discursive production of gendered

and sexual identities. During this phase she produced several influential feminist texts,

including *Gender Trouble* (1990) and *Bodies that Matter* (1993); although, her feminist

work has continued since, notably with her text *Undoing Gender* (2004b). Towards the latter

part of the 1990s Butler broadened her examinations of the power of language, with studies

of the violence of legalistic and everyday language in *Excitable Speech* (1997a).

I have taken up Butler's work more selectively than Foucault's. While Butler's Foucauldian-

influenced ideas of gender performativity have influenced my approach to this thesis, her

psychoanalytical works particularly in *The Psychic Life of Power* (1997b) and the latter

chapters of *Gender Trouble* (1990) which draws on Lancan and Freud are of less interest to my theoretical approach. Psychoanalysis falls outside of the scope of this dissertation's theoretical frame inasmuch as the dissertation has its basis in post-structural Foucauldian cultural theories. In this sense, I have made the decision to utilise Butler's work that is of a Foucauldian (and to a lesser extent Hegelian) influence, intentionally leaving out her contributions to psychoanalytic theory.

Butler's work is considered to have had a substantial influence within varying scholarly fields over the past two decades. As Salih argues, "even theorists who do not agree with Butler's [arguments …] acknowledge the impact that her ideas have had in a broad range of critical and theoretical fields" (2002, p. 140). She is considered to have been the biggest single influence on post-Critical feminist theory, having been taken up in countless feminist studies (Brady & Schirato, 2011; Lloyd, 2007; Salih, 2002; Salih & Butler, 2004). Butler's theory of performativity has also been broadly influential in cultural studies research that examines the impact of language on culture (Lloyd, 2007; Salih & Butler, 2004). Similarly, her work has impacted media studies, particularly studies of the discursive production of gender in film and television (Humm, 1997). Her more recent work on the cultural politics of war has also impacted media and cultural studies, having been used to examine the discursive production of Western and non-Western characters in film (Hall, 2006) and everyday cultural relations in the US (Naber, 2006). In the following sections, I outline Butler's main theoretical contributions to my approach in this dissertation with a focus on her theoretical understandings of desire and Other as produced through language and her concept of gender performativity.

Butler's approach to subjectivity owes much to Foucault on the one hand and Hegel on the other. Butler's work examines how *desire for recognition* exposes the Subject to the constitutive power of *externalised cultural norms* (Butler, 1990, 1997a, 2009). With this in

mind, Butler appropriates Hegel's theorisations of the Subject's desire for social recognition (Butler, 2012/1987) while also drawing upon Foucault to understand the subjectification of the Subject by externalised forces. From these two ontological standpoints, Butler can argue that the Subject desires recognisability, but can only achieve it via the pursuit of external culturally-produced norms that precede the Subject itself (Butler, 2009). She articulates the trajectory of her work:

> In a sense, all of my work remains within the orbit of a certain set of Hegelian questions: What is the relation between desire and recognition, and how is it that the constitution of the subject entails a radical constitutive relation to alterity? (Butler, 2012/1987, p. xx)

Butler's political task is similar to Foucault's. She intends to show how the subject is constituted through the power of language as cultural discourse (Salih, 2002). Her work thus follows Foucault's in exploring the power of normative regimes, which emerge through language and discourse, to constitute culturally recognisable subject positions. Here, Butler situates her thought clearly within post-structural linguistic paradigms which assert that language has a constitutive power (Butler, 1997a). Rather than simply describing the subject, language also constitutes the subject through its description and, indeed, definition. Thus, much of her work is dedicated to identifying the discourses that name the Subject to reveal how the Subject is constructed through the power of representation rather than external to discourse.

Concomitantly, Butler selectively borrows from Hegel to argue that the subject is made vulnerable by its own desire for recognisability (Butler, 2004b, 2009, 2012/1987). She argues that "our very sense of personhood is linked to the desire for recognition, and that desire places us outside ourselves, in a realm of social norms we do not choose" (Butler, 2004b, p. 33). In this sense, the subject acts upon itself by desiring a normalcy produced external to the subject, which will place the subject within frames of social recognisability.

The second way Butler uses Hegel is in her examination of the Self as a subject that is produced in relation to the Other. Hegel's dialectic is invoked here. Hegel argues that the Self is constituted always in relation to an Other that is external to the Self. That is, the Self's "relation to the other is essential to what it is" (Butler, 2009, p. 49). When the Self is produced, so is the Other. The Subject, therefore, is formed "through a citation of its exceptions" (Boucher, 2006, p. 116). However, Butler does not fully accept Hegel's assertions. When Hegel goes on to argue that the Self desires things that are Other and attempts to reconcile the Self with the Other through a process of self-transformation which Hegel calls 'synthesis' (Salih, 2002), Butler has theoretical hesitations. Charges against Hegel's synthesis have insisted that it assumes a progressive maturation of the Self as a person who progresses towards a more fulfilled sense of selfhood throughout a lifetime by amalgamating Self and Other (Brady & Schirato, 2011; Salih, 2002). By contrast, according to scholars such as Butler, the Self is constituted within a historical context and so the Self is never in a linear process of growth, but rather is formed variously in and by different contexts in which the Self is immersed (Brady & Schirato, 2011). Here, Butler parts ways with Hegel, insisting that progressive maturation of the Self through synthesis is never achievable. Butler thus embraces "dialectic without synthesis" (Salih, 2002, p. 30), a move that is more of a post-structural than Hegelian ontological frame.

Butler's work is informative for my approach to this thesis. Firstly, she reinforces a Foucauldian notion of discourse, namely that discourse both precedes and constitutes the Subject. Secondly, she argues that the Self is always produced in relation to an Other. Thus, in the discourses of Australian childhoods examined, not only is a discursive Subject produced but also an Other inasmuch as Self and Other are both constructed in the discursive moment of production. Thirdly, Butler utilises the notion of desire, which helps to explain that normative discourses can be produced as desirable. Within the television advertisements

examined, it becomes evident that particular versions of Australian childhood are framed as socially *desirable* (white, rural, middle class, and so forth—see analysis chapters), while others are not. Thus, I come to use Butler's notion of the Self and Other, as well as her notion of desire, alongside Foucault's notion of normativity in order to turn my focus explicitly to the formation of both the desirable and normative Self and the undesirable Other on television advertisements.

For Butler, all identities are *performative*. By this she means that the Subject's identity is an iteration of identity constructs that are made available to the subject in discourse. A Subject's identity, therefore, is not innate; rather "identity is an *effect* of discursive practices" (1990, p. 24, original italics). The Subject does not have a pre-determined identity formation, but nor does the Subject have unbridled freedom in choosing the identity formation it takes up. Instead, the subject repetitively enacts an identity that garners reward in the form of social recognition (Butler, 1993). When enacted often enough, the identity comes to be naturalised and believed as an innate personal identity, and the discursivity of the identity is concealed. However, for Butler, the identity is nonetheless a result of repetitive iteration of a way of being rather than being innate. Butler explains performativity:

> It is clear that coherence is desired, wished for, idealized, and that this idealization is an effect of a corporeal signification. In other words, acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this *on the surface* of the body, through the play of signifying absences that suggest, but never reveal, the organizing principle of identity as a cause. Such acts, gesture, enactments, generally construed, are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means. (1990, p. 185, original italics)

Butler's examination of the discursive formation identity is initially explained in *Gender Trouble* (1990), where she examines the formation of gender identity through the heterosexual matrix. The heterosexual matrix, Butler argues, is a discursive formation that aligns sex, gender and sexuality. When a person is born of a particular sex, a particular

gender and sexuality become discursively assigned to that person. At the moment gender becomes tied to the notion of sex, its discursive formation is concealed in discourse as natural and innate. A Subject is assigned an expected discursive identity formation and tasked with the question of how to enact the discursive identity that they have already been allocated (Butler, 1990; Salih, 2002). Furthermore, the heterosexual matrix produces binaries that Butler disputes. Sex, for example, is misrecognised as a foreclosed choice: a Subject is either male or female. Butler points to the nineteenth-century hermaphrodite Herculine Barbin as a figure who undermines the binary notion of male/female (Brady & Schirato, 2011; Butler, 1990). Thus, for Butler, even the notion of sex is discursive inasmuch as people are generally constrained to being assigned one or the other sex in judicial contexts, such as on passports. So, Butler argues, discourse produces sex and gender as one and the same discursive construct: in discourse, Butler argues, sex *is* gender. Therein, Butler argues that sex and gender categories are discursive and constraining.

Further drawing on Foucault's notion of the Subject, Butler argues that the Subject can never reach a state of completion. The subject can never *become* a woman, for example, because the social category of woman is not a fixed and stable entity. Rather, when enacting a discursive iteration of womanhood, the Subject is in the process of *becoming* a woman; as the discursive category of womanhood never reaches closure, nor does the person in becoming. Given her assertion that social categories never reach closure, Butler insists that a moment cannot be ascertained when a social category had been formed (hence her disagreement with Hegel on synthesis) (Butler, 1997a). There is no historical moment, for example, when gender formations emerged or were solidified. Instead, they are consistently reiterated. This reiteration, she argues is necessary for their continued existence. This is what Butler calls "the continuing action of norms" (2009, p. 168). This idea provides some significant insights particularly for a study of Australian childhoods, as it poses a

philosophical approach the question: when is the category of Australian childhood formed? Using Butler's framework, this question is not the focus. For Butler, social categories are always in the process of being formed, and always *becoming*. In this dissertation, I am examining the ways category of Australian childhood is in a process of being produced, while also knowing that the category of Australian childhood will not reach a point of closure or completion. It is through the continued reiteration and reimagining of norms of Australian childhoods that the norms are both maintained and altered within discourse.

Butler's work on the notion of performativity offers several informative theoretical foundations for my thesis. Through her explanation of performative normativity, Butler elucidates how the Subject's recognisability is tied to discourse, thereby showing the power of discourse to constitute the Subject. She thus reinforces the importance of analysis of the role of discourse in producing normative and marginalised identities, such as heterosexuality or, in this case, Australian childhood. For Butler, discourse produces idealised and marginalised identities that enable and constrain possibilities for a socially recognisable existence, and is therefore a valuable and important focus for scholarly work which aims to challenge unjust social assumptions. Similarly, I have explained here that, from a Butlerian perspective, discourse garners its power through its ongoing iterative effect. A single iteration of discourse, she says, is not enough for the production of a normalising performative identity. Instead, discourse must consistently reiterate and reinforce normative frameworks, such as normative understandings of Australian childhoods.

Sara Ahmed

Sara Ahmed's work builds upon the work of Butler and Foucault on the constitutive effects of discourse, by examining how emotions are produced through discursive interactions. Her work is used in this thesis to consider how texts name emotions in their narratives to produce

understandings about Australian childhoods. Ahmed traverses feminist cultural studies (2006, 2010), post-colonial studies (Ahmed, 2004, 2007), and media studies (Ahmed, 2004, 2010) in her examinations of the sociality of emotion. Ahmed makes the argument that emotions are discursive and culturally mediated, considering emotions not to originate within people or objects, but through discursive interactions. In *The cultural politics of emotion* (2004), she explains her theory through an explanation of a boy and a bear. When the boy sees the bear, he becomes fearful, and reads the bear as fearsome. It is not that the bear is inherently fearsome, or the boy inherently fearful. Rather, it is through the boy's social and cultural understandings of the bear as fearsome (through discourse) that he apprehends the bear as fearsome, and becomes fearful. From this perspective, the emotion of fear does not originate from within the boy or the bear, but through a discursive, historical, and culturally mediated interaction between boy and bear. Ahmed explains:

> It is not that the bear *is* fearsome, 'on its own', as it were, It is fearsome *to* someone or somebody. So fear is not in the child, let alone in the bear, but is a matter of how child and bear come into contact. This contact is shaped by past histories of contact, unavailable in the present, which allow the bear to be apprehended as fearsome. (2004, p. 7).

The story of the bear "allows us to think about the 'sociality' of emotion" (2004, p. 8), so as to understand that emotions come to be produced through discursive interaction.

Ahmed continues, explaining the relevance of such an understanding of emotion for textual analysis. Her examinations of emotion in *The cultural politics of emotion* (2004) involve close readings of texts which generate emotive effects. The "emotionality of texts" (2004, p. 12), she explains, is produced through framing strategies—such as "figures of speech" and "metonymy and metaphor" (2004, p. 12). Texts, she argues, can name discourses of emotions such as fear, nostalgia and happiness, to produce some interactions and narratives as requiring certain emotive responses. By constructing emotive narratives, texts produce discourses that associate subjects with certain emotive features—such as the association of

the bear with fearsomeness, or in this thesis, all-white childhood memories with happiness (see Chapter 6).

In *The promise of happiness* (2010), Ahmed continues this thesis through her examination of the culturally and socially mediated emotion of happiness. For Ahmed, happiness produces subjects as good through their proximity to happiness. Such an approach suspends that assumption that things that are happy are necessary good or worth. Instead, she argues, happiness produces things as good and worthy: "to be happy about something makes something good" (Ahmed, 2010, p. 210). The implications for this approach are evidenced in her discussion of the happy housewife. By constructing a housewife as being happy in her subordinated position, texts can frame the housewife subject position as positive. In this sense, happiness becomes a marker of the worth and value of often unjust cultural practices. Similarly, the cultural ideal of the good suburban, white, heteronormative life is produced through images of happy normative families: "the picture of the family as happy … make[s] visible a fantasy of a good life" (Ahmed, 2010, p. 45), discursively inscribing the exclusionary white nuclear family imaginary as ideal, and simultaneously marginalising non-traditional families.

Ahmed's approach to emotion is valuable for me to begin to critique how texts produce subject positions as worthy or otherwise through their proximity to happiness. For example, in Chapter 6, *From white sands to black billabongs*, I discuss how nostalgia for a happy white past in which white children freely roam on beaches produces the multicultural present as less ideal than an imagined white past. The emotionality of this narrative ascribes value to whiteness through its proximity to happiness (Ahmed, 2010). Therein, Ahmed's theorisations of textual productions of emotion help me to explain how discourses of ideal Australian childhoods come to be produced through emotive narratives. With an understanding that emotion is discursive and does not emerge from 'within' the subject, I

can read the ways ideal emotional understandings of Australian childhoods come to be made recognisable *through discourse*.

Space as discursive, performative and relational

Lastly, I want to reflect upon my post-structural theoretical approach to space that informs my analyses. Each analysis chapter is focussed on childhood in different spaces, and it is with this in mind that I pause here to reflect on the ways I see the relationship between space and subjectivity. Following post-structuralist scholarship, I read space as *discursive*, *relational and performative* (Murdoch, 2006). From this perspective, spaces do not have meaning outside of discourse; they are products of discourse (Bartley et al., 2004). But, when put into discourse, spaces also *do something*: they work to produce the possibilities of recognisable subjects. Spaces enable and constrain how subjects can be recognised and how they can act within social spaces.

Most accounts of the social production of space begin with Lefebvre's (1991/1974) keystone text *The production of space*, in which he conducts a critical Marxist analysis of capitalist constructions of urban spaces. Here, Lefebvre highlights the ways spaces are separated and given meaning in capitalist societies – recreational space, private space, work space, and so on. Lefebvre's formative work has been influential on the ways space can be read as a social practice, but overlooks some key post-structuralist ideas about the multiplicity and fluidity of social life. Post-structural geographers have therefore come to develop ideas of space as a discursive construct: produced through histories and culturally mediated meanings (Massey, 2005; Thrift, 2004; Murdoch, 2006). In this sense, space is not a pre-made structure upon which people live their lives; rather, it is a product of human interactions and discursive practices. Post-structuralists move away from the notion of space as a container for social

action towards an idea of space as a "relational structure" (Thrift, 2004, p. 87)—produced through discursive interaction.

Secondly, many post-structuralist geographers consider space to be performative in the Butlerian sense (Gregson & Rose, 2000; Gulson, 2007; Tyler & Cohen, 2010). To argue that space is performative is to understand space as something that is *done*. As Doel (1999) explains, space should be considered a verb—a way of doing and being in the world. Or, as Murdoch puts it, a person does space like they *do* subjectivity: "space is practised and performed in the same way that social identity and belonging are practised and performed" (2006, p. 18). In a study of a car boot sale, for example, Gregson (Gregson & Rose, 2000) examines how the spaces of car boot sales garner their meaning from the repetitive and ongoing ways in which the spaces are put together. People move through the space of the car boot sale in ways that have specific meanings within the space. Particular identities are recognisable within the space of the car boot sale—the dodgy dealer, the hawker, the bargainer. The performative reiteration of car boot sale identities produces these subject positions as recognisable and normative within the space. But, moreover, the performative interactions within the space of the car boot sale produce the space by inscribing meaning upon the space—so that hawking, bargaining and consuming come to define the space *as* a car boot sale location. In this sense, Gregson highlights, "particular performances articulate their own spatialities, as opposed to being just located in space" (Gregson & Rose, 2000, pp. 446 - 447). Therefore, it is argued, "performances do not take place in already existing locations: the City, the bank, the franchise restaurant, the straight street. These 'stages' do not pre-exist their performances, waiting in some sense to be mapped out by performances" (p. 441); rather, spaces are produced through ongoing performative reiterations of their meanings. Reiterations of spatial meanings make certain ways of *doing* spatialities

recognisable. Spaces are produced and given meaning through discursive reiterations—they are performative (Gregson & Rose, 2000).

If space is performative and discursive, then it remains plausible that multiple discourses of the same space can exist simultaneously (Murdoch, 2006). Dominant (post)colonial discourses of spaces in Australia, for example, produce Australian land as something to be tended, disciplined and conquered. Such a reading of space is very different to Indigenous ideas of land stewardship, which position land as something to be respected and nurtured. Whilst the post-colonialist discourse of Australian land is dominant, alternative Indigenous discourses of Australian spaces remain somewhat recognisable, although perhaps called upon intermittently in national discourse (Healy, 2008). I explore this more in Chapter 4, which discusses rural Australian childhoods and Chapter 6, which discusses Indigenous Australian childhoods. From this perspective, a post-structuralist approach to space sees it as something that is contestable; the truths of space, like the truths of subjectivities, are discursive—produced through their ongoing citation.

Furthermore, where there are dominant discourses of spaces of the nation, the subjects that pass through national spaces are enabled and constrained by culturally regulated spatial understandings. Such understandings particularly emerge in Australian critical whiteness and post-colonial studies wherein white subjectivities can move through Australian spaces far differently than non-white subjectivities. Perera (2009), for example, highlights how belongings within the spaces of Australia, and particularly Australian beaches, are discursively linked to whiteness. White bodies can move through beach spaces in ways that are trusted and unquestioned, which functions in stark contrast to cultural (at times violent) resistance to non-white bodies on the beach. This white territorial notion of space is taken up in Chapter 6 of this study, *From white sands to black billabongs.*

What I think is central to this post-structuralist account of space is that space is inherently social and cultural. Meanings are ascribed to spaces through historical and cultural accounts of how to 'do' space, and in this sense, space only acquires meaning when put into discourse (Murdoch, 2006). A post-structuralist reading of space is applied throughout this thesis. I examine rural and suburban Australian childhoods in Chapters 4 and 5, where I consider the ways rural and suburban Australia are generally produced as white locales. I examine outback discourses of Indigenous Australians in Chapter 6, considering the outback a space for 'authentic' Indigenous Australian children. Chapter 7 continues a post-structuralist understanding of space, examining how the school is produced as a space for middle class white Australian childhoods. Thus, throughout the thesis, post-structuralist understandings of space inform my readings of Australian childhood—wherein idealised Australian childhood subjectivities both produce and are produced by the spaces in which they are framed.

Conclusion

Whilst Butler, Ahmed and Rose are heavily influenced by Foucault, each has developed independent theoretical trajectories. At times, their works differ theoretically from Foucault's. Butler, for example, advocates Foucault's perspective of power and discourse, while her work on the Subject does diverge from Foucault's in some ways. Most notably, Butler examines the discursive production of the Self and the Other as relational in a way that is less explicit in Foucault's work. Her approach has thus been labelled as "dialectic" (Salih, 2002, p. 30), a concept that Foucault rejects on the grounds of assuming a binary conception of the Self/Other. Nonetheless, as Butler herself argues in *Subjects of Desire* (2012/1987), Foucault's work is more dialectic than he lets on, given that he examines the production of categories such as madness and criminality in relation to social norms of sanity and legality. In this sense, Butler herself happily uses Foucauldian language about the

Subject while also speaking of the Other with less trepidation that Foucault. Despite these differences, both Foucault and Butler have been influential figures upon the post-structural theoretical framework (Ahmed, 2004; Mills, 2003). Given that my approach is influenced by both Foucault and Butler, I have labelled the theoretical approach that I bring to this thesis as broadly post-structural.

Ahmed (2004; 2010) primarily follows Butler in her feminist critique of the ways emotions, particularly happiness, are used to orient people towards the worthiness of particular subjectivities. For Ahmed, reiterations of happiness as proximate to particular subject positions constructs certain subject positions as inherently good, and others as inherently bad. Her utilisation of Butler's Self/Other thesis (Ahmed, 2006) marks a significant divergence from Foucault, while retaining the Foucauldian idea that discourse produces subjects.

Rose, meanwhile, utilises post-structural Foucauldian discourse analysis to examine the ways power functions within particular historical moments to produce the category of childhood. He takes up Foucault's notion of governmentality in his analysis of power in neoliberal times, extending Foucault's theorisations into studies of childhood, consumption and advertising (Rose, 1999/1990). Furthermore, he conducts a Foucauldian examination of the power of discourse to influence Subjects to self-govern in relation to social norms. When examining neoliberal consumption discourse, he sees advertisements as producing social norms, often in the name of scientific truth, in order to convince viewers to consume in particular ways. While Rose's examinations of advertising have been informative, I have explained that his work is limited, and examined other works that view advertising in a broader sense in order to widen my understandings of the purposes of advertising.

The theoretical notion that truth and knowledge are produced by powerful historical and cultural discourses informs my analysis. I approach the television advertisements and consumption discourses that I examine as contributing to the production of a discursive truth about Australian childhood. The television advertisements have the power to regulate the ways in which Australian childhood identities are normatively understood. By placing the production of the category of Australian childhood in the context of the languages in which it is reiterated and produced, this work functions as a Foucauldian archaeological study that works to reveal the constructedness of Australian childhood. Rose and his media studies contemporaries, furthermore, contribute understandings about the link between the rhetorical functions of advertisements in neoliberal contexts and the discourses produced, in order to help understand the link between the production of (enabling, limiting and exclusionary) discourses of Australian childhoods and the image management imperatives of advertisers in neoliberal times. In revealing how Australian childhood is a discursive construct, this work contributes to an ethical project of deconstructing extant ways of understanding the category of Australian childhood so that it might be re-imagined in more inclusive ways.

Introduction

This methodology chapter works through "questions about how [the] research should proceed" (Gough, 2002, p. 7) in accordance with the research conventions of cultural studies (Yell, 2005), media studies (Stokes, 2006), and (post-)structuralism (Lee, 2000). I describe the research practices undertaken in order to provide assurance of trustworthiness, responsibility and systemacity (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2008; Lee, 2000). By explaining my research practices, this chapter works to position my research as "responsible and responsive to the regulatory practices" (Lee, 2000, p. 191) of the academic scholarship with which I engage. The chapter goes through the research practices employed in four steps, describing and evaluating: the selected methodologies for data analysis; the methods for reading the data; the data collection procedures; and fourthly, the reflexive practices I employ in my research.

The chapter begins with an examination of the methodologies used to address the research question. Two methodologies typically used in post-structuralist analyses of discourse are social semiotic and discourse analysis methodologies (Yell, 2005; Stokes, 2006; Threadgold, 2000; van Leeuwen, 2005). Their use together provides strategies for

examining the ways representational practices that are regular across several texts produce social discourses. Social semiotics examines the ways representational practices produce texts (van Leeuwen, 2005), and discourse analysis examines the ways texts produce discourses (Willig, 2008). Used together, they provide for this thesis a way of examining the production of discourses of Australian childhoods on television advertisements.

The chapter then turns to an examination of methods for analysis developed within social semiotic and discourse analytic methodological traditions. I outline ways of examining the discursive aspects of texts in terms of the ways texts produce subjectivities within their narratives (Willig, 2008; Carbine, 2001; Fairclough, 1995). Then, I outline ways of examining semiotic meanings of multimodal texts in terms of visual, written, sonic and motive semiotic conventions (Cranny-Francis, 2005; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

Thirdly, data collection methods are outlined. This involves an explanation of the ways I chose my archives for the collection of television advertisements, the ways I developed themes from the advertisements, and the ways I selected exemplary texts for deconstruction in the analysis chapters. The archives of the National Film and Sound Archive and YouTube were used in data collection to provide breadth of data. Drawing on McKee (2011), I explain the value of the use of these two archives side by side. The advertisements were then synthesised into themes on the basis of the narratives employed (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Carabine, 2001). The four themes developed are: rural Australian childhoods, suburban Australian childhoods, Australian childhoods on beaches and billabongs, and Australian schooling childhoods. Exemplar advertisements (Stokes, 2006) were selected that were representative of the broad discourses identified within each theme.

Lastly, I consider epistemological questions about how my readings of the data are shaped by my own subject position (Lee, 2000; Ahmed, 2005). Rather than simply naming my own

subjectivities, I critique the discursive work implicit in reflexive practice and examine how my work is situated in relation to feminist and Black scholarship. Following Ahmed (2005), I argue that my position of privilege is not transcended through the naming of my own privilege. Given that my readings are inevitably shaped by my privilege, they cannot do the same work as feminist and black scholarship, but can contribute to a shared political project for social justice.

Data Analysis Methodologies

To address the research question, this thesis draws upon the methodological traditions of both discourse analysis (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008; Foucault, 1972; Graham, 2005; Kendall & Wickham, 1999; Willig, 2008) and social semiotics (Halliday, 1978; Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Hodge & Kress, 1988; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Symes, 1998; van Leeuwen, 2005). There is a close complimentary relationship between discourse analysis and social semiotics (Yell, 2005) inasmuch as both concern themselves with the ways meaning is produced through communication. While discourse analysis examines the ways texts produce discourses (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008; Willig, 2008), social semiotics examines how semiotic signs make up meaningful texts within cultural contexts (Hodge & Kress, 1988; van Leeuwen, 2005). Recent scholars drawing upon the two methodological traditions have highlighted how social semiotics proves to be a productive methodology for identifying the characteristics of texts, which is invaluable for an examination of the ways texts produce discourses (van Leeuwen, 2005; Yell, 2005). As van Leeuwen argues:

> Evidence for the existence of a given discourse comes from texts, from what has been said or written – and/or expressed by means of other semiotic modes. ... It is on the basis of … similar statements, repeated or paraphrased in different texts and dispersed among texts in different ways, that we can reconstruct the knowledge which [discourses] represent. (2005, p. 95)

Thus, by focusing on the semiotic elements of texts, their discursive function can come to be analysed (van Leeuwen, 2005; Yell, 2005). The complimentary use of discourse analysis and social semiotics has been exemplified in recent studies, particularly by multimodal discourse analyses of media texts (Hallett & Kaplan-Weinger, 2010; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; LeVine & Scollon, 2004). Multimodal discourse analyses have explored issues such as: gender production in online instant messaging (LeVine & Scollon, 2004), ideologies on newspaper homepages (Knox, 2009b) and national identities on tourism websites (Hallett & Kaplan-Weinger, 2010). Similarly, scholars from post-structural orientations have extensively used both discursive and semiotic methodologies complimentarily in studies of issues such as: gender and race in the media (Schirato & Yell, 2000), gender and social class in school prospectuses (Gottschall et al., 2010; Wardman et al., 2010), and social status in magazine advertisements (Ketabi & Najafian, 2011a, 2011b). In this study, social semiotics and discourse analysis together provide the methodological foundations to explore the ways Australian television advertisements composed of semiotic signs form discourses of Australian childhood. In this section, I outline the key functions of social semiotics and discourse analysis.

Social Semiotics

Social semiotics is the study of the signifying practices in social contexts. It reveals how meaning making is a social practice by examining how meanings are produced through the interactions of signs and their contexts (Halliday, 1978; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; van Leeuwen, 2005). Social semiotics is used in several fields of scholarly analysis, including media and communication studies (Ketabi & Najafian, 2011a, 2011b; Yell, 2005), cultural studies (Schirato & Yell, 2000; Stokes, 2003), education (Gottschall et al., 2010; Symes, 1998; Wardman et al., 2010), linguistics (Knox, 2009b) and post-colonial studies (Bowman, 2010; Carlson, 2008). It is particularly useful to analyses of the ways media produce

meaning because "meanings in the media are communicated by signs, and semiotics is concerned with the question of how signs work" (Bignell, 2002, p. 2). Its uses in media studies are multifarious, including for analyses of websites (Baldry & Thibault, 2006; Bateman, 2008; Cranny-Francis, 2005), print advertising (Cheong, 2004; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; O'Halloran, 2008) and film (van Leeuwen, 1991).

The semiotic approach employed in this thesis draws on the 'social' semiotic methodology, and is informed by formative theorists in the field including Hodge & Kress (1988), Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), van Leeuwen (2005), Yell (2005) and Halliday and Hasan (1989). Here, I will briefly outline the origins of social semiotics in order to exemplify both the linguistic origins of the methodology and the particular nuances that demarcate its theoretical approach from that of related semiotic and linguistic methodologies.

In this thesis, where post-structural theory and its insistence on interpretation and subjectivity is a dominant lens through which the data is analysed, the social aspect of semiotics is emphasised. In this sense, I embrace social semiotics for its consistencies with the post-structuralist critique of the presumed truths that exist as if they were embedded in signs. However, inasmuch as post-structuralism comes after structuralism and social semiotics comes after semiotics, my use of 'post'-structuralism and 'social' semiotics is not intended as an outright rejection of structuralist semiotic methodologies, but rather to use them cautiously (Sturrock, 1986/2003; Yell, 2005; Lee, 2000; Bartley et al., 2004). As Sturrock (1986/2003) puts it, "post-structuralism is not 'post' in the sense of having killed structuralism off, it is 'post' only in the sense of coming after and of seeking to extend structuralism" (p. 122-123). Post-structuralism, in this sense, is a critique of structuralism by scholars engaged with and concerned with structuralist methodologies. It is "a critique of [the presumption of order and truthfulness posited by] structuralism conducted *from within*" (Sturrock, 1986/2003, p. 123, y emphasis) and, therefore, has "carried the insights of

structuralism" (Sturrock, 1986/2003, p. 142) through that critique. In this thesis, then, I do not presume to reject structuralism as something useless for my methodologies; rather, through a post-structuralist lens, I use and extend the structuralist methodology of semiotics through the use of 'social' semiotics. Here, then, I cross the porous boundaries between semiotics and social semiotics, structuralism and post-structuralism.

Social semiotics: the origins

Social semiotics grew out of a convergence between on the one hand the structuralist semiotics of Barthes (1972) and his predecessors (de Saussure, 1916/1966), and on the other hand systemic-functional linguistic analysis, particularly based upon the works of Halliday (1978; Halliday & Hasan, 1989). By building on systemic-functional linguistics' concerns with *contexts* in language formation (Halliday, 1978), and Semiotics' concerns with non-linguistic meaning (Barthes, 1972), social semiotics emerged as a discipline concerned with the contextualised formations of meanings by non-linguistic significations (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). By examining the contextualised formations of signs in a communicative event, social semiotic researchers examine how signs are used to produce meaning within a context.

The formative structuralist school of Semiotics, commonly known as Semiology (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), gained its currency in Paris in the 1970, but emerged out of the earlier linguistic works of Ferdinand de Saussure in France and Charles Saunders Pierce in the United States (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). The structuralist semioticians of the 1970s viewed signs as maintaining a static, universal meaning that is delivered largely unchanged into the mind of the sign's receiver. Perhaps the most influential of these structuralist semioticians is Roland Barthes, whose early works argue that a 'signifier' prompts an understanding in one's mind (the 'signified') in a generally unified and unchanged manner

(Barthes, 1972). Barthes (1972) explains this process by using the example of one person giving another person roses. When someone gives roses (the signifier), the act is to signify passion (the signified). However, while this process is cogent and rational within western societies, giving roses in another society or context may signify something entirely different. That is to say, structuralist semiotics overlooks contexts, something addressed by social semiotics.

The structuralist view of semiotics maintained its relevance well into the 1980s and 1990s, particularly in the works of John Fiske who published *Reading television* in 1987. However, over the last decades of the 20th Century, social semiotic works influenced by systemic-functional linguistics also gained currency. A formative scholar within social semiotics is Michael Halliday, whose systemic-functional approach to linguistics argued that language meaning is contingent upon contexts (Halliday, 1978; Halliday & Hasan, 1989). This contextual approach to the reading of meaning-making was introduced by Halliday and others such as Hodge and Kress (1988) in order contextualise the meanings of non-linguistic as well as linguistic signs. Halliday considers the meanings of signs as contingent upon the social and cultural environments in which they occur:

> when I say 'social-semiotic', in the first instance, I am simply referring to the definition of a social system, or a culture, as a system of meanings. But I also intend a more specific interpretation of the word 'social', to indicate that we are concerned particularly with the relationships between language and social structure, considering the social structure as one aspect of the social system. (Halliday & Hasan, 1989, p. 4)

For Halliday, as with social semioticians such as Hodge and Kress (1988), van Leeuwen (2005) and Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) who are influenced by Halliday's work, signs must be considered in relation to nearby semiotic resources and surrounding contexts; hence the 'social' aspect of social semiotics. Social semioticians, therefore, argue that a structuralist conception of meaning-making is inadequate as it finalises the potential of meaning making

at the site of production, which ignores the ways texts exist within contexts (Cranny-Francis, 2005; Hodge & Kress, 1988; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Symes, 1998; Yell, 2005). As Symes argues,

> Mainstream semiotics, particularly in its Saussurean incarnations, had tended to be context-devoid, to be overly concerned with the formal and structural properties of language and sign systems, and to maintain a divide between itself and the power dynamics of society ... (1998, p. 135)

In a trend that Symes calls "the socialisation of semiotics" (1998, p. 135), many semioticians in the late 1980s onwards extended and critiqued the structuralism of semiotics in order to consider 'social' context as an important factor in the creation of meaning, and social semiotics emerged as a dominant approach to text analysis in media, cultural and advertising studies (Bignell, 2002; Yell, 2005).

There are several key concepts that underlie a social semiotic analysis and are necessary to understand how social semiotics functions in the analysis of the production of textual meanings. The central concepts in social semiotics that will be discussed here are: the social semiotic understanding of the text (Fürsich, 2009; van Leeuwen, 2005; Yell, 2005), the social semiotic understanding of the sign/semiotic resource (Hodge & Kress, 1988; van Leeuwen, 2005), and the analytical activities of social semiotics categorised under the terms: *semiotic potential*, *semiotic affordance* and *semiotic inventory* (van Leeuwen, 2005).

Central to social semiotics is the concept of the **text** (Yell, 2005). Its use in textual analysis is diverse (Fürsich, 2009; Yell, 2005) and an explanation of its use within social semiotics and this thesis is therefore pertinent. Within social semiotics, a text is considered to be any event where communication takes place (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). A person walking down the street, a conversation, a book, or a television advertisement could all be considered texts. Yell (2005) provides an instructive social semiotic definition of a text by providing two key principles about texts: one, that texts are created in relation to a context; and the

other, that texts are both products and processes. In the first instance, Yell (2005) reinforces that, like an individual sign, a text is always and inevitably within a context which shapes its formation and reception. This is why social semiotics concerns itself with examining the *contexts* in which the textual signifying practices are located (Yell, 2005). Secondly, as both products and processes, texts can be both physical products (a book, a television show, etc.) and fleeting and fluid interactions in time and space (a conversation with a peer, a car drive to work, etc.). Regardless of its medium, the text produces meanings that can be analysed through social semiotics (Yell, 2005).

Texts are formed by **semiotic resources**, which are the basic communicative acts that give texts meaning (Hodge & Kress, 1988; van Leeuwen, 2005). A social semiotic analysis examines the ways semiotic resources are used in the production of the text. Semiotic resources are "the actions and artefacts we use to communicate" (van Leeuwen, 2005)— hand gestures, facial expressions, drawings, spoken words, written words, traffic lights, dress wear, a person's gait, et cetera. The semiotic resource was traditionally called the 'sign' in semiotics, however social semiotics now employs the term 'semiotic resource' to show that the sign does not have a predetermined meaning, but rather has a specific meaning in a specific context. Hence, it is a resource to be used, and will gain meaning when put into a context (van Leeuwen, 2005). Semiotic resources examined in this thesis take multiple forms, as television advertisements are *multimodal* texts. Visual, sonic, motive and written semiotic resources are all examined throughout the thesis, and the meanings they offer to the texts are explored. Ways in which each of these modes of signification can produce cultural meanings are examined later in this chapter.

Given that social semiotics accepts that the meanings made from semiotic resources are contingent upon the contexts in which the semiotic resources are used, it is important that social semioticians examine what possible meaning or meanings can be made when the

semiotic resource is put into context (Cranny-Francis, 2005; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). To do this, the social semiotician examines a text's **semiotic potential** (van Leeuwen, 2005), which is the potential for a semiotic resource to make meanings. The semiotic potential, then, is the possible meanings of a semiotic resource within a context. For example, the use of a red octagon as a road sign has the likely semiotic potential to signify 'stop', whereas a red octagon in a child's play pen has different semiotic potential: it might simply be a learning tool whose association is more likely with becoming familiar with regular polygons than with road safety.

A semiotic resource can not only glean meaning within the context of a text, but also contribute meaning to the text in which it is placed. The possible ways in which a semiotic resource can contribute to the overall meaning of the text in which it is placed is named the **semiotic affordance** (Hodge & Kress, 1988; van Leeuwen, 2005). The semiotic affordance of the semiotic resource thus explains that it is both affected by the surrounding resources, and affects the surrounding resources and the meaning of the text as a whole (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). For example, not only would a stop sign garner its semiotic potential from the surrounding contexts, road and cars that constitute a road-transport text, but its existence within the text is another resource that cogently fits into the transport motif, thus reinforcing to the text's receiver that the scene they are witnessing is, indeed, a scene by a road. Therefore, not only does the context affect the semiotic resource but the semiotic resource also affects the context.

Fifthly, van Leeuwen (2005) argues that a descriptive **semiotic inventory** of the conventional uses of semiotic resources within a specific context is necessary prior to analysis. By creating an inventory prior to analysis, researchers can engage with the meanings cultures can ascribe to semiotic resources in particular contexts. For example, later in this chapter where I describe methods of social semiotics, an inventory of cinematic

signifying techniques is developed in order to show ways televisual texts can create

meanings using cultural conventions of televisual and cinematic meaning making (Cranny-

Francis, 2005; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

These five key terms discussed are illustrated below:

Concept/ Activity	Description	An Example in this Thesis
Central Concepts in Social Semiotics		
Text	The text is any communicative act. Texts are produced within contexts and can be both product (a book, and image) and process (a conversation, a gait). (Yell, 2005)	A television advertisement is a text.
Semiotic resources	The basic units of communication—hand gestures, words, images, etc. (Hodge & Kress, 1988; van Leeuwen, 2005).	Semiotic resources that communicate meanings in the advertisements include the clothing worn by the depicted actors, their skin colour, the ways they walk, the sports they play, the colours used in the advertisements, the camera angles employed, the soundtracks playing, the words spoken in the voiceover, etc.
Central Activities in Social Semiotics		
Identifying the Semiotic potential of a semiotic resource	Semiotic potential is the possible meaning or meanings that can be made when the semiotic resource is put into context (van Leeuwen, 2005).	A red octagon will likely signify a stop sign if the advertisement is about a road trip.
Identifying the semiotic affordances of a semiotic resource	The semiotic affordances of a semiotic resource are the ways in which a semiotic resource can be used to shape the meaning of the text as a whole (Hodge & Kress, 1988; van Leeuwen, 2005)	The depiction of a natural landmark such as Uluru or a kangaroo can be used to frame an advertisement as Australian. That is, the semiotic affordance of Uluru is that it can frame the text as being uniquely Australian.
Developing an inventory of semiotic resources	Development of an inventory is a Social Semiotic activity in which the semiotician lists and categorises key semiotic resources that are used in the particular contexts to be	An inventory of culturally significant semiotic resources that are used in the creation of televisual texts is developed in Part II of this chapter, listed under the categories of 'visual semiotic resources', 'written semiotic

	analysed prior to analysis (van Leeuwen, 2005)	resources', 'motive semiotic resources' and 'sonic semiotic resources'.

Social semiotics is thus useful for coming to understand how semiotic resources can be used to produce meaningful texts, such as television advertisements. Social semiotics, then, can yield significant insights into the ways texts produce meanings.

Discourse Analysis

While I use social semiotics to examine the ways signs produce texts, I turn to discourse analysis methodologies to examine the ways many interrelated texts produce discourses. Discourse analysis is thus used alongside social semiotics here, so that I can understand both the textual and broader discursive meanings produced within television advertisements. My discourse analytic methodology is heavily influenced by Foucault (1972), who argues that interrelated texts construct discourses that form normative and recognisable subject positions (Foucault, 1972). Foucault's discourse analysis focusses on the ways discourses enact power by producing and normalising categories of the being in the world, as well as ways of imagining the world as 'truth' (Foucault, 2002b; Rose, 2007). There are several key components to the discursive production of knowledge as truth, as follows: a group of texts produce a discourse, and regularly name a subject in the same way, thereby producing the subject as recognisable (Foucault, 1972). These steps will be outlined herein. First, however, a definition of the Foucauldian concepts of discourse is required.

There are several key features to Foucault's conception of **discourse** which make it distinctive. Firstly, Foucault considers discourses as providing the conditions for which subject positions become recognisable and normalised (Foucault, 1972). Foucault considers discourses not simply as *spoken by* subjects, but also as constituting subjects, as he explains in *The archaeology of knowledge* (1972):

> [Discourse analysis is] a task that consists of not—of no longer—treating discourses as groups of signs (signifying elements referring to contents or representations) but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. Of course, discourses are composed of signs; but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this *more* that renders them irreducible to the language (*langue*) and to speech. It is this 'more' that we must reveal and describe. (p. 48)

Here, Foucault surmises several complex points that are central to his conception of discourse. Firstly, he points out that discourses are not simply composed of language but all forms of semiotic practices—hence the particular value of using a social semiotic analysis in conjunction with discourse analysis. Secondly, he argues that discourses do more than innocuously describe the subject. For Foucault, discourses produce the subject by repeatedly and regularly naming it in a particular way. Therefore, from a Foucauldian theoretical orientation, a series of television advertisements that produce an Australian childhood discourse are considered to be collectively making that way of speaking about the Australian child truthful, recognisable and normative.

In *The archaeology of knowledge* (1972), Foucault presents four concepts that provide a theoretical framework for considering how subjects become objects of discourse. These concepts are: the statements, the object of discourse, the discourse, and the discursive formation (Foucault, 1972). Firstly, the **statements** are the data/texts analysed, such as the television advertisements in this study. Secondly, a **discourse** is produced by a series of statements/texts that consistently name the object of discourse. Thirdly, a **discursive formation** is the set of rules utilised by discourses (Foucault, 1972; Rose, 2007)—that is, the necessary ways of naming the subject in order for it to be recognisable as a particular type of subject. Lastly, an **object of discourse** is a subject that is constituted within discourse (Foucault, 1972). These four concepts are illustrated below, with an example of their uses in the thesis provided:

Concept	Description	Example from thesis

The statements (texts)	The data analysed	The texts under analysis are Australian television advertisements
The discourse	A discourse is produced by an assembly of statements or texts that adhere to one set of social rules about naming a subject, and in so doing constitute the subject. A discourse is "a group of statements as far as they belong to the same discursive formation" (Foucault, 1972, p. 117).	A discourse of Australian childhood can be produced when an array of Australian television advertisements regularly name the Australian childhood subject according to a similar set of rules.
The discursive formation	A discursive formation is a set of social and institutional rules that govern how the subject is regularly and systematically described in discourse. (Foucault, 1972)	The Australian childhood subject on television advertisements is regularly described in particular ways, such as gendered, raced, social classed, geographical, sporting, etc., and influenced by neoliberal consumption rationalities.
The object of discourse	The object of discourse is the subject that is "delimited, designated, named, and established" (Foucault, 1972, p. 42) by discourse, and therefore made an object of discourse.	The object of discourse under analysis is the Australian child.

These four components: the texts, the discourse, the discursive formation and the object of discourse are the constituent elements of a Discourse Analyses. With these four key terms defined, a discourse analysis can be described. Foucault's own PhD dissertation on madness can be used to exemplify this point (Foucault, 1989/1961). In his thesis, Foucault examines the ways medical, psychological and religious records (the texts) form a discourse of madness (the discourse) by consistently adhering to the same social and institutional rules (the discursive formation) in the description of madness (the object of discourse). This procedure has also been taken up in countless Foucauldian Discourse Analyses in various fields of research, including but not limited to cultural studies (Graham, 2005; Kendall & Wickham, 1999; Poynton, 2000; Threadgold, 2000) and media studies (Sinclair, 2006; Stokes, 2003). Indeed, another key theorist used in this thesis, Nikolas Rose, uses this

Foucauldian method of analysis of discourse in his studies of childhood. In *Governing the soul*, Rose (1999/1990) examines how family, psychology, education and advertising texts (the texts) construct a discourse of childhood (the discourse) by consistently utilising psychological norms (the discursive formation) in the construction of the childhood subject (the object of discourse). By the same formula, I examine how Australian television advertisements construct discourses of Australian childhood national identities by consistently producing Australian childhood as gendered, middle class and white, to construct the normative and recognisable Australian childhood subject.

Discourse Analysis has branched out into several methodological models for the examination of the textual production of discourse which, while all influenced by a Foucauldian view of discourse, have come to have their own nuances. There are multiple forms of discourse analysis. Three prominent discourse analytic methodologies have been influential to this thesis; these are Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA). While each has nuanced differences in focus, the three models provide informative foundational understandings and methods about how discourse analysis takes place.

Foucauldian Discourse Analysis has been developed as a discourse analytic model that aligns itself closely to Foucauldian notions of uncertainty, scepticism and the destabilisation of truth. It characteristically draws upon first-hand accounts of Foucault's texts in order to align itself with Foucault's archaeological and genealogical projects (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008; Carabine, 2001; Foucault, 1972; Graham, 2005; Kendall & Wickham, 1999; Willig, 2008). Drawing upon Foucault, FDA aims to reveal the complexity through which objects of discourse are formed, and to do this without alluding to any presumed truths about their authentic and unadulterated properties (Foucault, 1972; Graham, 2005). As Foucault states,

> …what we are concerned with here is not to neutralize discourse … but on the contrary to maintain it in its consistency, to make it emerge in its own complexity. What, in short, we wish to do is to … substitute for the enigmatic treasure of 'things' anterior to discourse, the regular formation of objects that emerge only in discourse. To define these *objects* without reference to the *ground,* the *formation of things*, but by relating them to the body of rules that enable them to form as objects of a discourse… (1972, pp. 47 - 48 , original italics)

This approach is also characterised by lack of specific procedural methods for the analysis of discourse. Foucault's reluctance to provide procedure for discourse analysis has its basis in his disputation of the idea that there might be a true or correct way of doing things (O'Farrell, 2005). For Foucault, to develop a procedure for discourse analysis would involve the production of a scientific metanarrative, a concept Foucault attempts to undermine. Thus, Foucault describes his work as "a labyrinth into which I can venture, in which I can move my discourse, opening up underground passages, forcing it to go far from itself" (1972, p. 17). Here, Foucault is explaining method as an exploratory practice in which irregular and complex explorations of the discursive event can take place. His analysis is not restricted to procedural steps but rather involves explorations that follow various textual possibilities that lead to unknown conclusions. In this way, Foucault argues, "I can lose myself and appear at last" (1972, p. 17) to proffer explanations that could not be reached using a procedural framework. Foucault sees his Discourse Analytic work as inspiration for people "to read his books and take away whatever ideas they found interesting for their own purposes, not apply them as a system" (O'Farrell, 2005, p. 120). His Discourse Analytic work is thus seen as inspiration for future analyses rather than as prescriptive procedure. Therein, a Foucauldian discourse analysis has its focus on remaining true to Foucauldian resistance to scientific metanarratives, scepticism of all truth claims, and to revealing how truth is produced in discourse.

Other discourse analysts, however, have developed somewhat more prescriptive accounts of how to do the analysis of discourse. Central among these accounts are those found in Critical

Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1992, 1995; Taylor, 2004; van Dijk, 1995; Yell, 2005). CDA is a broad concept which has come to be used loosely as any form of discourse analysis that takes a critical stance towards the exercise of power through discourse. Thus, it may be used to describe varied approaches to discourse analysis, including MDA (Machin & Mayr, 2012); however, it generally takes on an explicit linguistic focus that differentiates it from MDA (Fairclough, 1992, 1995; van Dijk, 1995). It primarily involves examination of the ways written and spoken word can produce discourse, and CDA scholars in recent decades have developed extensive methods for the analysis of language. Given that television advertisements can feature both written and spoken word, methods from CDA scholarship are informative for this thesis's analyses of the linguistic features of television advertisements.

Furthermore, Critical Discourse Analysis explicitly takes up the political project of aligning its analyses with the marginalised Other (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000; Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1995). It is less focussed on Foucauldian deferral of truth claims as it is on undermining the power of dominant ideologies. Indeed, CDA's focus on the ideologies of the dominant and dominated subjects of discourse reveals a clear distinction between CDA and FDA. FDA focusses on the practices of discourse, rather than on promoting or undermining ideological doctrines. Therein, and more explicitly than FDA, CDA "implies a critical and oppositional stance *against the powerful and elites*" (van Dijk, 1995, p. 18, original emphasis) and in "*solidarity* with dominated groups" (p. 18, original emphasis). Foucauldian scholars such as Graham (2005) and Wetherall (2001) argue that CDA's focus on taking an absolute ethical and political stance is something of which Foucauldian scholars should always be sceptical. By contrast, Foucauldian Discourse Analysis "endeavours to avoid the substitution of one 'truth' for another" (Graham, 2005, p. 3). While CDA's emphasis on *aligning* its work with the marginalised Other is not unequivocally employed

in this thesis, there is an explicit concern with how Otherness is produced in discourse. In this sense, my work takes on a Foucauldian scepticism about truth claims rather than a hard-line CDA oppositional stance. CDA is nonetheless invaluable for coming to understand the role of language in the production of discourse, and CDA methods of linguistic analysis (Fairclough, 1995) are therefore taken up in the method section of this chapter. For the analysis of other modes of address such as the visual and sonic, however, Multimodal Discourse Analysis emerges as an informative discourse analytic model.

Multimodal Discourse Analysis examines the ways texts which are multimodal can contribute to the production of discourse (Cheong, 2004; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; LeVine & Scollon, 2004; O'Halloran, 2004, 2008; Schirato & Webb, 2004). Like CDA, it is influenced by a Foucauldian approach to discourse without close alignment and engagement with Foucault's broader archaeological and genealogical projects. MDA recognises the broad amount of signifying practices that can produce meaning and contribute to the formation and reiteration of discourse (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). It is often used in conjunction with social semiotic analytical methods in order to garner the meanings of the multimodal texts that produce discourse, and in this sense MDA has provided extensive precedence for the use of semiotic methods in conjunction with discursive methods (Ketabi & Najafian, 2011a, 2011b; Knox, 2009b). When used with social semiotics, it is often labelled Systemic-Functional Multimodal Discourse Analysis to highlight the value of Halliday's systemic-functional work that was outlined earlier in this chapter (LeVine & Scollon, 2004). In contrast to linguistic CDA analyses, then, the meanings of words from the perspective of MDA are examined not only for their linguistic aspects but also the range of ways inflections and modulations in voice can also convey meanings. Furthermore, MDA focusses on how other non-verbal modes of address can produce meaning and contribute to discourse, including written, visual, motive and sonic modes (O'Halloran, 2004; van

Leeuwen, 2005). MDA, therefore, is a part of this analysis inasmuch as multiple modes of address are examined when exploring the production of discourses on television advertisements. While I more closely align my analyses with the Foucauldian archaeological project than many MDA works, the example set by MDA in the use of social semiotics to examine discourse, and the methods developed, are influential herein.

Data Analysis Methods

Having outlined the methodologies used in this study, this section turns to how those methodologies can be employed in the analysis of texts. In this section, the specific methods of analysis used in discourse analysis and social semiotics are discussed. While Foucault is careful not to provide rigid or step-by-step accounts of how to conduct analyses (Graham, 2005; O'Farrell, 2005), methods of analysis are nonetheless necessary in this dissertation for the purposes of scholarly integrity (Lee, 2000). As Lee argues when discussing Foucault's resistance to prescriptive methods:

> The project of engaging in the search for method is both necessary and inevitable. The need for 'responsibility' in research brings a corresponding requirement for systematicity, of some kind or another (2000, p. 202)

To achieve "an authoritative account about the site" (Lee, 2000, p. 198), this section draws from Foucault's explanations of his analyses in his methodological treatise *The archaeology of knowledge* (1972) as well as methods developed by subsequent discourse analysts including Willig (2008), Kendall and Wickham (1999), Cranny-Francis (2005) and Søndergaard (2002). In keeping to a Foucauldian analytical framework, I do not provide steps with which analysis will take place, but rather map the ways in which texts and can be approached and discourses analysed.

Foucauldian Approaches to the Analysis of Discourse

Many Foucauldian scholars have developed frameworks for conducting analysis of discourse (Carabine, 2001; Willig, 2008; Kendall & Wickham, 1999). Here, I outline some analytical themes that have been developed by Foucauldian discourse analysts. Willig's work on identifying discursive subject in the text and the social practices informing the text (Willig, 2008) are explored, as are the ways Rose (2007) and Cranny-Francis (2005) examine wider discourses informing the text. I then turn to Søndergaard's methods of examining subject positions constructed within the text (Søndergaard, 2002; Willig, 2008).

A primary task involved in discourse analysis is the identification of the instances in which the discursive subject is constructed (Carabine, 2001; Kendall & Wickham, 1999; Willig, 2008). In the case of this thesis, the discursive subject is primarily the Australian child. Here, I consider both the explicit and the implicit references to the discursive subject. When a subject is explicitly absent from a text, it may not be discursively absent (Carabine, 2001; Søndergaard, 2002; Taylor, 2004). Its absence could reveal significant features of its subjecthood. As Willig explains, "the fact that a text does not contain a direct reference to the discursive object can tell us a lot about the way in which the object is constructed" (2008, p. 115). For example, a text involving parents discussing how they might paint a baby room for an impending birth does not feature a child, but the choice of paint colours and toys might make implicit statements about the gender of the inferred child.

Another key understanding in discourse analytic research is that discourses are "already socially established" (Butler, 1990, p. 191) prior to their reiteration in the text. As Foucault explains, "every statement involves a field of antecedent elements in relation to which it is situated." (1972, p. 124). Therein, discourse analyses generally examine the various **wider discourses** that texts rely upon in producing meaning (Carabine, 2001; Foucault, 1972; Rose, 2007; Willig, 2008). While one discursive subject might be referred to several times across the texts under analysis, differing discourses might be invoked to construct the same

subject at various times. For example, discourses of childhood as natural might be invoked to construct childhood in one instance, while discourses of childhood as evil might be invoked to construct childhood in an entirely different way in another instance.

Along with examining the wider discourses that inform the discourse under analysis, Willig (2008) recommends an examination of the social context in which the discursive object is being deployed. For this, researchers should ask: "what is gained from constructing the object in this particular way at this particular point within the text?" (Willig, 2008, p. 116; Fariclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1995). This sort of work is particularly evident in Critical Discourse Analyses, which aim to examine how texts work to reinforce the ideological dominance of particular social groups (van Dijk, 1995). In this sense, a discursive subject is represented in a particular way for a particular purpose. For example, what does the brand seek to gain from constructing a child in a particular way within an advertisement? Does a particular representation at a particular point in time make the brand seem more alluring to buy, or even important to buy? (Beasley & Danesei, 2002).

Also central to Foucauldian work is the question of legitimation. Or as Butler puts it, discursive reiterations "produce and regulate the intelligibility of … concepts" (1990, p. 44). Thus, a discourse analysis also often examines the subject positions that discursive constructions legitimise. This process asks what it is that is naturalised as 'common sense' as a result of the ways in which the discursive subject emerges (Butler, 1990; Willig, 2008). Søndergaard (2002) argues that such a process involves examining the practices of inclusion and exclusion. For Søndergaard (2002), "the idea is to make the processes of constitution explicit, processes that usually are regarded as natural and taken for granted in our discourses" (p. 190). For example, in Chapter 5, a cereal advertisement's representation of a group of five white boys (the discursive subjects) playing cricket in the backyard (wider discourses of Australianness) constructs white male subject positions as the *included*, or

legitimate, subject positions within Australian cricketing discourse, and simultaneously *excludes* ethno-racial minority and female subject positions.

Social Semiotic and Linguistic Approaches to the Analysis of Text

The above methods for the analysis of discourse are complimented by social semiotic methods for the analysis of the ways texts articulate meanings, which is necessary to understand discursive constructions. As explained earlier, a central activity of social semiotics is the development of a semiotic inventory of conventional uses of semiotic resources within a specific context (van Leeuwen, 2005). In developing an inventory of social semiotic readings of multimodal texts, I draw on the semiotic methods of various scholars including Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), van Leeuwen (2005), Cresswell (2005) and Cranny-Francis (2005) as well as CDA (Fairclough, 1992; 1995; 2001; van Dijk, 1995). Contextual, visual, sonic, motive and linguistic ways of analysing texts are outlined herein.

Firstly, social semiotics emphasises the role of context in the analysis of semiotic resources. The context in which this analysis of the television advertisements takes place is distinctly *Australian*. Thus, Australian culture is understood to be central to the analysis of the semiotic resources in the Australian television advertisements. Australian culture is an expansive category that influences the ways in which semiotic resources are deployed; images, symbols and inflections of Australianness produced on advertisements constitute the semiotic affordances of semiotic resources, contributing to the overall meanings of the texts and shaping them as distinctively Australian (Elder, 2007; Fiske, Hodge, & Turner, 1987; Hogan, 2009; Ward, 2003/1958). Furthermore, following cultural theorists such as Stuart Hall (1992) and John Storey (2003), I read culture as a transient, open-ended and fluid concept, which is both a living text and lived experience. Culture is momentarily produced and reproduced within social structures and power struggles which enable and constrain the

possibilities of how culture might be understood. As Dolby (2003) argues, culture exists simultaneously as social glue and social divider, identifying the insiders and outsiders of a group of people. From this perspective, Australian culture is neither innate to Australian people nor unchanging, but emerges momentarily in complex and contradictory ways in texts and social interactions (Hogan, 2009). Thus, it would not be possible to include an exhaustive array of Australian cultural signifiers for analysis in a single thesis. With this in mind, I draw in this thesis on the work of Hogan (2009) to consider Australian culture in the advertisements, under the categories of: social relationships, values and ethics; material and symbolic culture, physical environment, and everyday leisure activities (Hogan, 2009), and these categories are discussed later in this chapter.

Further to readings of texts in contextualised ways, I examine the ways texts gain meaning through intertextual significations. Following Kristeva, Cranny-Francis argues that intertextuality, or the ways in which texts draw upon other texts, influences the overall meanings of a text (Cranny-Francis, 2005). In making meaning of a television advertisement, for example, one must draw upon other artefacts in popular culture, including other television advertisements, film, literature, poetry, current affairs and so on, to inform the reading. By "locating it intertextually" (Cranny-Francis, 2005, p. 2), a text is understood in relation to the (con)texts which inform the text under analysis. In my analysis, then, the social and cultural contexts, especially within Australian national discourse, should be considered parts of the texts, and should be used when considering how the texts might come to make meaning of and for Australian childhoods.

Besides contextual factors, an examination of visual semiotic affordances is integral to social semiotics (Hodge & Kress, 1988; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; O'Halloran, 2004; van Leeuwen, 2011). Visual images can suggest meanings through the composition of their elements. Visual conventions used in the production of meaning include modality, salience,

location of elements within a frame, and relationships actors have between other actors as well as the camera (Cranny-Francis, 2005; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Modality is used to explain the realism of an image. An image with high modality appears truthful, as if it is unaltered or telling the real sequence of events. A photograph with earthly colours and seemingly natural levels of light might be considered to have higher modality than one whose fluorescent colours, brightness and contrast make it appear not to represent reality (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; O'Halloran, 2008). Salience of particular images can also affect meaning inasmuch as salient elements are given more importance to the overall meaning of the text. A salient component of the text is created through techniques such as increased brightness, size, attractiveness and centrality in the frame, and can indicate heightened importance of a particular object or actor in the image (Cranny-Francis, 2005; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Similarly, the stance of actors can indicate social dominance or subservience (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). For example, people facing straight-on to the camera hold more power than those side-on, while those facing directly away from the camera could be defiant, rude, or frightened, depending upon context; similarly, people looking down on the camera are afforded social power while those looking up at the camera are subservient (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Such ways of reading images are informative for coming to understand *how* images can come to convey dominant meanings of texts and can be used in data analysis when the discursive meaning of advertisements is being explored (van Leeuwen, 2005).

Similarly, movement can have cultural meanings applied to it which change depending upon the direction of the movement (Bowe & Wells, 1996; Caldwell, 2005; Cranny-Francis, 2005; Villarejo, 2006). In many western cultures, a movement on the horizontal axis from left to right can signify progress (Cranny-Francis, 2005). The meaning of this movement stems from the western writing tradition of writing from left to right. The reverse movement on

the horizontal axis – from right to left – implies the reverse of narrative, which is a return to the beginning. This symbolism of the return can be used as a metaphor for closure or realisation (Cranny-Francis, 2005). On the vertical axis, a movement from the bottom of the frame to the top is symbolic of a 'blast-off', seen in a positive or uplifting way (Caldwell, 2005; Cranny-Francis, 2005). In the reverse, a movement from top to bottom of frame is seen as a negative (Cranny-Francis, 2005).

As with direction, time is central to the progression of a narrative (Bowe & Wells, 1996; Caldwell, 2005; Villarejo, 2006). The speed of a film sequence affects meaning. A film sequence that is digitally manipulated to appear faster-than-life is called a 'fast motion' sequence which can imply action, panic or chaos (Caldwell, 2005). A film sequence that is digitally manipulated to be slower-than-life is called *slow motion* or *bullet speed* (Caldwell, 2005). A slow motion sequence indicates a moment of climax and can be used to attempt to generate an emotional reaction (Caldwell, 2005). In a broader sense, stories often unfold over a significant amount of time. Therein, audio-visual sequences function within two time spaces: *real time*, or the length of the time of the advertisement (generally 30 seconds), as well as *story time*, or the implied amount of time that passes in a narrative (Villarejo, 2006). Story time is generally implied through cinematic techniques such as *fade-ins*, *fade-outs*, *flashbacks* and *flash-forwards* (Bowe & Wells, 1996; Villarejo, 2006).

The notion that sonic factors can affect meaning of a text has a long history in post-structuralist and (social) semiotic scholarship (Barthes, 1972; Derrida, 1974; van Leeuwen, 1999). Notably, Bathes' examinations of the 'grain of the voice', introduces the idea that the voice bears the marks of the body. He describes the grain of the voice as "the *body in the voice as it sings*" (Barthes, 1972, p. 181, original italics). This introduces a way of examining human sounds, but music particularly, not only as language practice, but also as "the encounter between language and a voice" (Barthes, 1972, p. 181). Schafer (1977) proved

further formative insights into studies of sonic factors through his development of the concept of *soundscapes*. He argued for an examination of environmental sounds as musical pieces which can be analysed in a manner somewhat akin to the visual analysis of landscapes. Landscapes have landmarks while soundscapes have soundmarks; landscapes have foregrounds where soundscapes have sound signals; landscapes have backgrounds where soundscapes have keynotes (Schafer, 1977). Following Schaffer and Barthes, media, film and sound scholars have worked to examine how sound influences the meanings of multimodal texts (Cranny-Francis, 2005; Kassabian, 2001; van Leeuwen, 1999; Villarejo, 2006). Loud sounds, for example, can signify that the producer of the sound has authority and power (Cranny-Francis, 2005; Kassabian, 2001). Equally, silence is a method that can be used to indicate certain meanings (Caldwell, 2005); for example, a silent street in a western film indicates that a battle is imminent. Furthermore, meaning of a text can also be affected by the intertextual connotations that music brings to a text (Kassabian, 2001; Villarejo, 2006). When used in film, music creates associations between visual text and the signifiers in the music (Kassabian, 2001; Cranny-Francis, 2005), and thereby influences the overall meaning of the text. Cranny-Francis argues that "by using music that audience members associate with other events or situations, the score foregrounds the intertextual practice, encouraging viewers to bring other (individual) associations" (Cranny-Francis, 2005, p. 79) to the text. Heavy drum beats, for example, can at times signify the imminence of war.

Drawing on CDA methods (Fairclough, 2001; van Dijk, 1995; Taylor, 2004), linguistic meanings in the form of spoken and written word can be gleaned from texts. Meaning can be suggested by the written semiotic mode through, among other factors, use of *key words*, *clause*, *metonymy* and *metaphors* (Berger, 2004; Fairclough, 1992, 1995, 2001; Jager & Maier, 2009; Mulderrig, 2008; Taylor, 2004). Each individual key word in a text may alone

create multiple meanings. As Fairclough states, "words typically have various meanings, and meanings are typically 'worded' in various ways" (1992, p. 185). Ongoing use of several words that could signify a specific way of seeing could culminate to suggest a discursive understanding more forcibly. Metaphor, too, can be used to create meaning in a discourse through an intertextual analogy to another concept (Berger, 2004; Fairclough, 2001; Taylor, 2004). Metonymy can be used to refer to a concept not by name, but through association: such as describing the movie industry as 'Hollywood'. Synecdoche is another type of rhetoric. A synecdoche occurs when a word is a part of the whole, but is used to refer to the whole, as with referring to a car as 'wheels' (Berger, 2004). Such rhetoric is particularly influential in television advertisements explored in this thesis where for example one child can represent *all* Australian children, a concept that utilise in my analysis in Chapter 4.

The above methods for semiotic and discourse analysis provide invaluable resources for the reading of race, social class, and gender, which are not always straightforward categories to code. Such categories are central to my analyses and explored in all of the advertisements examined in this thesis. Semiotic and discursive indicators of race, social class, and gender require contextualised readings of those categories which are achieved through semiotic and discourse analysis (Yell, 2005). Racial groups, for example, have markers of inclusion and exclusion that go beyond skin tone (which, of course, is an important code in its own right). Racial groups also have their own codes of language, dress and demeanour (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Henley) which are each considered when race is read within the advertisements in this thesis. In the chapter *From White Sands to Black Billabongs*, for example, the Indigenous word 'billabong' is used by an Indigenous child in a way that highlights his race. Similarly, middle-class performatives are emphasised by advertisements in the chapter *A Touch of Nature in the Big Smoke* through the orderliness of the hedges in one advertisement, and in the chapter *Great Walls and other Obstacles* by the structured

rows of the school tables, demarcating the school as a place which embraces middle-class educational values. Gendered dress codes in the chapter *Wholesome Little Aussies*, where girls wear pink tutus and boys wear blue plaid farming shirts, and where women cook and men drive tractors, are all codes which are used to identify and gender within the advertisements. Thus, my readings of these central categories emerge through contextualised semiotic discursive readings of race, social class, and gender respectively, in order to glean the ways messages are produced and operationalised in the narratives of the texts.

Data Collection Procedure

Having outlined my methodologies and methods, I would like to turn to a discussion of my data collection procedure. A post-structuralist approach to validity and reliability of data collection differs significantly from the approach taken by structuralist and positivist researchers (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007; Lee, 2000; Søndergaard, 2002). In a post-structuralist study, data analysis is not claimed to reveal any essential underlying truths that can be objectively extricated from a data corpus (Søndergaard, 2002). For a post-structuralist study, traditional data collection and analysis procedures such as objectivity and quantification are replaced by qualitative procedures focussed on rigour and trustworthiness (Gall et al., 2007). Therefore, the task of a post-structural collection and analysis of data is to transparently and clearly show how data have been rigorously, cogently and intelligibly collected and synthesised (Gall et al., 2007). This is commonly achieved through the provision of transparent data collection and theme identification procedures that clearly and explicitly show how data has been collected and themes have been identified (Gall et al., 2007; Rose, 2007).

Whilst discourse analyses vary greatly, scholarly texts that outline discourse analysis methods typically describe three broad phrases of the analysis (Rose, 2007; Stokes, 2006; Carabine, 2001; Jager & Maier, 2009): the first is data collection, where researchers identify sources of data; the second is the immersion phase (Rose, 2007; Stokes, 2006; Carabone, 2001) where researchers explore narratives within the data; and the third is theme identification (Rose, 2007; Stokes, 2006; Carabone, 2001) where researchers synthesise the data to form an argument. Below, these three phases are outlined.

Data Collection Phase

With an identified topic: *Australian television advertisements featuring children produced between 2006 and 2012*, the first step involved searching archives for data (Rose, 2007). The data was collected for this study from two audio-visual archives: the National Film and Sound (NFSA) archive and the online archive, YouTube. While the NFSA—as Australia's official audio-visual archive (McKee, 2011; NFSA, 2013)—was originally to be the primary source of data, YouTube proved to have a far greater amount of Australian television advertisements and provided access to many popular advertisements which remain actively circulated, shared and viewed online. The advertisements circulated on YouTube represented actively used cultural artefacts, shared because of their relevance and connectedness to Australian culture and Australians' perceptions of themselves and their shared national media experiences. In other words, the advertisements on YouTube hold relevance because everyday television consumers have singled them out as meaningful enough to share, re-watch and preserve online.

The NFSA is a federal government-run archive of Australian film and sound designed for preservation of Australian audio-visual material. The archive is publically available and can be explored through its online, government-run search site (http://colsearch.nfsa.gov.au) as

well as at its physical home in Canberra, Australia. YouTube is a for-profit website (youtube.com) described by Snickars and Vonderau (2009) as platform, archive and medium, and by Kavoori (2011) as storytelling device. Considered here as an archive (McKee, 2011; Snickars & Vonderau, 2009), YouTube has a diverse range of audio-visual content available from across Australia and the world (Kavoori, 2011). YouTube has online access to Australian television advertisements uploaded by various advertising agencies, companies and members of the public. Television advertisements on the YouTube archive can be accessed online from youtube.com. NFSA, as a professionally curated research archive, is the normative and nominally less controversial (McKee, 2011) choice of archive for use in research. By contrast, YouTube is an archive which only emerged at the beginning of the twenty-first century (Drew, 2013) and which is not professionally curated. For this reason, YouTube is met with some mistrust among the academic community (McKee, 2011). However, there is growing recognition of its value as a research archive in its own right (McKee, 2011). In recognition of the caution with which the academic community is approaching YouTube as a research archive, McKee argues that it is important to "map the differences between [NFSA and YouTube] on their own terms rather than to assume that the traditional archive automatically represents best practice and any variation from that practice on the part of YouTube must represent a lack" (2011, p. 157).

McKee (2011) argues that the NFSA and YouTube function differently on two primary levels: the accessioning of data and the cataloguing of data. Accessioning involves the curatorial practices of "choosing which data to archive and adding them to the archive" (McKee, 2011, p. 158). Cataloguing, meanwhile, involves the strategies by which data is made accessible for researchers—primarily, the search functions and modes of access to the archives.

The data in each archive comes to be placed in the archives, or *accessioned,* in different ways and the contents of each archive are therefore significantly different. All data in the NFSA archive is chosen and added by trained curators (McKee, 2011) who file, filter and manage the content with a narrow focus on Australian and professionally produced content. The NFSA is driven by a distinct archival purpose—to preserve Australian audio-visual material from television and film platforms (NFSA, 2013). The content, therefore, is specifically Australian. Metadata on each sample in the archive is uniformly added, including year of release and title of advertisement. The YouTube archive, by contrast, is a global "democratic" (McKee, 2011, p. 157) archive to which any internet user can contribute audio-visual material (Kavoori, 2011). This means that YouTube has significantly more samples, but lacks uniformity in the provision of metadata such as year of broadcast. Most advertisements on YouTube, however, did have the year of publication provided, and many had significantly more details than the NFSA metadata, including information about the advertising agencies that produced the advertisements, the soundtracks on the advertisements, actors' names, and so forth. YouTube videos are uploaded by diverse of stakeholders and interest groups in society—advertising agencies keen to share their work, companies sharing their television advertisements online, advertising enthusiasts, television stations, and so forth.

The differing accessioning processes have led to differences in the content of the archives (McKee, 2011). Significantly, the NFSA archive has a greater amount of content which McKee (2011) labels "serious" material (p. 160)—news, current affairs, documentaries, docudramas, political advertisements—than YouTube. It also has a greater amount of older advertisements, particularly from the 1970s and 80s (NFSA, 2013). YouTube, by contrast, has a greater amount of cultural and corporate texts (McKee, 2011) such as soap operas, game shows and corporate advertisements. It also has a greater amount of material from the

21st Century than the NFSA (McKee, 2011). As a result, where NFSA lacks many corporate advertisements in the period of study, YouTube makes those advertisements available, providing the "elusive" (McKee, 2011, p. 155) content not available on the NFSA. As McKee (2011) argues, "there now exists a popular institution that both remembers television programs and makes the texts available to researchers" (McKee, 2011, p. 155).

Ways in which data can be collected by researchers from the NFSA and YouTube archives, known as the *cataloguing* practices (McKee, 2011), are also significantly different. The NFSA features an advanced search function through which a researcher can narrow searches to specific categories, for example, 'television', then 'advertisements', then 'produced between 2000 and 2009' (NFSA, 2013). Through the NFSA search engine, 250 television advertisements between 1990 and 2012 were found, 25 of which featured children. With such a small sample, I turned to YouTube for more advertisements.

The cataloguing in the YouTube archives is significantly less systematic than that of the NFSA (McKee, 2011). YouTube does not provide the option of searching only advertisements or only Australian content. Keyword searches are required. The search engine is, however, intuitive, as the search terms are provided by the general public and often take the form of logical colloquialisms (McKee, 2011). As McKee (2011) states, "one types in what one would ask another human being, and this often produces the correct item" (p. 168). For the study, keyword searches of the YouTube archive to find Australian television advertisements included: 'Australian Television Advertisement'; 'Australian Television Commercial'; 'TV ads'; 'TV advertisements featuring Kids'; 'Television ads, children'; 'Child Television Advertisement'; 'Brand TV ad, Australia'; and 'Aussie TV advertisement'. The advertisements located had a variety of metadata connected to them: most had details about the publishing agency, year the advertisement was aired on television

and the company which commissioned the advertisement. Over 2000 Australian television advertisements were located on YouTube, 300 of which featured children.

Thus, while the NFSA might at first glance have appeared the obvious choice of archive for this study, it has significant practical shortcomings such as a low amount of television advertisements in the period of the study. NFSA is useful inasmuch as the cataloguing practices are uniform across the entire archive, consistently providing useful data such as the date of production for the advertisements on the archive. YouTube, meanwhile, balances the practical shortcomings of the NFSA by providing the advertisements necessary for this analysis. Where YouTube has shortcomings in lack of uniformity in its cataloguing practices, most advertisements had details of the advertisements provided. The two archives came to be used side-by-side in order to develop a cumulative corpus of Australian television advertisements featuring children.

To identify children in the advertisements, I relied on the discourse analytic and social semiotic methods outlined earlier in this chapter. Using these methods, I examined markers of childhood as it exists within dominant cultural discourse, including: spatial practices of childhood (Jenks, 2005; Jones, 2001), cultural practices of childhood (Jenks, 2005; Jenks, James & Prout, 1990; Matthews, 2003), and family norms (Rose, 1990; Walkerdine, 1999).

Spatial practices of childhood which might indicate that a character is intended to be a child-figure, can include attendance at school (Chapter 7, page 269) or after-school care, street play (Chapter 5, page 213), activities within childhood bedrooms, and playing with children's toys. Cultural and family practices used to identify childhood figures include dependence on parents for food (breakfast, lunch, dinner –Chapter 5, page 190), dependence on parents for regulation of activities, as well as self-guided play in streets and the outback which might point to notions of childhood innocence (Chapter 4, page 151) and notions of

rogue parentless children (Chapter 5, page 213). Such markers can act to construct the characters as children within the national context and demarcate the depicted children as certain types of children within childhood discourse, and helped me to refine my corpus to 330 advertisements featuring childhood characters.

Immersion Phase

The second broad phase in discourse analytic data collection procedure is generally referred to as the immersion phase, wherein researchers familiarise themselves with the data in order to identify which data are relevant or particularly illuminating (Tonkiss, 1998; Stokes, 2006). The advice on this generally involves phrases such as *immersion* (Stokes, 2006), *feeling* (Tonkiss, 1998), and *familiarity* (Carbine, 2001). This takes time as researchers work to "read and re-read" (Carbine, 2001, p. 281) the data. Rose (2007) is informative here, explaining that the discourse analyst should "explore its [the text's] intriguing aspects" (p. 199) in order to develop an understanding of its discursive work. Here, then, the advertisements that are "intriguingly complex" (Rose, 2007, p. 199) are selected for further deconstruction in the analysis chapters.

This phase in my research involved delimiting the corpus of 330 advertisements featuring children to only those advertisements which feature discourses of national identity. Here, I used Hogan's (2009) model of identifying discourses of national identities, which she developed in her study of Australian national identities in television advertisements. In her analysis, Hogan (2009) developed four key dimensions of national identity (p. 117) upon which she based her data sampling method. These were: social relationships, values and ethics; material and symbolic culture, physical environment, and everyday leisure activities. Where advertisements featured any of these four dimensions, she included them in her sample group. Working within this model, these four key dimensions of national identities

were used in this study to identify advertisements featuring discourses of Australian national identity. The dimensions are summarised in the table below, followed by a short description of each category. While the examples provided here are broad, they are not exhaustive. National identity discourses—both dominant and non-dominant—are also discussed substantially throughout the analysis chapters when discussion is required for explanations of analyses. Furthermore, these concepts are *dominant* and *discursive*, and should not be read as underlying truths or genuinely representative of the broad Australian demography.

Social Relationships, Values and Ethics	Material and Symbolic Culture	Physical Environment	Everyday Leisure Practices
'fair go' Egalitarianism (Ward, 2003/1958)	Iconic Personalities – sportspeople, singers, musicians	Outback (Hoffenberg, 2001; White & White, 2004)	Beach culture (Perera, 2009)
Christianity (Elder, 2007)	Poetry – Lawson, Patterson, Mackellar	Beach, sunny days (Elder, 2007)	Cricket / beach cricket (J. Miller, 2007)
Working class masculinity (Elder, 2007; Ward, 2003/1958)	National Songs – national anthem, Waltzing Matilda, 80s pub rock	Suburban home as 'great Australian dream' (Uhlmann, 2006)	Football – Australian Football League (AFL), National Rugby League (NRL) (Vamplew & Stoddart, 1994)
Larrikinism / Rebellion (Bellanta, 2012; Gorman, 1990)	Bushrangers (Bellanta, 2012)	Harbour Bridge, Opera House, 'Big Things' statues (Clark, 2004)	Didgeridoo
Militarism, Gallipoli, ANZACs (Ward, 2003/1958)		Uluru (Elder, 2007), Blue Mountains, Seven Apostles, Three Sisters rock formation	Surfing (Booth, 1994)
Indigenous land stewardship (Simpson, 2010)		Volatile Weather (Thomas, 1996)	
		Rural Farming lifestyle (Beeton, 2010; Carleton, 2009)	
		Native plants and Animals –	

		Kangaroo, Emu, banksia, gum tree	

Key aspects of the **social relationships, values and ethics** in dominant Australian national identity discourse include egalitarianism, the 'fair go' (Ward, 2003/1958), Christianity (Elder, 2007), working class masculinity (Ward, 2003/1958), heteronormativity (Elder, 2007), rebellion (Ward, 2003/1958) and militarism (Ward, 2003/1958). The values of Christianity and heteronormativity were brought to Australia with colonial settlers (Elder, 2007). These values remain active within dominant Australian discourse and are reflected in cultural traditions such as the national Christmas and Easter public holidays, as well as the predominance of Catholic and independent religious education institutions (Campbell, 2007). Patriarchal heteronormativity could similarly be seen to have come from its colonial roots, as reflected in the laws of the nation at federation which included the restriction of women's right to vote in the early 20th Century. However, the dominant discourse of Australian national identity has its own unique form which emerged out of colonial identity (Ward, 2003/1958). In Ward's keystone 1958 text on Australian identity, *The Australian Legend*, it is argued that Australian identity manifests itself in the anti-British and anti-elite rebelliousness that is characteristic of Australian working class culture. This Australian cultural trait emerged in the early years of colonisation when former convicts were granted farming land. These former convicts were the early working class Australians who set themselves apart from their British rulers by developing an anti-elite ideology (Ward, 2003/1958). This ideology rested on the premise that the Australian working male resented the British ruling classes. Mockery of pretentiousness or success coupled with egalitarian 'fair go' values (Gorman, 1990) are consequentially part of working class masculine Australian discourse.

Key aspects of Australia's *dominant* **material and symbolic culture** include national forms of poetry named 'bush ballads', national and nationalistic songs including but not limited to the national anthem and *Waltzing Matilda*, and iconic personalities such as famous Australian cricketers, footballers, singers and musicians (Elder, 2007; Mackellar, 1988/c.1908). Bush poetry emerged in the 18th and 19th Centuries as a popular rural pastime. Poets such as Henry Lawson, Dorithea Mackellar and Banjo Patterson developed ballads which manifested themselves in Australian mythology. Australian sportspeople, particularly Australian cricketing captains such as Ricky Ponting and Michael Clarke, but also footballers and successful Australian Olympians are similarly lauded within mainstream nationalistic discourses as models of ideal Australian identity (Elder, 2007). Their sporting success and representation of the nation on the world stage situates them as ideal Australians. These cultural song, poetry and personalities have thus manifested themselves over time as key signifiers of Australian national identity.

Key aspects of Australia's **physical environment** include vast beaches on sunny days, the Australian outback, the suburban home, the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Sydney Opera House, Uluru, Australia's volatile droughts and rains, and native Australian animals including kangaroos and emus (Elder, 2007; Thomas, 1996). The Australian outback represents a location of particular importance to national identities mythologies (Beeton, 2010). In early settler mythology, the outback was seen as a dangerous frontier which was to be conquered by early European explorers (Beeton, 2010; Thomas, 1996). Farmers battled against the outback and its weather patterns. The suburban home similarly became a signifier of Australian mythology (Uhlmann, 2006). Within dominant Australian discourse, the 'great Australian dream' is to own a home on a quarter acre block (Uhlmann, 2006). The outback, suburban home, key built landmarks and native animals thus each constitute physical aspects of dominant Australian identity discourse.

Everyday leisure practices within dominant Australian discourse include beach culture, surfing, backyard cricket and beach cricket (Booth, 1994; Elder, 2007; Perera, 2009). Cricket is a sport which was brought to Australian by colonialists. Australia's cricketing rivalry with England is renewed biennially with the Ashes test cricket tournaments (Miller, 2007). Conversely, Australian Rules football is a football code that emerged as a hybrid between the settler code of rugby union and traditional Indigenous games. Thirdly, beach culture is a key leisure practice in dominant Australian discourse, particularly white Australian culture where the beach represents a location for the exhibition of white bodies and sovereignty over the island-nation (Perera, 2009).

Thus, in the initial viewing of the advertisements, or what Stokes (2006) and Tonkiss (1998) would call the *immersion* stage of discourse analysis, I used the four categories recommended by Hogan (2009)—social relationships, values and ethics; material and symbolic culture; physical environment; and everyday leisure activities—to identify the advertisements which substantially feature one or more Australian national identity traits. 70 advertisements were identified which formed my refined corpus of advertisements featuring both children and discourses of national identities. Following this, themes within the corpus were to be identified.

Identification of Themes

The third broad phase of discourse analysis is commonly understood as the development of *themes* from the data (Stokes, 2006; Tonkiss, 1998). Such a process is often described in the Critical Discourse Analysis literature as the search for *themes* or *frequency* (Tonkiss, 1998; Carabine, 2001; Jager & Maier, 2009), and in the Foucauldian Discourse Analysis literature as the search for *regularity* or *repetition* (Willig, 2008; Kendall & Wickham, 1999).

However, as a part of this process, outliers that disrupt themes are also considered in order that the complexity of discourse is highlighted. As Foucault points out:

> To analyse discourse is to hide and reveal contradictions; it is to show the play that they set up within it; it is to manifest how it can express them, embody them, or give them a temporary appearance (1972, p. 151)

Thus, themes have been identified, while contradictions and outliers have also been considered to highlight the complexity of discourse. Here, I will explain the steps taken in theme development.

This third phase in the data collection took a similar appearance to Thematic Network Analysis (TNA) (Attride-Stirling, 2001), wherein TNA firstly identifies the key themes in individual textual narratives, then clusters texts with similar textual narratives into thematic groups, and then develops an overall thesis argument based on the discourses that cut across all themes (Attride-Stirling, 2001). In my data collection procedure, this was done in three steps which follow the Thematic Network Analysis model proposed by Attride-Stirling (2001). Firstly, examining each text, I identified the "simple premises characteristic of the [text]" (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 389), such as the basic narratives about Australian childhood. Secondly, when several texts produced the Australian childhood subject in similar ways, they were clustered into groups (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Narratives of Australian childhood were clustered into four spatial groups that emerged as dominant (explained below): rural Australian childhood, suburban Australian childhoods, Australian childhoods on beaches and billabongs, and Australian childhoods at school. Thirdly, I developed an overall argument, based upon the *discourses that emerged across the four theme clusters*. The three steps are shown below:

Step 1: Examine narratives of each text	Step 2: Group similar texts into thematic groups	Step 3: Develop an argument that is coherent across texts of all themes

Qantas *Spirit of Australia* (2009); Bank of Queensland *Banking on Our Kids* (2010); Sanitarium *Proud to be Australian* (2010); Holden *Owner's Grant* (2010); Devondale *Wholly Australian* (2010); McCain *Baby Peas* (2010); Tourism Australia *There's nothing like it* (2010); Caravan and Camping *We love this Country* (2010); Toyota *Kluger* (2008); Tourism Queensland *Where Australia Shines* (2010); Telstra Bigpond *Australia Day*, (2008)	Theme: Rural Australian Childhoods	Argument: Australian television advertisements produced between 2006 and 2012, as situated within a neoliberal consumption context, construct and idealise exclusionary discourses of Australian childhood in terms of race, gender and social class.
Telstra *Dem Homes* (2007); Woolworths *Typical Family* (2011); Cuddly Altra *Thanks Mum* (2010); Hasbro *Nab-It* (2010); Nutri-Grain *Boy2Man* (2010); Milo *Vitamins & Minerals* (2010); Ikea *This is Home* (2008); Coles *It all Counts* (2010); Kirks *Quench your Thirst* (2010); Milo *Duo* (2008); Sanitarium *Weet-Bix Kids* (2006); Foxtel *EOFYS* (2010); Ford *Territory* (2010); Heinz *Creamy Pumpkin* (2010) Bendigo Bank *Community* (2010); Foxtel *Next Generation (*2009)	Theme: Suburban Australian Childhoods	
Tourism Queensland *Where Australia Shines* (2010); Tourism Australia *There's Nothing like it* (2010); Tourism Australia *Beautiful Australia* (2006); Port Macquarie Tourism *Little Treasures* (2010); Kangaroo Island *Let yourself go* (2012); Nutri-Grain *Afternoon Snack* (2010); Nutri-Grain *Get the Ball Rolling* (2009); Suncorp Insurance *Queenslanders Love the Water* (2010); Suncorp Bank *Sun Protection* (2010); Nutella *A lot of energy* (2010); Bondi Rescue *Aussie Hero* (2010); Port Macquarie Tourism *Little Creatures* (2010), Nutri-Grain *Get the Ball Rolling* (2009), and Tourism Queensland *Where Australian Shines* (2010); Tourism Australia *There's Nothing like it* (2010); Tourism Australia *Beautiful Australia* (2006); Qantas *Spirit of Australia* (2009)	Theme: Australian Childhoods on Beaches and Billabongs	
Sultana Bran *Fight the Fuzzies* (2008); Sultana Bran *Obstacle Course* (2009); Tip Top *Up* (2010); Australian Government *National Broadband Network* (2010); Uncle Toby's *Muesli Bars* (2010); Telstra Bigpond *Great Wall of China* (2006); Telstra Bigpond *Australia Day* (2008); McCain *Veggie Patch* (2010); Oreo *Bachelors* (2009); KFC *Outback Bucket* (2010); I&J *Iron Jay* (2010)	Theme: Australian Childhoods at School	

The first theme is that of rural Australian childhoods. Several advertisements were selected to exemplify the ways rural Australian childhoods are idealised as white, traditionally gendered and middle class across the advertisements in this theme. I selected advertisements that were representative of the broader theme, and one which contradicted the trends across the theme. The first were two advertisements featuring children living in rural Australia: McCain *Baby Peas* and Devondale *Aussie Farming Families*. I also selected advertisements

featuring Australian children traveling through rural Australia: Telstra *Big Things* and Caravanning and Camping Australia *We love this County*. These advertisements consistently encourage agentive viewers to consume in order to achieve or endorse idealised rural Australian childhood subjectivities. In this sense, the discourses of Australian childhoods are influenced by neoliberal consumption discourses in which the narratives are targeted towards securing future consumption by constructing idealised subjecthoods and selling them as achievable through consumption. Thirdly, I selected a Toyota *Kluger* (2009) advertisement that represents rural Australian girls as anti-rural, bored, and disenchanted. This text is critiqued in Chapter 4 in order to highlight disruptions and contradictions within discourses of rural Australian childhoods.

In the second theme, suburban Australian childhoods, childhood was again regularly constructed as ideally white, traditionally gendered and middle class. I chose exemplar advertisements representative of the theme, and that depicted children in the suburban home (Woolworths *Typical Family,* 2011; Telstra *Dem Homes*, 2007; Uncle Toby's *Muesli Bars,* 2010), in the suburban backyard (Milo *Duo*, 2008; Sanatarium *Weet-Bix Kids*, 2006), and in the suburban streetscape (Foxtel *EOFYS*, 2010; Ford *Territory*, 2010). In each, I argue that suburban Australian childhoods are regularly constructed as white, traditionally gendered and middle class. Frequently, the advertisements appeal to mothers to consume in order that their children grow up normative. Here, again, neoliberal consumption discourse is evident. Consumption is framed through the narratives as a way for viewers to achieve normative Australian childhood subjectivities. That is to say, the advertisements attempt to secure future consumption by positing that idealised models of Australian childhood can be achieved through consumption.

In the third theme, Australian childhoods on beaches and billabongs, I explore how Indigenous and White Australian childhoods are spatially differentiated. Beach spaces

dominantly feature white Australian childhoods, whereas inland waterways dominantly feature Indigenous Australian childhoods. Whereas Indigenous childhoods are very rarely pictured on beaches, white childhoods are sometimes depicted in inland waterways. I find, then, that white Australian childhoods are spatially privileged in terms of mobility and access to beaches. I select five advertisements that are representative of this theme: Tourism Queensland *Where Australia Shines* (2010), Tourism Australia *There's Nothing like it*, (2010a), Tourism Australia *Beautiful Australia* (2006), Port Macquarie Tourism *Little Treasures*, (2010), and Nutri-Grain *Get the Ball Rolling* (2009). I also examine the one text found where Indigenous Australians are represented on the beach, in order to highlight a contradiction to the theme (Tourism Australia *There's Nothing like it*, 2010b), and to examine how Indigenous Australians are constructed tokenistically upon beachscapes in this text. The differentiated racial discourses of Australian childhoods are revealing of several consumption assumptions, such as that white people are considered likely consumers and Indigenous people are considered consumable spectacles. Furthermore, consumption functions as a way for white viewers to achieve idealised white Australian childhood subjectivities and to simultaneously endorse limiting and comforting (outback) visions of Indigenous Australian childhoods.

The fourth theme identified is that of Australian Childhoods at school. In this theme, I examine how Australian childhoods at school are represented in ways that privilege whiteness, gender norms, and heteronormativity. I examine two groups of advertisements that feature Australian childhoods at school. The first group of advertisements depict scholarly middle class Australian childhoods. The advertisements I deconstruct in this chapter that are representative of this group are: Sultana Bran *Fight the Fuzzies* (2008), Sultana Bran *Obstacle Course* (2009), and Tip Top *Up* (2010). I then examine a smaller group of advertisements that contradict middle class representations (Telstra Bigpond *Great*

Wall of China, 2006; Telstra Bigpond *Australia Day,* 2008), where desirably un-scholarly working class Australian childhoods are depicted. Thirdly, I examine Australian childhoods in the playground, using the Oreo *Bachelors* (2009) advertisement as representative of this group of advertisements. Across all of these advertisements, whiteness, heteronormativity and traditional gender norms are produced as ideal, and achievable through consumption. In an era where education is characterised by privatisation and marketisation, the advertisements are revealing of the new relationships between education and consumption. Many of the advertisements in this chapter rely on narratives that depict the achievement of ideal and successful studenthoods (often white, middle class and gendered) as contingent on correct consumption choices.

Limitations of the study

What I aim to do in this study is employ a Foucauldian *archaeological* research trajectory, which is concerned with exploring the regularity and contradictions across a series of interrelated texts from a specific period of time (Foucault, 1972). Working within an archaeological framework, the thesis takes a different form than other analyses of the content of television advertisements. Such an approach stands apart from, but also works in conversation with, studies that explore advertisements based on marketing style (Prideaux, 2009), production analysis (Philo, 2007), or children's reactions to advertisements (Lewin-Jones & Mitra, 2009; Mehta et al., 2010). In speaking about my work in relation to these other methodological approaches, I aim to contribute to a conversation about television representation and childhood which has involved various methodologies, which each have their own strengths and weaknesses. As Knox (2009a) puts it in his discussion of academic literature:

> No single research approach can tell us all we need to know, and no single research project can employ every worthwhile approach. What is required is for each approach to move forward with some knowledge and understanding of the others, so that we can complement each other's strengths and cover each other's weaknesses (p. 474)

Here, I want to highlight the choices that have been made in the formulation of the study, and the consequences of these choices for the final thesis argument. The choices made have determined the ways in which I uniquely contribute to analyses of childhood on television advertisements and provide new scholarly insights that function in conversation with the extant literature.

Perhaps the most obvious trajectory that I did not pursue was that of interviewing respondents to advertisements. With a commitment to understanding *discourse as truth*, I wanted to maintain a focus on *ideas* of Australian childhood in contemporary times and not on children's responses to advertisements. Following a long tradition of scholars in Foucauldian (Kendall & Wickham, 1999; Graham, 2005; Wetherall, 2001; Willig, 2008), Critical (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1995; Taylor, 2004) and Multimodal (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; van Leeuwen, 2005; LeVine & Scollon, 2004; O'Halloran, 2004, 2008; Schirato & Webb, 2004) discourse analyses, I have argued in this chapter that language and semiotic signifiers produce culturally mediated meanings independent of producer or receiver. As Fürsich argues, it is important to acknowledge "the autonomy of cultural practices or objects as signifiers in their own right, independent of the intentions of the authors and producers or reception of the audience" (2009, p. 240). Whilst multiple meanings can be made of a text at the point of reception, I also hold that texts themselves have an interpretive power. Butler exemplifies this point in her examination of *how* photographs work to produce meaning. Discussing camera angle, lighting, and other semiotic aspects of photographs, she argues:

> The "how" not only organizes the image, but works to organize our perception and thinking as well. […] The photograph is not merely a visual image awaiting interpretation; it is itself actively interpreting, sometimes forcibly so. (2009, p. 71).

It is not my contention that audiences cannot make multiple meanings or provide diverse and valid insights for analysis; they can. Rather, I am contending that texts *do* have a role in mediating and interpreting—they are communicative. With this understanding, a semiotic and discursive reading of texts can show how texts interpret Australian childhoods and foreclose possible readings of Australian childhood. This textual work can contribute to scholarly understandings of the ways exclusionary and marginalising truths of Australian childhoods emerge through the textual production of discourses.

Towards the beginning of my research, I deliberated over whether to conduct a Foucauldian archaeological or genealogical analysis. Genealogical analysis would be more concerned with the conditions of emergence of texts (O'Farrell, 2005), and in this sense, a genealogical analysis would likely have involved examinations of the intimate decisions made by advertisers and the relationships between images and brands, such as Miller and Rose's (2008/1997) work with the Tavistock Institute in the UK. By contrast, archaeology is more concerned with the ongoing reiterations, repetitions and contradictions across texts that produce and disrupt recognisable cultural discourses (Foucault, 1972; O'Farrell, 2005). I made the decision to conduct an archaeological analysis primarily because I had always been concerned with the exclusionary effects of what Rose calls the "public habitat of images" (1999, p. 76); that is, the vast array of images splattered across television screens. Archaeology is also more in line with my ongoing interest in commonplace and mundane discourses that act as a backdrop to Australian national life, which was discussed in the literature review (Billig, 1995; Edensor, 2002; Prideaux, 2009).

In the literature review, I spoke of some studies that *do* focus on the histories of brands and the concerns of advertisers (Lang, 2010; Philo, 2007; Prideaux, 2009), such as Prideaux's (2009) comparison of the narratives of advertisements emerging from brands with emerging nationalist credentials to those with established nationalist credentials, and Miller and Rose's work with the Tavistock Institute (Miller & Rose, 2008/1997). Studies of the production aspects of advertisements generally involve intimate deconstructions of a small corpus of advertisements, and in this sense, examination of the breadth of reiterations is generally not as achievable. In this thesis, however, with a focus on discourse, my concern is with the public habitat of images and not the decisions made in their emergence. What I hope to contribute to here, then, is the notion of discursive reiteration across *many interrelated texts* which, as Foucault (1972) states, is necessary for discourse to emerge. My point here is not that studies of the production and marketing aspects of advertisements are in any way fundamentally flawed, but rather, that they have their limitations for an archaeological study which is primarily concerned with discourse.

The third thing that I would like to examine here is possible alternative ways of accessing advertisements. I have come across several methods, including recording advertisements aired during children's shows (Bramlett-Solomon & Roeder, 2008; Gilmore & Jordan, 2012; Harrison & Marske, 2005), recording television over a series of weeks (Hogan, 2009), and accessing advertisement from audio-visual archives (McKee, 2011). My approach—accessing content on archives—was selected because I wanted a broad range of advertisements in order to examine regular reiterations of Australian childhoods across a wide variety of advertisements. Studies that record advertisements based on the time in which they were aired generally select advertisements targeted at a specific audience group. Batada et al. (2008), for example, selected advertisements aired on Saturday mornings in order to collect data about advertisements *targeted at* children. Such an analytical approach

is concerned with the impact of advertisements on children, more than the *idea of* childhood per se. In this thesis, where I have been concerned more broadly with the idea of childhood, my methodology is focussed on *breadth of* advertisements featuring childhoods, and not necessarily target audiences.

The choices made in the determination of my methodologies outlined here (textual analysis and archival data collection) have determined the scope and content of my study. They have simultaneously and necessarily affected the arguments I could make, as well as made room for my unique contribution to the scholarly literature on childhoods on television advertisements. My decisions have been guided by a Foucauldian archaeological focus on the ways *discourses* are produced and systematically reiterated across *multiple texts* during a *specific time frame* (Foucault, 1972). It is my conviction here that this study, with its textual analysis and archival approach to data collection, helps me to stay true to a Foucauldian archaeological analysis. This approach contributes to the scholarly conversation about contemporary *ideas of childhood* on television advertisements by highlighting the discursivity of Australian childhoods, and works alongside and in ways complementary to other methodological approaches by highlighting the broad, discursive, and exclusionary work of a wide variety of recent television advertisements which produce Australian childhoods in the history of the present.

Reflexivity

Much of my work in this thesis involves deconstructing the privileges, inclusions and exclusions that texts produce. Before moving into the analysis chapters, I want to make note of my own position of privilege that I bring to the analyses, and begin to conduct what Ahmed (2007) calls a "double turn" (p. 284). By this, Ahmed advocates that scholars critically reflect upon their own cursory declarative practices and question their performative

effects. She warns against the attempts of white scholars to transcend their own whiteness through reflexivity. Thus, here, while I want to reflect on how my position as a privileged subject enables and constrains my writing, I also want to reflect on the fact that talking about my privilege does not alleviate that privilege, and indeed it might work to reaffirm it.

By naming my own whiteness and maleness, I run the risk of assuming that reflexivity can break down or alleviate the privilege I bring to this text. The act of naming one's own privilege might work to show awareness that "men … too have a gender" (Lingard & Douglas, 1999, p. 1) and that "I am … coloured too" (Ahmed, 2007, p. 277). However, the work of highlighting my own subject position does not have the power to alleviate me of my privilege (Lee, 2000; Ahmed, 2007). As Ahmed notes, when I make visible my own whiteness, there is the risk that "whiteness becomes *just* a colour, along with other colours" (Ahmed, 2007, p. 278). The declarative statement, then, risks "conceal[ing] the power and privilege of whiteness" (Ahmed, 2007, p. 278). Here, then, by merely stating 'I am a white male' and leaving it at that, I risk the assumption that I am alleviating my own privilege by stating it: that I am a good scholar because I have made this cursory statement. This risks positioning my whiteness as equal to racial categories that are historically less privileged, and similarly, my maleness as equivalent to Other gendered categories. Recognition of privilege does not in itself mean that I can overcome subjective textual readings.

From such a standpoint, then, I cannot undo my own male, white, and social class-based ways of seeing. As Ahmed says, privilege is not "something that is 'outside' the structure of … ordinary experience" (2007, p. 261). My privilege exists in my memories and my upbringing—I am and have long been treated with privilege by the society that I live in, and this is something I cannot transcend. Therefore, I cannot know what it is like not to be white or male. My privilege follows me wherever I may go, and so I cannot presume to fully know how everyday life is without it, however much I try. It follows from recognition of my own

privilege that my work might speak in support of female and non-white scholarship, but it is not the same. Ahmed takes a similar line in her discussion of Indigenous/Invader reconciliation. She argues that past and present unjust actions against Indigenous Australians cannot be forgotten, and therefore, "we [can] live with and beside each other, and yet we are not as one" (Ahmed, 2010, p. 39). In this sense, my scholarly work can live beside that of women and Indigenous Australians and other minorities, but it is not *as one* with them. It does similar work, but not the same work. We approach the texts differently. I speak out against works of which I am benefactor; Others speak out against work which injures and offends them every day, in a way that I cannot know. Thus, we may work on a similar political project, but inevitably from different subject positions.

So, this reflexive piece is not here to break down my privilege or cast me as a "good white [person]" (Aveling, 2007, p. 38). Rather, it is to begin to speak against the ongoing discourses of privilege of which I am a benefactor. I use post-structural theory to assist me here. Post-structuralism and its analytical insights into the production of truth help me to "unsettle the relationship" (Youdell, 2006, p. 41) between power and knowledge, and to make visible the ways privilege is discursively produced (Moreton-Robinson, 2007). My work, which may be framed by my own privilege, nonetheless aims to highlight how that privilege is unjustly reaffirmed in everyday discursive practices.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the research practices that I have employed for this dissertation. I have discussed the methodologies used, my methods for analysis that are based on the methodologies, my data collection procedure, and my epistemological relationship with the data. These research practices, I have argued, have been developed in conversation with research conventions developed in cultural, media, and post-structuralist studies of discourse

(Lee, 2000; Stokes, 2006; Yell, 2005). The following four chapters constitute the analysis chapters in this thesis, in which these methodologies are implemented for the analysis of discourses of Australian childhoods on television advertisements. Based around the four spatial themes identified in the data collection phase (rural Australian childhoods, suburban Australian childhoods, Australian childhoods on beaches and billabongs, and Australian schooling childhoods), these chapters examine how Australian television advertisements produced between 2006 and 2012 construct limited and exclusionary discourses of Australian childhood, and in so doing sustain and entrench symbolic and performative disadvantage in relation to Australian childhoods.

Constructions of Rural Australian Childhoods

Rural spaces are often understood in discourses of national identity as locales where true, pure and unadulterated versions of nationhood can be found (Edensor, 2002; Elder, 2007; White & White, 2004). Such a discursive construction of rural national purity emerges through discourses of national identity both in Australia (Elder, 2007; White & White, 2004) and internationally (Edensor, 2002; Löfgren, 2001). This understanding of rural spaces as locations of national purity is underpinned by the assumption that rural spaces are resistant to modernist, neoliberal and globalist changes that are ostensibly manifested first in the nation's metropolises (Edensor, 2002; Haynes, 1998). Rural spaces are perceived to be more pure than city spaces inasmuch as they preserve time-tested national values that are diluted by the corruptions of city cultures. They thus appear in discourse as spaces where a nation's true and ancient "heart" (Elder, 2007, p. 209) is maintained.

Discussing iconic rural geographies, Edensor explains:

> So ideologically charged are they, that they are apt to act upon our sense of belonging so that to dwell within them, even if for a short time, can be to achieve

> a kind of national self-realisation, to return to 'our' roots where the self, freed
> from its inauthentic – usually urban – existence, is re-authenticated. (2002, p. 40)

Many of the advertisements in this subset play on a narrative of *resentment* for urban lifestyles dictated by work and fast-paced city living, and ask viewers to consume in order to resist such a life—in the form of embracing an idealising slower-paced and more community-minded rural, Australian lifestyle. The slower-paced, 'more authentic' rural Australian lifestyles are tied in these advertisements to white, gendered and heteronormative subjecthoods.

Indeed, within national identity discourse, rural Australians are often framed as white characters that live in patriarchal and gendered nuclear family units. The most salient of these rural characters is the archetypal rural Australian male, a "heterosexual white bloke doing a certain type of work—the crocodile man or the little Aussie battler" (Elder, 2007, p. 217). Homosexual and interracial characters are few and far between, and when such subjectivities occur in rural Australian spaces they are remarkable precisely because they are an affront to the idyllic rural norm (Thomas, 1996). Conversely, another imaginary of authenticity in rural Australian spaces is that of rural Indigenous characters, whose discursive power as authentic Indigenous Australians lies in the assumption that they are uncorrupted by the ills of the city (Carleton, 2009; Stadler, 2010). Indigenous rural characters appear authentically Indigenous only so long as they refuse white culture and continue to live in traditional ways (Drew, 2011). This rural Indigenous imaginary is a focus in Chapter 6.

Concomitantly, when children are framed within a nation's iconic rural spaces, they can be seen as having an enhanced degree of innocence and purity. The metaphor of the rural as natural conflates with the metaphor of childhood as innocence to reinforce and bolster the

image of childhood innocence especially when children are located within rural spaces. Jones (1999, p. 121) elaborates:

> Romantic constructions of childhood stress that its defining and most cherished characteristic is that of a natural innocence. The same is true for certain views of countryside. It is the confluence of these two innocences in the notion of 'country childhood' which makes it so powerful a vision.

The discourse of natural/innocent rural childhood and the discourse of natural/authentic rural nationhood together form a particularly nostalgic image of the uncorrupted *rural Australian child* as an authentic and ideal Australian childhood character. Children in rural spaces can emerge in national identity discourse as purely and wholesomely national subjects, having grown up in the heart of the nation and having learned how to be Australian in locales uncorrupted by liberal modernity and the diluting cultural effects of globalisation.

In this chapter I explore television advertisements that produce discourses of rural Australian childhoods in exclusionary ways. I consider how the advertisements attempt to secure future consumption by positioning consumption of advertised products as a way to assemble an identity aligned with rural discursive subjecthoods. In these narratives, white, gendered and middle-class rural Australian childhoods are positioned as desirable for the consuming subject. The work conducted in this chapter begins my analysis of the history of the present of Australian television advertisements by conducting a Foucauldian archaeological examination of advertisements that construct rural Australian childhoods as wholesomely white, traditionally gendered, and middle class. More than simply being a confined rhetorical device to secure consumption, I argue that the use of exclusionary imaginaries of rural Australian childhoods also produces (Foucault, 1990/1978), entrenches and reiterates (Butler, 1990, 2009) the discursive truthfulness of a rural and pre-global Australian child.

Two salient ways of framing rural Australian childhoods in television advertisements have emerged through the archaeological analysis. The first is the framing of white, gendered and

middle class Australian children growing up in rural spaces as natural and wholesome characters (Qantas *Spirit of Australia* 2009; Bank of Queensland *Banking on Our Kids* 2010; Sanitarium *Proud to be Australian* 2010; Holden *Owner's Grant* 2010; Devondale *Aussie Farming Families*, 2010; McCain *Baby Peas,* 2010). The second is the depiction of children learning national identity on journeys through rural spaces (Tourism Australia *There's nothing like it*, 2010; Caravan and Holiday Parks *We love this country*, 2010; Toyota *Kluger*, 2008; Tourism Queensland *Where Australia shines*, 2010; Telstra Bigpond *Australia Day*, 2008). While the former set of advertisements imagine children *growing up in* rural locales and the latter show children *visiting* rural locales, it remains a theme that these advertisements frequently construct wholesome rural Australian childhoods as white, traditionally gendered and middle class.

Consistent with the theoretical framework introduced in Chapter 2, this chapter brings a Foucauldian approach to the analysis of the discourses of rural Australian childhoods that are produced in advertising texts. Central to this Foucauldian approach is the recognition that Australian childhoods are *produced in discourse* (Foucault, 1976; 1978; 2002b) through their regular and repeated representation. Discourses of rural Australian childhoods, which are produced through their consistent representation, are both inclusionary and exclusionary—they make some ways of doing rural Australian childhood recognisable and other ways unrecognisable. Following Foucault, Butler's concept of performativity comes in useful in this sort of analysis. Butler's performativity explains language as a constitutive act. In this sense, Butler explains, ''discursive practice … enacts or produces that which it names'' (Butler, 1993, p. 13).

Theorising rural landscapes

As discussed in the theoretical framework, a spatial turn has taken place in the humanities over the past few decades, in which scholars have increasingly come to see that space is "a construct and not a given" and that it is "transient and social" (Gulson & Symes, 2007, p. 2). The spatial turn is influenced by post-structuralist theories of space that challenge the assumption that spaces are neutral and uncontested in their meanings. Rather, spaces are increasingly understood as being "given meaning through myth, language and ritual" (Bartley et al., 2004, p. 14). From this perspective, spaces are laden with cultural and subjective meanings that influence the ways they are perceived (Bartley et al., 2004; Gulson & Symes, 2007; Lukinbeal, 2005). Since the spatial turn, scholars in cultural studies, media studies, tourism studies, education studies and related fields have increasingly focussed on the ways landscapes can proffer complex and contesting meanings depending upon the ways they are represented (Carleton, 2009; Daugstad, 2008; Lukinbeal, 2005; Pitkänen, 2008). A discursive reading of texts' representations of spaces reveals how texts *actively interpret* (Butler, 2009) people, landscapes, and their interactions, in order to frame landscapes and their inhabitants in particular ways (Beeton, 2010; Lukinbeal, 2005). A landscape can thus be considered "a central component of the narrative" (Lukinbeal, 2005, p. 7). For example, scenes can begin with panoramic shots that do geographic framing work (Daugstad, 2008), orienting the viewer to the spaces in which the textual narrative occurs. Similarly, landscapes can actively "mediate our interpretation" of a text (Lukinbeal, 2005, p. 7), particularly through cinematic techniques such as "extreme long shots, long shots and deep focus shots" as well as "a bird's-eye view or high angle camera setup" (Lukinbeal, 2005, p. 8).

In Australian film studies, the rural Australian landscape is often examined in relation to complex historical and cultural understandings. In particular, the conflicting settler and Indigenous notions of Australian spaces often emerge (Carleton, 2009; Simpson, 2010; Stadler, 2010). Land can be viewed possessively when gazed upon from "the dominant

European notion of landscape", as juxtaposed to the dominant Indigenous view of the land that "acknowledges a mutually constitutive relationship" (Simpson, 2010, p. 90; Stephens, 2006). Indigenous Australians are seen as having a long and intimate history with the rural Australian landscape (Stadler, 2010). The landscape can be considered for Indigenous Australians as a spiritual site, where traditional Indigenous stories explain how the land was formed and how it nourishes its inhabitants.

Within dominant post-invasion Australian discourse, a shorter but still rich relationship with the rural landscape exists. It is understood as a location where white Australian identity was forged and still dominates today (Beeton, 2010; Carleton, 2009; Hoffenberg, 2001; Thomas, 1996). The rural Australian landscape is imagined in two dominant ways in contemporary Australian mythologies: as a "harsh, unforgiving and uncontrollable" (Beeton, 2010, p. 115) location and, contradictorily, as a "nurturer and protagonist" (p. 115). While this discursive dangerous/safe dichotomy exists globally (Jones, 1999; Valentine, 1997), it also manifests itself uniquely in white Australian national identity discourse (White & White, 2004). Early free white settlers attempted to conquer rural Australian land by erecting fences and felling trees, and early white explorers have attempted to conquer dangerous Australian landscapes by crossing mountain ranges and deserts (Beeton, 2010). When tamed and familiarised, however, the rural landscape comes to signify a safe and protecting place in which people can escape and recuperate (White & White, 2004).

Rural landscapes can be described in various ways, as signified by their various portrayals as 'countryside', 'outback' and 'bush' within the cultural and media studies literature. The terms *rural* and *countryside* are most often used to describe green agricultural lands within proximity of small villages but far from cities. The term *countryside* is more often used in the literature coming out of the United Kingdom (for example, Jones, 1999; Matthews, Taylor, Sherwood, Tucker, & Limb, 2000; Valentine, 1997), whereas Australian literature

usually uses the terms *rural* and *bush* more frequently than *countryside* to describe Australian agricultural locations (for example, Beeton, 2010; Carleton, 2009; Liepins, 2000a, 2000b; Stadler, 2010; Ward, 2003/1958). Indeed, for white settlers, the difference between the green and luscious English countryside and the dry and scrubby Australian bush became one of the earliest signifiers of the difference between the English motherland and Australia. As Beeton states, "the Australian bush could not conform to images of rich greens and bountiful flowerings" and so "[settler] Australians themselves demanded a 'new' image" of the rural" (2004, p. 127). *Bush* and *outback* are quintessentially Australian terms often used to describe rural and remote locations that are wild and untamed (as in Beeton, 2010; Carleton, 2009; Lambert, 2009; Stadler, 2010; Thomas, 1996). The bush and outback are consistently referred to in tandem in Australian literature on landscapes (Thomas, 1996), and authors rarely define the difference between the two. However, authors describing Australia's inhospitable desert wilderness more often use the term outback than bush (as in Beeton, 2010), while Australia's more vegetated, woodland, and hospitable rural locations are more likely to be described as bush than outback (as in Thomas, 1996; Lambert, 2009). Thus, it emerges that while I am discussing rural Australian spaces, the spaces can be variously perceived depending upon the semiotic markers that differentiate rural spaces from one another.

Australian childhoods in rural spaces

In discourses of rural childhoods, the metaphor of the rural as a *safe and nurturing* place is most often employed (Jones, 1999; Matthews et al., 2000; Valentine, 1997). Both childhood and rurality are discursively associated with nature. As a result of the discursive similarities between childhood and the rural, rural landscapes can come to signify locations where children can exist naturally, where childhood innocence can be prolonged (Valentine, 1997), and where children can go to heal and get in touch with their discursively natural dispositions

(Jones, 1999). Rural children are imagined as healthier and happier than urban children, more in touch with nature, and removed from the potential ills of urban lifestyles (Holland, 2005; Jones, 1999; Matthews et al., 2000; Valentine, 1997; Woods, 2011). Rural children, therefore, are perceived to be pure and wholesome, and unlike their urban contemporaries, and are considered less likely to prematurely lose their childhood innocence. As Matthews et al (2000) argue in a discussion of children growing up in the countryside:

> Popular discourses of the rural rely on imagery that present the countryside as a place where happy, healthy lifestyles are lived and where [children] can enjoy the benefits of trouble free environments, away from the stresses and uncertainties of the urban mayhem ... (Cloke et al., 1995a; Halfacree and Boyle, 1998). Such notions of an idyll harbour a sense of there being a sealed-off rural, a countryside removed from the wider material influences of urban society in general. (2000, p. 145)

Such a discourse of rural children as pure and natural is used in many television advertisements over the period of study. Frequently, Australian childhood purity is tied to whiteness, heteronormativity and traditional gender roles (Qantas *Spirit of Australia*, 2009; Bank of Queensland *Banking on Our Kids*, 2010; Sanitarium *Proud to be Australian*, 2010; Holden *Owner's Grant*, 2010; Devondale *Aussie Farming Families*, 2010; McCain *Baby Peas*, 2010; Tourism Australia *There's nothing like it*, 2010; Caravan and Holiday Parks *We love this country*, 2010; Tourism Queensland *Where Australia shines*, 2010; Telstra Bigpond *Australia Day*, 2008).

Interestingly, whilst the eleven advertisements that I identified promote different product types such as travel and automobile products (Qantas *Spirit of Australia*, 2009; Holden *Owner's Grant*, 2010; Tourism Australia *There's nothing like it*, 2010; Caravan and Holiday Parks *We love this country*, 2010; Tourism Queensland *Where Australia shines*, 2010) and food and appliances (Devondale *Aussie Farming Families*, 2010; McCain *Baby Peas*, 2010; Telstra Bigpond *Australia Day*, 2008; Sanitarium *Proud to be Australian*, 2010), all but one are brands that originated in Australia. Whilst some like Telstra and Qantas are now partly

foreign-owned, and others like Holden have been bought out by foreign entities, the majority of these brands can trace their origins to Australian industry. The advertisements' utilisation of a discourse of white rural Australian 'authenticity', then, can also be read as using exclusionary nationalist discourse to bring to the fore these brands' credentials *as authentically and historically Australian* and wedge market share (Prideaux, 2009).

Regardless of product type, however, the white protagonist consistently recurs and, whilst both male and female, the protagonist is exclusively framed within a conservatively gendered narrative. Here, I examine two exemplary advertisements—McCain *Baby Peas* and Devondale *Aussie Farming Families*—and consider how the advertisements attempt to secure future consumption by positioning consumption of advertised products as a way to assemble an identity aligned with rural discursive subjecthoods. Through these narratives, white, gendered and classed discourses of Australian childhood are naturalised and reinforced as truthful.

McCain Baby Peas

In the McCain *Baby Peas* advertisement aired on Australian television in 2010, the discourse of wholesome rural Australian childhood is central to the advertisement's narrative and consumption message. The advertisement begins with a long shot of a white girl and her grandfather walking down a lane. It is early morning, signified by tweeting birds (0:02) and golden sunrays bouncing off the plants (0:09). In the foreground is a field thick with low green plants. In the background are rolling hills of rural Australia (0:00-0:01). The grandfather leads the granddaughter into the field and picks a pea pod from a plant. He pries open the pod and shows his granddaughter the row of peas in the pod, proclaiming: "Look, a pea" (0:01-0:02). The granddaughter laughs and looks up at her grandfather: "Granddad, real peas come from the freezer" (0:03-0:06). The grandfather responds: "That's where they

end up. But **this is where they start out. They soak up the goodness of the sun, the soil, the rain**. And then, when they turn into sweet baby peas like this McCain picks them, freezes them fresh to lock in the flavour and puts 'em in a bag" (0:06-0:21). As he speaks, he plants a seed (0:09-0:11). The grandfather and granddaughter then walk back to his utility truck, while birds tweet in the background, and they sit in the seats of the Ute (0:21-0:22). The girl puts a pea in her mouth and proclaims in a cutesy childish voice: "Mmmm, they're good!" (0:23-0:24). The grandfather looks at her and responds affectionately, "**They're all good, sweetie**" (0:25-0:26).

In these screenshots from the McCain Baby Peas (2010) advertisement, a grandfather walks his granddaughter down a lane in a rural farming environment (left), and later plants a seed in the soil (right).
(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f29AJv0-pK4)

From beginning to end, this advertisement is framed as a storyline about the rural as a location of origin, and the rural as a place of goodness. The opening medium-distance shot seen in the above right image is a framing shot that spatially orients the viewer. Included within the frame is the rolling Australian hillside. As the first shot in the advertisement, this shot has significance as the first impression for viewers. The camera frames a luscious rolling Australian hillside within the shot to show the viewer that this conversation is taking place in rural Australia. Furthermore, the landscape itself has the semiotic affordance (van Leeuwen, 2005) of framing the white farmer and his granddaughter as rural and wholesome characters on a morning outdoor stroll. Therein, this landscape orients the viewer to the spatial narrative, and frames the narrative's white inhabitants as a particular type of person— natural and wholesome.

The early morning rural setting signifies *beginning*, as does the planting of a seed and the use of a young child. The grandfather alludes to the motif of beginning in his speech as well, when he pronounces "This is where they [the peas] start out." In the very next sentence, he links beginning to goodness: "They soak up the goodness of the sun, the soil, the rain." The goodness motif continues, with the granddaughter's explanation of the taste of the peas as "good" and the grandfather's affectionate response, "they're all good, sweetie." The girl is framed in terms of goodness and innocence, also. The grandfather sees her as a Rousseauian innocent child inasmuch as he treats her with affection in his choice of words ('sweetie') and inasmuch as she is framed as naïve ("real peas come from the freezer!"), ergo innocent. Like the peas, this white girl is in natural surrounds where she can 'soak up the goodness of the sun, the soil, the rain', and this acts as a testament to her own goodness.

The confluence of the rural landscape and childhood goodness and innocence positions the product, peas, as wholesome and natural by association. Here, the discourse of innocent rural Australian childhood is useful in conveying an image of wholesomeness and purity, and to frame the product accordingly. Consumers of the advertised product, in this sense, are positioned as people who see themselves as consuming natural, healthy foods from a brand dedicated to a discursive image of naturalness for its products and its consumers. Concomitantly, in the depiction of the innocent child in the rural Australian location, the advertisement discursively reinscribes such an image of the Australian child as desirably Rousseauian (Jenks, 2005/1996). That is to say, the visual and aural linking of rural naturalness and childhood innocence in this advertisement functions to reinforce an image of purity and naturalness both for the product being promoted, as well as for the white rural Australian child depicted here.

Here, then, this advertisement's use of the discourse of pure and wholesome rural Australian childhood markets McCain peas as a product that is pure and wholesome, but also to

construct white Australian girlhoods as cogently and naturally belonging within the rural spaces of the nation. While the simple depiction of an adult farmer in a rural locale might have similarly worked to construct the product as coming from a natural and pure place, the use of a white, gendered, *rural Australian childhood* in the advertisement reinforces and drives home the message being conveyed: nature, wholesomeness, purity. That is to say, the discourse of rural Australian childhood is taken up in the advertisement as a poignant image of naturalness, purity and wholesomeness so that the advertisement might secure future consumption from viewers seeking out wholesome, pure foods from an Australian brand.

From a Foucauldian perspective, then, the discourse of wholesome and natural rural Australian childhoods, framed here as white and gendered, is *produced as truth* (Foucault, 1976, 2002b). The narrative is employed to secure consumption by positioning the peas as a 'natural' product. However, this text's representation of white innocent rural Australian childhood as 'natural and authentic' concomitantly works to reinscribe whiteness and innocence as ideal aspects of rural Australian childhood subjectivities. What I am highlighting here is not the "primitive origins" (Foucault, 1972, p. 146) of rural Australian childhoods, or a truthful and grounded form of the category, but rather what Foucault calls the "enunciative *derivation*" (Foucault, 1972, p. 147). By this, following Foucault, I mean that the category of white and gendered rural Australian childhoods comes to be understood as truthful not by reference to a non-discursive fact, but by the reiteration of this definition of rural Australian childhoods in discourse (Foucault, 1972). To put it simply, through the description of rural Australian childhoods as white, gendered, and wholesome, this text contributes to the production of the discourse of wholesome rural Australian childhoods as something which is nominally truthful, while also marginalising non-normative childhoods from this rural Australian imaginary.

Devondale Aussie Farming Families

Similarly, the discourse of wholesome rural Australian childhoods as white and gendered is sustained and reiterated in three 2010 Devondale dairy products advertisements titled *Aussie Farming Families*. All three Devondale *Aussie Farming Families* (2010) advertisements use the same footage featuring wholesome rural Australian children, re-cut each time for different lengths of advertisement. All three produce an image of the rural Australian childhood as wholesome insomuch as the child is white, rural, and appropriately gendered. The advertisement that will be focussed on here is the longest, 30-second version.

In this advertisement, viewers are being invited to endorse, through consumption of Devondale, the rural Australian community ideal, along with all of the *national ideals* for which it is a synecdoche: gender normativity, the nuclear family, and nostalgia for a traditional and racially homogenous way of life that presumably exists in rural places. Here, consumption of Devondale becomes a signifier of "our allegiance to particular communities of morality and identity" (Rose, 2008/1996, p. 93); it is simultaneously a rural and a national community of morality and identity which is being imagined and reiterated here. To consume Devondale is not just to eat cheese—it is to endorse an identity that is purely, wholesomely, Australian. Within neoliberal consumption discourse, wherein consumption signifies allegiance to particular values and contributes to personal messages about selfhood, the narrative here suggests that consumption of Devondale is an action that can assist a consumer in identifying with, endorsing and sustaining the exclusionary messages produced, and thereby, can position the consumer as a truly *Australian* subject. That is to say, the advertisement attempts to secure future consumption by positioning consumption of Devondale as a way to endorse the rural narrative produced in the advertisement.

Likely, then, the most desirable target consumer demographic for this brand is the white, middle-class demographic which is represented by the protagonists of the narrative. The relatively high socio-economic status of Australia's white middle-class with disposable

income positions them as desirable future consumers. Thus, in appealing to this demographic with purchasing power, the brand features them as central to national advertising discourse. Consequently, by appealing to white middle-class demographics this narrative merely works to reinforce the centrality of privileged socio-economic demographics within the national imaginary.

The advertisement involves multiple quick scene changes. The advertisement, attempting to emphasise the Australianness of the brand, shows a white farming family offering a feast to their farming neighbours at a community barbecue hosted in rolling dairy plains somewhere in rural Australia. It begins with the sound of a cow mooing (0:01). Three white girls, around the age of eight, are standing on a gate that has a sign on it that reads "This is a Devondale farm". The three girls are dressed as fairies. They wear tutus and have fairy wings attached to their backs. One is wearing a plastic crown on her head, and another is wearing a crown of flowers. All three girls are white with light coloured hair. As the camera sweeps past them, they follow it with their eyes and yell in high pitched voices, "We own the company!" (0:00-0:03). The scene changes to a bustling kitchen where white people mingle and chat. One person cuts a block of Devondale cheese, a lady prepares a meal in a kitchen, and a man walks into the house with his baby in his arms (0:04-0:08). The scene changes again to a father and son walking down a lane. Both wear blue flannelette shirts. The father has his hand on his son's head as he looks at the camera and says "we own the company" (0:08). Next, the group of people are shown walking in a paddock towards waiting tables and chairs. They hold a banner that reads "Devondale. Wholly Australian" (0:09). The family proceeds to feed their guests cheese and milk (0:10-0:11). The mother then turns to the camera and says: "Devondale is owned by thousands of …" and the community turns to the camera, hands in the air to finish her sentence together: "Aussie farming families!" The mother continues: "We're the biggest community of farming families in Australia. We produce the

milk, we own the company. So when you buy Devondale for your family …" The community finishes her sentence again: "You're looking after ours!"

Throughout, panning shots of Australia's rural farmland frame the narrative, and the fact that the community party is outside in a paddock forcefully reinforces the message that this story is about rurality and nature. It is also forcefully framed as a narrative about family and community. However, they are particular *gendered* versions of family and community that are produced. Childhood gender roles are strictly adhered to throughout, using several semiotic techniques including metaphor (Fairclough, 1995; Lukinbeal, 2005), sunlight, and colour meaning (van Leeuwen, 2011). Take for example screenshot below, which shows girls dressed in gendered fairy clothing standing behind a gate (0:00-0:03):

Screenshot from 2010 Devondale 'Aussie Farming Families' advertisement
(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7LO20wwFThI&feature=related)

This gate is keeping children within a luscious green rural paddock, but also is symbolically containing, indeed quarantining, rural and traditional feminine subjectivities within the rural landscape, lest they be corrupted by the ills of urban Australia. The image is of a simple and pure rural childhood lifestyle, where the girls have a gendered position which they joyfully embrace. A lifestyle is constructed where white girls with strawberry-blonde hair frolic in the open paddocks. Sunrays beam down on their smiling faces and reflect off their hair, inciting imaginings of a warm and joyful day. The girls' swinging on the gate suggests

childish playfulness. They appear happy and un-complicated in this image, and the gendered play reinforces the normalcy and wholesomeness of these rural Australian children.

The wholesomeness of the gendered image is in part due to the fact that the girls are performatively (Butler, 1990, 1993) enacting their gendered subject positions. Following Butler, to represent the feminine body is to produce its discursive recognisability. As Butler posits, gender is produced by cultural reiterations of idealised gendered subject positions in discourse (1990; 1993). In *Gender Trouble*, Butler famously writes, "the domains of political and linguistic 'representation' set out in advance the criterion by which subjects themselves are formed" (1990, p. 4). In this sense, Butler channels Foucault's argument that discourse is productive. Following Foucault, she argues that texts have the "power [to] *produce* the subjects they … represent" (p. 4, original italics). Here, it can be read that the feminine Australian childhoods are not innocuously represented, but rather produced in discourse at the moment of citation. The text "inevitably "produces" what it claims merely to represent" (1990, p. 5)—through representation, the text *produces* rural Australian girlhoods as gendered, white and rural, and demarcates them as recognisable and idealised in Australian childhood discourse.

Gendered subject positions are produced later in the advertisement also. At 0:08, a boy is depicted being led down the lane by his father. The boy and father dress similarly and the father has his hand on his son's head as if guiding him, both physically down the lane and metaphorically towards his masculine adulthood. At 0:13, a girl is shown learning from her mother. Similar to the men, the women are shown wearing matching coloured clothing and the girl is taking cues from her mother, where both are serving food to the guests. Here, then, it is suggested that rural children learn their gendered subjectivities with one mother and one father in the heterosexual nuclear family unit. The men are dressed in flannel-print blue, and therefore masculine (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; van Leeuwen, 2011) t-shirts; the women

wear pink, and therefore feminine, t-shirts. This is the archetypal, ostensibly natural, construction of a pure nuclear Australian family unit in a rural Australian locale:

Screenshots from 2010 Devondale 'Aussie Farming Families' advertisement
(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7LO20wwFThI&feature=related)

Overtly about the rural family, this advertisement incites viewers to consider the heterosexual nuclear family, and gendered rural subjectivities, as wholesome and desirable in the rural Australian context. Furthermore, it reinscribes in discourse whiteness as a privileged norm of rural wholesomeness. Non-white children are rendered invisible, and excluded from the discourse of rural Australian childhood through the violence of omission (Butler, 2004b). By this phrase, 'violence of omission', I again follow Butler. "Discourse", she argues, "effects violence through omission" (2004, p. 34) insomuch as the exclusion of some lives from the frame of recognisability demarcates them as discursively unrecognisable. Examining the absence of references to Iraqi children in US media during the Iraq war, she asks, "do we have an image, a frame for any of those lives, singly or collectively? … Are there names attached to those children?" (2004, p. 34). Here, too, I observe the conspicuous absence of non-white children. What of the Australian children who do not fit the homogenous ideal produced in the Devondale advertisements?—in one of the most multicultural nations in the world, their absence is conspicuous. As with other advertisements in this trope (Bank of Queensland *Banking on Our Kids*, 2010; Sanitarium *Proud to be Australian*, 2010; Holden *Owner's Grant*, 2010; McCain *Baby Peas*, 2010; Tourism Australia *There's nothing like it*, 2010; Caravan and Holiday Parks *We love this*

country, 2010; Tourism Queensland *Where Australia shines*, 2010; Telstra Bigpond *Australia Day*, 2008), there is a distinct absence of Indigenous children from the narrative of wholesome rural Australian families. Aboriginal culture, and particularly the Aboriginal *family* and *community*, with its longevity beyond that of the post-colonial white culture pictured in this advertisement (Moreton-Robinson, 2007), remains outside of the frame of authentic rural family constructions. It seems the national identity formation posited here appeals to nostalgia for a national identity formation that emerged after white settlement but prior to contemporary conditions of globalisation, in an imagined era of white Australian hegemony.

I want also to highlight the salient role of *happiness* in this Devondale *Aussie farming families* (2010) advertisement. Generally, happiness is associated with goodness (Ahmed, 2010). Following Ahmed, happiness is not just an effect of goodness, but also "participates in making things good" (2010, p. 13). With this in mind, this advertisement can be read as producing a white, gendered and heteronormative version of rural Australia as good by overtly producing a narrative of happiness. The overtly happy, smiling faces in this advertisement belong exclusively to white and heteronormative people in a homogenously white community. Here, then, happiness and its associated goodness is distinctly connected to a privileged form of Australian identity. Happiness, here, is "what you get for being a certain kind of being" (Ahmed, 2010, p. 12)—white, heterosexual, married, with children. The advertisement's construction of the normative rural Australian life as happy, then, also functions in the idealisation of white, gendered, and heteronormative rural Australian identities.

Besides the happy family motif in this advertisement, there is a clear, happy, rural community motif as well. 'Community' is a term with significant linguistic connotations. A community implies a social relation that is "more natural" and "less 'remote'" (Rose,

2008/1996a, p. 91) than a 'society'. Community is also a term that is used frequently when describing rural townships. That is to say, enhanced feeling of community is part of the "metanarrative of the rural" (Niel & Walters, 2007, p. 279) both in Australia (Liepins, 2000a, 2000b) and internationally (Bunce, 2003; Jones, 1997; Niel & Walters, 2007; Valentine, 1997). Rural communities are perceived to be safer, more wholesome, more "peaceful" and more "close knit" (Valentine, 1997, p. 137), than urban societies. In this context, the construction of a wholesome rural community can be seen as a direct rejection of non-spatial, globalised, networks of relationships.

Furthermore, the perceptibly organic and genuine sense of community in rural locations makes them desirable geographies to raise children (Valentine, 1997). In a study of parents' perceptions of raising children in rural English towns, Valentine found that parents:

> ... regard a rural environment as a safer place for their children to grow up than an urban one. To justify these claims about the relative safety of the village ... [parents] mobilised popular representations of the rural idyll as a supportive community. (1997, p. 144)

In the Devondale *Aussie Farming Families* (2010) advertisement, the focal family provides a feast for their friends, and this joyful gathering is constructed as a coming together of a farming community to support one another. To take the Australian term, the families coming together as an interdependent and supportive cohort is a performative reiteration of their Australian *mateship* (Ward, 2003/1958). The ostensibly Australian wholesomeness of this community is alluded to in the banner that members of the community carry across a farming field, which reads "Devondale: Wholly Australian" (0:09):

This screenshot from the 2010 Devondale Aussie Farming Families advertisement shows a rural community coming together for a 'wholesome' community gathering (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7LO20wwFThI&feature=related)

In this image, the rural landscape in the background and superimposed images of cows give a sense of place (Lukinbeal, 2005) to the community; it is clearly a community that is *rural*. There is a sense of sameness in this scene of a rural community gathering. It is a union of quintessentially rural and white Australian adults and children, again excluding non-white people from the frame of wholesome rurality and normalising rural whiteness. The emotional and cultural closeness of the community is constructed in the advertisement by discursively reinscribing the community as one big family, as is revealed when the community shouts as one to the camera, "When you buy Devondale for your family, you're looking after ours!" Pre-pubescent children running among the adults appear to be the centre of the community, in a similar way to the child being the centre of the family unit (Holland, 2005). The children laugh at several points throughout the advertisement (0:05 and 0:23) and run amongst their parents (0:10). When the community yells, "Aussie farming families", the shot changes to two close-up images of smiling children (0:15-0:16), showing that childhood is central to the idea of family and community. These pre-pubescent and gendered children, it appears, are the sign of a healthy rural Australian community (Holland, 2004).

Therein, this advertisement *produces* in discourse an image of pure and wholesome rural Australian childhoods, which are homogenously white, gendered and heteronormative, as

discursively, truthfully, and authentically Australian (Foucault, 1976). White, gendered children are framed as central to rural Australian family and community ideals, which also function as a synecdoche for broader national ideals.

The advertisement attempts to secure future consumption by endorsing a wholesome, pure, white and gendered rural childhood imaginary and inviting viewers to also endorse this imaginary through consumption ("when you buy Devondale for your family you're looking after ours!"). The narrative of Australian childhoods that emerges through this advertisement, then, fits within the neoliberal context of identity construction through consumption: by buying Devondale products, the advertisement suggests, viewers can actively contribute to and endorse the exclusionary and idealised narrative that is produced in the advertisement, and be seen to be doing so in a way that makes them recognisable within privileged discursive visions of nationhood. The exclusionary narrative, then, is used to secure consumption; but, through its use, it is also naturalised within national discourse.

Childhood Journeys through Australian Rural Landscapes

The perception that rural Australia offers authentic Australian experiences can position road trips through the Australian outback as opportunities to get in touch with authentic Australianness (Elder, 2007; Fiske et al., 1987; Haynes, 1998; White & White, 2004). The road trip through Australia is "a metaphor for a personal spiritual quest" (Haynes, 1998, p. 6) in which the adventurer is in search of "spiritual rebirth" (p. 6) through an intimate experience with the homeland. This Australian pilgrimage draws intertextual meaning from the Indigenous Australian walkabout, where Indigenous Australian boys traditionally embarked on journeys into the Australian outback to return as men (Elder, 2007), and similarly, to the many religious pilgrimages to global religious capitals such as Mecca and Jerusalem. In this sense, the journey is envisaged as a spiritual one—positioning national

identity as something that is majestic and mystical. In the advertisements studied in this section, childhood journeys through Australian rural locales are constructed as opportunities for Australian children to learn about authentic Australianness. Furthermore travel to Australian rural locales is positioned as an opportunity for the consumer to establish oneself as an authentic Australian: by travelling to rural spaces, or by purchasing products that endorse such travel, consumers can buy into and endorse privileged, agrarian, Australian identity constructs that are produced as ideal within dominant national discourse. The narratives, therefore, both attempt to secure future consumption and, through these attempts, naturalise exclusionary notions of authentic Australianness in discourse. As with the previous advertisements, such privileged versions of rural Australian childhoods continue to be white and traditionally gendered.

Many advertisements construct journeys through rural landscapes as times for children to learn about the real Australia. This childhood journey through rural Australia has been identified in various types of advertisements, such as in car advertisements and travel advertisements. Car advertisements on television (Subaru *Forester*, 2010; Toyota *Kluger*, 2008, 2011; Mitsubishi *Pajero*, 2008, 2010) can use rural Australian adventures to promote their cars as vehicles both literally and figuratively for achieving a more authenticated version of national selfhood. Likewise, television advertisements promoting local Australian tourism (Caravanning and Holiday Parks *We love this country*, 2010; Tourism Australia *There's nothing like it*, 2010) can frame road trips to rural Australian spaces as ways for consumers to get in touch with the authentic Australian experience. Road trips to rural Australian locales have also been identified in non-travel related advertisements (Telstra *Big Things*, 2008; Big M, 2011). In these cases, it is generally used as a rhetorical device to position brands as quintessentially Australian. Thus, a variety of advertisements attempting

to secure consumption of various products can depict exclusionary rural Australian childhoods as desirable and achievable through consumption.

The advertisements within this subset suggest that authentic Australianness can be experienced, indeed learned, on a short trip to rural Australian locations (Subaru *Forester*, 2010; Toyota *Kluger*, 2008, 2011; Mitsubishi *Pajero*, 2008, 2010; Telstra *Big Things*, 2008). The journeys represented in these television advertisements are journeys where children can come to learn about themselves *as Australian*. Throughout the narratives in both the chosen case studies and broader corpus (listed above), the wholesome, white and gendered adventurers return from their road trips with new perspectives about both themselves and the nation. The journey is a journey of the white national child, where the children contextualise their subjectivities within the Australian story. The landscapes in these adventures are not merely backdrops to the narrative. They are used to attempt to secure future consumption, but also naturalise exclusionary imaginaries of Australian childhood as 'authentic'.

Telstra Big Thing

In a Telstra *Big Things* advertisement, aired for several months on Australian television in 2008, a narrative of a father and son road trip is constructed. Whilst being an advertisement for broadband internet, the product being sold is not mentioned until the final scene. Instead, the advertisement primarily involves a voiceover of a boy narrating the story of his trip around Australia with his father. He narrates:

> My Dad says Australia's one of the big countries. He reckons **you've got to go out and see this thing in action**. Dad says the French have the Eifel Tower, the Chinese have the Great Wall, but Australians? We have the big things. The big lobster. The big Koala. And the big chook [colloquialism for Chicken]. People think they're called big things because of their size, but Dad says they were all designed by one man: Sir. Francis Big. The big merino was an official gift from the People's Republic of New Zealand. Yeah, nice one, Dad. And there's one big

thing in Australia that has never been approached by human kind [footage of a large model dinosaur is shown]. **Dad says Australia's the most amazing country ever** and you can't help but smile when you see it. My mates have all been to the beach for the holidays. But me? I've been everywhere. (0:00-0:53)

A male voiceover then reads: "In a country this big, you need a fast, reliable wireless network" (0:54-1:01). As the boy narrates, upbeat acoustic music plays. The advertisement opens with an image of the boy sitting on his front verandah waving goodbye to his friends as they run off with body boards, presumably towards the ocean (0:02-0:06). The father is shown getting out of his Kombi van and walking towards the son (0:02-0:06). Their road trip holiday then begins. An aerial shot shows the van driving down a highway (0:09). This long areal shot shows the Australian bush landscape on either side of the open road. Taken from the air and showing wide open spaces, this could suggest freedom and escape from the suburban home to the Australian bush. The van then stops at various giant statues of animals along Australia's rural highways, referred to as the "big things" (0:13). The van stops at the "big lobster" (0:13-0:17), the "big koala" (0:18-0:19) the "big chook" (0:19-0:20), the "big merino" (0:30-0:34) and a big dinosaur (0:40-0:43). The trip ends with the father carrying the sleeping son inside (0:50-0:53). The son is exhausted from his long road trip around Australia.

This advertisement is one in a series of Telstra advertisements featuring the same father and son. The father's identity is central to the narrative of Australianness produced within the advertisements. The advertisements consistently make a joke out of the father's lack of intelligence (there is no Francis Big, nor a People's Republic of New Zealand). His Australian identity is evoked by the construction of him as a simple, unpretentious man who is overly positive and good natured (Gorman, 1990; Ward, 2003/1958). This image of the father frames him as, in Australian parlance, a working class 'larrikin' in the vein of famous Australian archetypes such as *Crocodile Dundee* and Steve Irwin (Lang, 2010; see also Chapter 7, where I discuss other Telstra Bigpond advertisements featuring this same father

and son in the school environment). This archetypal character is traditionally gendered and raced inasmuch as the larrikin identity functions as a privileged form of white Australian masculinity. The imaginary of a father and son on a road trip across Australia thus evokes the gendered imaginary of 'the boys' escaping their banal lives to help the son 'find himself' whilst on the road under the influence of his larrikin father. The use of this imaginary instantly evokes a folksy and humble discourse of white Australian masculine identity and thus positions the brand as sympathetic with this perception of normatively white masculine national identity.

With the dominant and masculine Australian credentials of the advertisements' protagonists established, the road trip continues to evoke Australian imagery in order to associate the brand with an Australian identity. The narration frames the road trip as an opportunity for the father to show his son the country and to help him come to appreciate the greatness of Australia. The road trip is a journey where the boy learns to love his country and learns about his nation's identity. The camera's long shots of driving down highways, and the distinctly Australian images of the nation's 'big things', reveals the importance of experiencing iconic rural landscapes in the realisation of the true Australian identity. To understand Australia, it is suggested, children must "see this thing in action"; they must experience it first-hand. This rhetorical representation of the 'action' of Australia as being among rurality and iconic imagery is revealing of the stratification of Australian spaces within national identity tourism discourse. The predominance of rural images of bushland and iconic "big thing" sites is revealing of the landscapes that have been emotionally connected to nationhood within national identity tourism discourse, while also prioritising these rural locales as emotionally significant within the imagined community. Travel to these locations, it is suggested, is a way for children to access a true Australian national identity formation and to come to appreciate true Australianness. It seems that seeing Australia's cities and suburbs is not

enough for children to understand Australia's true spirit. Rather, it is suggested, Australian children must see the rural homeland and visit iconic rural sites in order to know their own nation.

Ironically, the rural spaces visited are visited because man-made structures have been erected upon them; the natural landscape is superseded by 'big' built structures that function to attract the eye of tourists seeking to see white man's triumphant structures upon the land. There is thus a conflict here between a love of rurality and a masculine need to conquer it by erecting glorified statues (Beeton, 2010; Stadler, 2010). In this sense, the journey might be metaphorically seen as a masculine father-son pilgrimage where they follow the nation's forefathers who conquered and tamed the Australian outback. Nonetheless, the discursive representation of the true Australia as being outside of the city reinforces the value of travel to rural Australia for coming to develop a personal sense of national identity (White & White, 2004), and relies on the geographical marginalisation of non-white, suburban, and city-dwellers, from the frame of authentic Australian identity.

I would like to suggest that this advertisement has two key functions. On the one hand, authenticity as an Australian child is tied to familiarity with rural Australia, in order to position the product as 'in the know' about national authenticity. The rhetorical strategy of this advertisement is telling. It promotes the product being sold as spanning the breadth of the nation ("In a country this big, you need a fast, reliable wireless network"). Furthermore, and cogent with neoliberal advertising rationalities that position consumption as integral to identity formation, the advertisement promotes a branded *identity* inasmuch as it positions the brand and its future consumers as valuing rural, and therefore traditional, Australia. The advertisement is thus promoting its ability to secure for its consumers identification and association with privileged national identity formations; by constructing the brand as valuing of a particular normative white and masculine vision of rural Australia, it can appeal to

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consumers who identify with, or aspire to, such an identity formation. Again invoking Miller and Rose (2008/1997), I would argue that consumption of the product is framed not merely as a function of need, but also of identity (Rose, 1999; Miller & Rose, 2008/1997). Consumers of Bigpond Broadband are positioned in this advertisement as a particular type of consumer—who consume the product as an act of allegiance to a particular agrarian model of Australianness. Through consumption, viewers can be positioned as endorsing and aspiring towards a more wholesome model of Australianness. As Miller and Rose (2008/1997) argue, consumption is tied up with "the kinds of relations that human being can have with themselves and others through the medium of goods" (p. 116). That is to say, consumption of Bigpond is positioned here as a personal identity statement—Bigpond consumers are framed a particular type of consumer who identity with the privileged model of Australian identity glorified in this advertisement.

Furthermore, the message that Australian identity can be *bought* through consumption of bigpond broadband has an immediate material consequence. It divides those who have economic means to buy into an identity formation from those who do not. In a society where brands are not simply products of need, but also identity markers (Rose, 1999), access to particular identity formations is tied to economic means. The narrative produced in this advertisement thus works to exclude low-socioeconomic status children from idealised models of Australianness.

Caravanning and Holiday Parks We love this country

The 2010 Caravanning and Holiday Parks *We love this country* advertisement shows children learning about themselves as Australian through rural journeys. The Caravan and Holiday Parks (2010) advertisement opens with a white family in a suburban locale stacking goods into their car (0:01-0:02). The family is constructed as the typical nuclear family

inasmuch as it features a father and mother, and pre-pubescent son and daughter. The daughter throws a soft toy bear into the car, the son stacks in his cricketing gear, and the mother throws in a bag. The car, with a caravan attached, is then shown driving along a beachside highway (0:03). The father and mother point excitedly at something off screen (0:04). Another scene of a young heterosexual couple smiling and pointing at a map is then shown. They sit on their car on the side of the road (0:06-0:08). A car drives past, and they wave. A happy and friendly rural atmosphere is being constructed. The camera then moves to show the people in another car smiling and waving (0:08). The family in the second car are an Asian family, again a nuclear family with a mother, father, daughter and son. The car then drives into a caravan park, and a voiceover begins:

> Nowadays, we seem to be working harder for longer. So it's good to **take the time out** to remember what we're working for. Because the greatest memories in life are often the ones we create ourselves. Caravanning and holiday parks: where **people come together**. **We love this country** dot com dot A-U (0:09-0:31)

As the voiceover speaks, the children from both families are shown together jumping on a jumping castle (0:11-0:13). The young couple are shown setting up their campsite (0:14). All of the cast then come together to play ball games in a circle (0:15-0:18). A brief time lapse then shows the white family's campsite as the sun sets (0:18-0:20). At 0:21, the voiceover reflectively states: "the greatest memories in life are the ones we create ourselves", and a sepia-toned home video of children waving is shown:

Screenshot from the 2010 Caravanning and Holiday Parks *We love this country* advertisement showing sepia-toned home video footage to suggest nostalgia for the Australian family adventure
(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eF433uXzo5k)

The sepia-toned and flickering reel of footage is a technique that suggests the footage is old and can indicate nostalgia for a past time, while the home video technique could suggest the intimacy of the moment. Like many advertisements that feature domestic Australian travel (Subaru *Forester*, 2010; Toyota *Kluger*, 2008, 2011; Mitsubishi *Pajero*, 2008, 2010; Tourism Australia *There's nothing like it*, 2010), this advertisement suggests that the suburban Australian family can escape the busy working lifestyle ('we seem to be working harder for longer') by heading to slower and more peaceful rural locations ('take the time out'). The Australian family road trip is thus constructed here as an adventure in search for the happier and more wholesome Australia that can be found in rural locations.

This message works on several levels to produce rural Australian childhoods as ideal. In one sense, the construction of the rural as an escape from the rushed, pressured working life in the big cities is to lament the material contemporary (indeed, neoliberal) economic rationalities in which communities are replaced by the individualised and privatised corporate lifestyles in the nation's big cities (Harris, 2004). Here, then, the narrative of the advertisement, positioning an image of the white, gendered rural Australia as a more desirable place to be, plays on anxieties about perceived loss of community in cities.

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Ironically, *consumption* – an activity central to neoliberal economic rationalities – is framed in the advertisements as a way of escaping the city's shallow individualised lifestyle. Here, then, viewers are asked to continue to consume (this time, in the form of a holiday) in order to escape the rushed world of the nation's big cities—if only for a weekend retreat. Through this narrative that situates consumption as a way of navigating a materialistic and individualised big-city context and of accessing more desirable Australian family and childhood subjectivities found in rural 'community' of Australia, the advertisement reinscribes an exclusionary image of rural Australian childhoods as desirable and ideal. Thus, when the voiceover states "we love this country", it is not the entire nation being referred to, but the rural parts that are shown in the advertisement; it is as if the phrase *this country* automatically excludes the urban areas of Australia as less Australian.

The theme of "coming together" is referred to both by the voiceover and the footage of the children together on the jumping castle (0:11-0:13). The image of children jumping together, two white and two Asian, constructs a multiethnic narrative. This is in contrast to the Devondale *Aussie Farming Families* (2010) which overtly glorifies whiteness in a rural locale. Potentially, the difference in racial representation lies in the activities of the families in each advertisement: the white family lives in a rural location in the Devondale advertisement, whereas the families in this advertisement (white and Asian) are suburban families, only passing through the rural locale to soak up the peaceful rural atmosphere. Thus, they do not *belong* here so much as are passing through. Furthermore, the protagonist family remains a white family, and in this sense, whiteness remains a central norm in this narrative of rural Australian identities.

Perhaps, too, this centrality of white characters indicates the perceived relative purchasing power of future consumers—white, middle-class consumers are situated as the protagonists because this is the demographic with disposable income. The advertisement, with its focus

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on securing consumption, is speaking directly to privileged demographics which it sees as its most likely consumers; in so doing, the narrative entrenches privileged demographics' centrality in advertising discourse.

In sum, this advertisement further constructs the rural as a place where authentic and wholesome Australianness can be accessed, so that children travelling to the rural are framed as getting in touch with a more desirable and wholesome version of Australia—which overtly features white and traditionally gendered characters. This image produces and reinforces rural Australian childhoods as more wholesome than suburban Australian childhoods which, it seems, are blanketed in undesirable city lifestyles dictated by busy and individualising working lives. Like the other advertisements explored in this chapter, rural Australian childhoods are consistently produced as authentic more desirable (Telstra *Big Things*, 2008; Subaru *Forester*, 2010; Toyota *Kluger*, 2008, 2010; Tourism Australia *There's nothing like it*, 2010), and wholesome (Devondale *Aussie Farming Families*, 2010; Mitsubishi *Pajero*, 2008, 2010). Importantly, too, such visions of rural Australian childhoods are not simply represented by advertisements in order to secure future consumption from white, middle-class viewers with disposable incomes. Through their representation, these discourses of rural privilege are also reiterated in discourse as recognisable and ideal. Following Foucault (1976), privileged forms of rural Australian childhoods emerge through the *productive power of discourse*. As Foucault argues in his examination of discourses of sex, discursive framing involves the "incitement and intensification" (1976, p. 11) of particular ways of being and becoming, and the necessary exclusion of others.

Through narratives which attempt to secure future consumption from privileged white middle-class socio-economic groups, and which ask all viewers to consume to achieve privileged subjectivities, the advertisements entrench and naturalise a particular

exclusionary vision of rural Australian childhoods—involving whiteness, gender norms, heterosexuality, the nuclear family (of which the child is a central component).

Ruptures in Rural Australian Childhood Constructions: Alternative Formations

While it is clear that the wholesome pure, white, gendered and heteronormative rural Australian childhood construct has emerged as a *dominant* and overwhelming theme in television advertisements, I want to avoid the impression that this is the only image available to viewers of television advertisements. Chapter 6, for example, examines Indigenous characters in rural locales and white characters in beach locales. As I will argue, Indigenous rural childhoods also have distinct discursive meanings in national discourse. On top of this, it should not be read from this chapter that white Australian childhoods are framed as uniquely rural. In the following chapter, it will be argued that white characters have a greater degree of spatial transience on television advertisements than Indigenous characters, as is evidenced by the fact that they are often depicted in suburban locales on advertisements also.

One exception to the trope of the innocent and pure rural Australian childhood imaginary is the Toyota *Kluger* (2008) advertisement. This advertisement, which uses travel through rural landscapes to promote the four wheel drive product, utilises the discourse of the *rural dull* to position the product within the marketplace. This advertisement will be explored here to show how alternative formations of rural Australian childhood can emerge through television advertisements. This rupture to the wholesome rural Australian childhood discourse does not happen often, and this case study is remarkable precisely because it can be read as a challenge to the dominant discursive trope.

Toyota Kluger

The Toyota *Kluger* (2008) advertisement constructs a narrative of a nuclear family's road trip through rural Australia. It features a daughter who resents the journey, and in so doing gives voice to the discourse of rural dull. The rural dull discourse, often attributed to girls (Rye, 2006), frames rural locales as undesirable due to the boredom and lack of modern facilities in such locales. Furthermore, the girl's resentment can be read as distaste for family road trips, thus resisting the nostalgic and glossy image of the nuclear family holiday that is dominant within advertisements featuring rural Australian road trips (Tourism Australia *There's nothing like it*, 2010; Caravan and Holiday Parks *We love this country*, 2010; Tourism Queensland *Where Australia shines*, 2010; Telstra Bigpond *Australia Day*, 2008).

The advertisement opens with a family packed into a hotel room. A teenage girl lies in a bed with her two younger brothers. She raises her head and sighs, asking her parents: "can I have my own room?" (0:00-0:02). Upbeat acoustic music starts playing, and the scene changes to a car driving down a highway. The car stops at a petrol station (0:05-0:08) then at a hotel (0:08-0:13). At the hotel, the father takes bags out of the car, and the teenage girl complains: "Where is my bag!? What am I going to do?" The road trip continues through the Australian Reptile Park near Gosford New South Wales (0:15-0:17). In the car, the father asks: "Who stinks?" One of the boys replies: "He does." The teenage daughter responds: "Ya both stink" (0:19-0:21). Continuing along the road, the boys and their father go swimming in a pool, playing with a blow-up crocodile toy (0:22-0:24). The family then stop at a petrol station and buy meat pies (0:31-0:35). Eventually, the family arrives back at their suburban family home (0:58). By this stage, all three children are sleeping in the back seat of the car (0:54).

In this advertisement, banal yet deliberate national (Billig, 1995; Edensor, 2002) Australian symbolism frames the journey; the Australian Reptile Park (0:16), meat pies (0:33), and a blow-up crocodile (0:23) frame the road trip as more than just a holiday, but rather a journey

where the idealised Australian subjectivity is performatively (Butler, 1990) enacted. Following Billig (1995), national identities are produced banally; they are produced and reiterated through routine and everyday rituals and symbols. This banal nationalism is apparent in this advertisement: the banal foods (meat pies), institutions (Australian Reptile Park) and toys (crocodile) frame the Australian family road trip. By eating, vising and playing with these banal symbols of Australia, the children in the advertisement are constructed as *Australian*. By interacting with such symbolism on the road trip, these children are framed as embarking on a uniquely Australian adventure. As the caption at the end of the advertisement suggests ('You'll fill it with more than just stuff'), the road trip—and the car that enables the trip—is framed not just as any trip, but a particularly emotive experience:

This screenshot from the 2008 Toyota Kluger advertisement (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y_Ua8-EWSuI) shows a crowded car with exhausted children. The caption reads: 'You'll fill it with more than just stuff'.

Of interest here is the tension between Toyota's globalised multinational business model and its nationalist advertising strategy. The banal Australian imagery listed above clearly works to position the *Kluger* as a car for Australian families, even a vehicle through which Australian identity can be learned on the road. Toyota is positioning itself here as a brand for Australians, and idealising national identity, despite being a multinational corporation. This international company is vying to win the money of agentive (Miller & Rose,

2008/1997) Australian consumers in a globalized era by proving that its values are compatible with and endorse a nation's dominant national discourse (Prideaux, 2009). It can thus be read, following Smith (1995), that national identities are sustained in a globalised era, as they remain a powerful symbol of community and belonging with which territorial groups identify. But furthermore, a discursive form of nationhood is also being reiterated on television advertisements in a globalized time *because* it stands to benefit an economic agenda for multinational entities.

The unwillingness of the teenage daughter throughout the journey plays a significant rhetorical role in this advertisement. Childhood experiences in this advertisement are maintained and regulated by the adults (Matthews et al., 2000) inasmuch as the teenage daughter's feelings towards the adventure are marginalised by the parents (Matthews & Tucker, 2007; Rye, 2006). The parents are shown ushering their children into the car and driving them through rural Australian towns, not heeding much attention to the girl's resistance.

While the parents marginalise the girl's perspective, the advertisement does not. By showing the complaining girl, the advertisement gives voice to the rarely acknowledged 'rural dull' where the perceived tranquillity of rural locations can be read by some, particularly teenage girls (Rye, 2006), as a location where "boredom, a lack of opportunities and non-modern features" (Rye, 2006, p. 417) lead to disillusionment with rural locations. Similarly, rural spaces can be read here as incompatible with childhood femininity (Jones, 1999). Jones explains that "given the broad tendencies to equate children with nature and women with nature it might be expected that constructions of female children would render them 'natural'" (1999, p. 131), but, this it isn't so, because "the 'natural' state of childhood is a wild, innocent maleness" (p. 131) rather than a state of tranquil, passive femininity. By resisting the rural idyll, this girl could be seen as rejecting the 'tomboy' subjectivity

associated with rural children in favour of a more feminine subject position, and, this could signal a loss of childhood innocence and a transition towards an adult femininity. In this advertisement, then, the ideal rural child is both reinscribed as desirable by eager parents and resisted by the reluctant girl. This advertisement thus frames the Australian rural childhood subjectivity as a more complex subject position than in the other advertisements examined here. This advertisement shows how the wholesome Australian rural childhood subjectivity can at once be intensely governed by adults (Cunningham, 2006; Rose, 1999/1990) and stubbornly resisted by children (Matthews & Tucker, 2007).

Furthermore, the supposedly genuine and un-glossed family unit produced in this advertisement positions consumption of the brand as a thing 'normal' Australian families participate in. Towards the end of the advertisement, for example, a caption reads 'It's a family thing' (0:59), constructing the car manufacturer as in-the-know about the nuances of the typical Australian family trip. In a sense, ironically, by showing viewers an inside look into an ostensibly more 'real' family, which has arguments and dissatisfactions, the advertisement re-casts wholesomeness as something that is endearing and more attainable than the perfection depicted in the other advertisements. Perhaps the viewers are supposed to sit back and laugh, reflecting endearingly upon the girl, seeing characteristics of people they love in the girl on the screen. Like the targeted viewers, this Australian family is imperfect and typical, ergo normal.

Normality has a particularly pertinent function in advertising rhetoric. As Rose (1999) points out, to be normal is to be healthy and natural—and is thus a desirable way to be. As a result, normality becomes a measurement to be aspired towards not through manipulation but by governmentality—by showing viewers that normality is good and healthy. Rose states, "normality is not an observation but a valuation. It contains not only a judgement but an injunction as to a goal to be achieved" (1990, p. 133). Thus, viewers can be encouraged to

consume in the pursuit of normality. Through the depiction of the 'normal' family on an Australian road trip in this advertisement, a message is produced: *normal Australian families drive Klugers*. The construction of the 'normal' Australian family here could thus be seen as framing consumption of the Kluger as a means for becoming a particular kind of Australian family—normal, banal, middle-class, white, nuclear, Australian. In this sense, idealised normativity is produced in the advertisement as achievable through consumption (Rose, 1999; Miller & Rose, 1997/2008).

Conclusion

This chapter has been an archaeological exploration of television advertisements that produce discourses of wholesome and pure rural Australian childhoods. The idealised white, gendered, classed and spaced Australian childhoods examined in this chapter are constructed in ways that might secure future consumption. Viewers are asked to consume in their own self-interest: be it endorsing a way of life (Devondale *Aussie Farming Families*; Telstra *Big Things*), or assembling for themselves socially meaningful subjectivities (Caravanning and Holiday Parks *We Love This Country*; Toyota *Kluger*). In this sense, I have considered the ways exclusionary white, gendered, and classed Australian childhoods are situated as desirable and attainable through consumption. Such versions of childhood might reflect the values of those viewers to whom the advertisements see as the socio-economic demographic most capable of consuming: middle-class white consumers with disposable income. But also, it positions Other viewers as being able to work towards the represented subjectivities through consumption.

From a post-structuralist perspective, I continue here to argue that the exclusionary discourse of Australian childhoods which has been examined in this chapter can have *embodied consequences for flesh-and-blood Australians*, and in particular Australian children.

Discourse works to construct social conditions, norms and ways of being that are recognisable and ideal within a society. In this sense, discourse "frames" (Butler, 2009, p. 3) social life, producing the social conditions through which everyday life is experienced and enacted. As Butler argues in *Excitable Speech*, "the discursive constitution of the subject [is] … inextricably bound to the social constitution of the subject" (1997a, p. 155) inasmuch as *real people* move through and enact agency within a society whose discursive norms – often norms which are unjust and inequitable – precede them and frame the ways in which they will encounter the world.

The production of a discourse of Australian childhood within the television advertisements represents the bringing together of product consumption and identity construction (Rose, 1999). Consumption of the products becomes "imbued with a self-referential meaning" (Rose, 1990, p. 231). By consuming, the viewer can be positioned as incorporating "a set of values from among the … moral codes disseminated in the world of signs and image" (p. 231). Consumption, in this sense, is not just to purchase a product, but to "assemble a way of life" (Rose, 1990, p. 230) which both endorses and aspires towards images of privilege. To buy Devondale cheese, the *Aussie Farming Families* advertisement suggests, is to endorse, or at the very least take pleasure out of, a privileged rural Australian identity formation ('when you buy Devondale for your family you're looking after ours!'); to buy Bigpond Broadband, the *Big Things* advertisement suggests, is to identify with agrarian Australian nationalism (In 'the most amazing country ever' you need 'a fast, reliable wireless network'), and so on. Idealised white, gendered, middle class rural Australian childhoods are positioned here as *better*, more desirable childhoods.

Whilst the advertisements could be seen as merely offering narratives of rural Australian childhood that might most likely secure consumption in a free market, I also argue that the advertisements nonetheless reiterate and sustain in discourse the desirability of the

exclusionary imaginaries that they depict. Following Foucault (1976) and Butler (1990; 1993), it is through the repetition of such privileges over and again across the texts examined that a particular exclusionary and marginalising discourse of rural Australian childhoods emerges as truthful. The point is not that rural Australian childhoods are produced once or twice in a particular way, but that it happens repeatedly across several interrelated advertisements, with an exclusionary effect. As Butler argues, "the normative production of the subject is an iterable process—the norm is repeated" (2009, p. 168). That is to say, the norm is performative insomuch as it is consistently re-produced, and as a result the violence of privilege is over and again re-enacted.

Despite the dominance of the discourse of wholesome, white, heteronormative and gendered rural Australian childhoods on television advertisements, this discourse can be challenged in advertisements also. The Toyota *Kluger* advertisement, for example, constructs the teenage girl as resentful of her rural Australian adventure. Here, while the Australian child is not framed as overtly innocent and wholesome, the use of this rural dull (Rye, 2006) discourse nonetheless emerges as an image management strategy. The depiction of a resentful teenage girl during a rural Australian road trip shows that this brand understands and is in tune with the 'typical' and blemished Australian family.

Furthermore, whilst the white, heteronormative, middle-class Australian child is produced time and again in the advertisements examined, it remains plausible that viewers, alert to this discursive formation, and able to subvert its meaning through alternative readings, forcing ruptures in dominant narratives and appropriating the text for their own means (Yell, 2005; Posner, 2011). In such an instance, the textual meaning "no longer consists of what the sender intends" (Posner, 2011, p. 21), but is used by the reader in subversive and creative ways. Whilst I contend that a dominant discourse exists within this corpus, it should not be understood that this discourse is all-powerful or entirely restricting viewers; indeed, it is

through subversion of the dominant narrative that powerful, indeed hopeful, new understandings of Australian childhood might emerge.

The advertisements examined in this chapter generally render Indigeneity invisible in discourses of rural Australia. Whiteness in these advertisements contributes to the image of rural wholesomeness that the advertisements are constructing. A less dominant but still significant subset of advertisements does depict Indigenous characters in rural locales. These advertisements do not as overtly construct a nostalgic image of wholesomeness, and rarely feature Indigenous children in family or community groups. Rather, they appeal to an image of traditional Indigenous cultures that marginalises urban Indigeneity. Chapter 6 examines the representation of Indigenous children in advertisements, and argues that Indigenous Australian authenticity is tied to their relegation exclusively to the outback. In that chapter, I argue that white Australian children are more spatially transient, and Indigenous Australian children are only desirable so long as they are framed as untainted by white urban culture.

Constructions of Suburban Australian Childhoods

The Australian dream of land ownership can be traced back to early settlement of white Australians on the continent (Davison & Dingle, 1995; Elder, 2007; Fiske et al., 1987). When Australia was colonised, the myth of *terra Australis* was premised on the assumption that Indigenous Australians had not claimed ownership over the land (Elder, 2007; Perera, 2009). The assumption was that without fences or western-style built structures, the land had not been domesticated, and was therefore free for settlers to claim (Perera, 2009). At the time of colonisation the western ideal of land ownership began. The British Crown and early free settlers began claiming parcels of land for themselves (Fiske, Hodge & Turner, 1987; Elder, 2007), and ex-convicts were granted small lots of land to farm after serving their time as prisoners (Elder, 2007).

More recently, the mythology of the Australian dream involves the more modest goal of ownership of a suburban quarter acre block (Davidson & Dingle, 1995). It is generally acknowledged that romantic ideals about suburban Australian home ownership gained currency in the post-war years, during which suburbs on the outskirts of Australia's major cities rapidly expanded (Darnell, 2006; Davison & Dingle, 1995). The 1950s and 60s saw traditionally working class Australians break into the suburban housing market. Their rise

to the status of home owners was aided by higher levels of employment and growing incomes of the post-war years (Davidson & Dingle, 1995; Darnell, 2006). With growing home ownership, new post-war suburban populations would "come to think of themselves as middle class" (Davidson & Dingle, 1995, p. 5) in the belief that they had finally gained access to the 'Australian dream' of land ownership. Romantic post-war discourses of Australian suburbs positioned the growing suburban lifestyle as the triumphant result of Australia's first-world economy (Davidson & Dingle, 1995). Australians could take pride in the image of a nation built on a strong middle class, wherein every man and wife can own a home to raise a child (Fiske, Hodge & Turner, 1987). The Australian dream of home ownership from this perspective is seen as a symbol of a free and prosperous nation in which every person can succeed if only they work towards their goals. This principle has its origins in "conservative" (Davidson & Dingle, 1995, p. 16) suburban ideologies of middle class respectability and pride. The sign of a successful man is his ability to provide the certainty of a home for his wife and children (Fiske et al., 1987; Hoskins, 1994)—a home owned by him, which no landlord can take from him. The sign of a successful suburban woman was the respectable maintenance of the home and rearing of the children. Because the man spent his days at work, "the principal inhabitants of the new suburbs were housewives and children" (Davidson & Dingle, 1995, p. 14), and in this sense, the Australian suburbs took on a feminised identity (Davison & Dingle, 1995; Fiske et al., 1987; Gleeson, 2006; Hoskins, 1994). The suburban home was the woman's domain—a place domesticated, clean and reliable.

However, such a romanticised image of middle class suburbia has been met with popular criticism. The discourse of middle class suburbia is often critiqued as dull, mundane and mindless (Davison & Dingle, 1995; Turnbull, 2008). From this perspective, suburban life is framed condescendingly as stifling and uninteresting (Turnbull, 2008; Davidson & Dingle,

1995). As Giles (2004) puts it, "suburbia … is frequently characterised as the temporal zone of the everyday in which people follow tedious and unthinking routines in a cyclical round of continuous repetition" (p. 30). Similarly, McGreggor laments, the "ritual of work/sleep/sex/love/family/death … is at the very heart of the Australian dream" (1997, p. 19-20 as cited in Uhlmann, 2006).

Feminist scholarship, too, has been astutely critical of the impact of conservative suburban life upon women (Ahmed, 2010; Enker, 1994; Gilles, 2004). In the romantic visions of suburbia, housewives' economic lives (Enker, 1994; Gilles, 2004) and happiness (Ahmed, 2010) are envisaged as being tied to working men's and children's desires. The conservative vision of the housewife's household roles—as carer, nurturer, cleaner, and so forth—often frames the housewife as a happy and ideal suburban woman, and this functions to justify her actions. As Ahmed argues, the romantic discourse of the happy suburban housewife "erases the signs of labour under the sign of happiness" (2010, p. 52).

Many cultural critics of the recent decades, on the other hand, have turned their focus away from trenchant criticism of conservative suburban mythologies towards examination of the complexities of suburban life. As Davidson and Dingle (1995) argue, critique of suburbia should "deconstruct the myths of uniformity and standardisation" (p. 17). Notably, some feminist scholars have taken up this challenge by examining the complex ways in which suburban women and girls come to be represented in Australian films set in suburbia (Davison & Dingle, 1995; Simpson, 1999; Turnbull, 2008). Such literature is focussed on examining the complex relationships characters have with suburban spaces, and the meanings they make of suburban spaces within their own lives. Such scholarship turns its attention towards exploring how Australian suburbs and their inhabitants are made meaningful through popular discourse. In this sense, scholars should be "neither out-and-out opponents nor uncritical defenders" (Davidson and Dingle, 1995, p. 16) of suburban life.

Wiring with a post-structuralist notion of space (Bartley et al., 2004; Doel, 1999; Gregson & Rose, 2000), I approach Australian suburbia and suburban Australian childhoods as socially constituted categories. Suburbia and its childhood inhabitants, in this sense, are made meaningful through discursive practices (Giles, 2004; Simpson, 1999). Suburbia acts as a framing device that produces Australian childhoods in particular ways. As outlined in the theoretical framework, a post-structuralist understanding of space also necessarily involves thinking of suburban Australian childhoods as subject positions that are *produced* rather than simply existing in a pre-discursive manner. Like all subjectivities, suburban Australian childhoods are, in the Butlerian (1990, 1993) sense, performative. They are constituted and defined through ongoing acts of repetition and definition. Suburbia and its childhood inhabitants, I argue, are produced through discourse.

This chapter explores discourses of suburban Australian childhoods that are produced by television advertisements. I continue in this chapter to analyse how the advertisements attempt to secure future consumption by producing idealised models of Australian childhoods which are sold as achievable through consumption. The idealised suburban Australian childhood discourses are seen, therefore, to be produced and naturalised within neoliberal consumption discourses. The advertisements are primarily about product consumption for self-advancement and identity formation (Rose, 1999).

Furthermore, I will continue to be examining discourses of Australian childhood from a theoretical perspective that discourses can and do have material effects on real peoples' lives. A I have argued before, discourses produce inequitable norms which precede anyone individual (Butler, 2009), but are necessarily experienced in ways that will affect how people are expected to behave, and how they might be able to interact in the world (Butler, 1997a).

Advertisements have been identified that picture the suburban Australian childhood subject inside the suburban home (Telstra Dem Homes, 2007; Woolworth Typical Family, 2011; Cuddly Altra Thanks Mum, 2010; Hasbro Nab-It, 2010; Nutri-Grain *Boy2Man*, 2010; Milo Vitamins & Minerals, 2010), in the suburban backyard (Ikea *This is Home,* 2008; Coles *It all Counts*, 2010; Kirks *Quench your Thirst*, 2010; Milo *Duo*, 2008; Sanitarium *Weet-Bix Kids,* 2006), and in the suburban streetscape (Foxtel *EOFYS*, 2010; Ford *Territory*, 2010; Heinz *Creamy Pumpkin*, 2010, Bendigo Bank *Community*, 2010; Foxtel *Next Generation*, 2009). Within each of these suburban spaces, I find that advertisements, in positioning their products as beneficial for the attainment of socially desirable subject positions, consistently construct ideal suburban Australian childhoods as heteronormative, traditionally gendered, white, and middle class, therein producing an exclusionary vision of what the suburban Australian childhood can be.

Dominant discourses of childhood in the suburbs

The dominant Apollonian vision of childhood as a time of innocence and naturalness sits uncomfortably in the unnatural built environments of cities. As Jones argues, "the presence of the 'natural child' in the 'unnatural urban' [is] problematic" (2002, p. 17). Whereas rural spaces are often framed as natural and safe and therefore good for children, suburban spaces are more likely to be seen as devoid of nature and full of lurking threats, and therefore bad for children (Jones, 2002). The suburbs, in this sense, are potentially corrupting and dangerous spaces for children. Eroded sense of community and accountability in urban locations (Valentine, 1997), globalised and multicultural urban spaces (Jones, 2002), violence and crime, traffic and air pollution (Jones, 2002), and shared but ever shrinking public spaces (Matthews et al., 2000) all incite adult fear for children's health and safety in suburban locales. Parental fears about the dangers of public spaces are exacerbated by widespread and overstated media reporting of uncommon occurrences of child abductions

and murders by strangers on the street (Valentine, 2004). Media hyperbole about child abductions, labelled by Valentine as 'terror talk' (2004), can contribute to the cultural construction of the city as a dangerous location for children to be raised.

Fears *for* children in the city are matched by fears *of* children in the city (Christensen, James, & Jenks, 2000; Jones, 2002; Valentine, 2004). Children on the streets are often seen as undomesticated and up to no good. As Matthews argues, "children on the street are seen as out-of-place, a destabilising presence to the social order" (2003, p. 102). Jenks traces this discourse back to the 19th Century in the UK. The streets, he argues, were once a place where children roamed freely. As ruling and eventually middle class families gained the disposable income to school their children, the children of those classes withdrew from the streets and into schools (Jenks, 2005/1996). During this period, childhood increasingly came to be understood in terms of innocence and in need of protection from the ills of society, and the adult world moved to "claim children back from the streets" (Jenks, 2005/1996, p. 85). Today, children of the working class still generally spend more time playing on streets than their middle class counterparts (Hayes, 2010). While middle class children generally have more expensive, organised, after school activities structured by adults, working class children spend more of their time in unstructured play "with relatives and friends in the neighbourhood" (Hayes, 2010, p. 13; Schutz, 2010). Therein, it emerges that "the city space" continues to be read in mainstream discourse as segregated by social class (Jenks, 2005/1996, p. 85). The streets are locales primarily understood as being occupied by working class children, while children of the middle classes are kept busy in private spaces doing organised and monitored activities (Hayes, 2010; Schutz, 2010; Valentine, 2004) that keep them away from the trouble of the streets.

Another way in which the suburbs come to be segregated by social class is through the development of class-based enclaves (Jones, 2002; Matthews, 2003). The more desirable

real estate is bought up by the wealthier middle classes, while the working classes are relegated to the more remote and less desirable suburban spaces. Enclaves of middle class suburban order and civility generally take the form of gated communities on leafy streets (Jones, 2002). Whilst working class families might equally pursue these locales, they often do not have the resources to achieve this end (Jones, 2002). Thus, semi-private suburban streetscapes can emerge in which middle class children *can* play in ostensibly safe neighbourhoods with children of similar middle class 'respectability'.

The image of the cities as dangerous and unfit for children contributes to the construction of suburban childhoods as in more need of direct, family-centred interventionist approaches to their upbringing than childhoods in rural spaces (Jones, 2002; Valentine, 1997). As Jones argues,

> One consequence of [the discourse of unsafe cities] … was the shift of children's place in the city from the public to the private domain. Children were increasingly interned from the street for their protection (2002, p. 22)

Similarly, Valentine (1997) finds: "As a result of … fears about children's safety in the village parents heavily supervise their offspring's use of space" (p. 143). Suspicion of dangerous city spaces, then, has at the very least contributed to "unprecedented levels of control and confinement of children" (Jones, 2002, p. 25) over recent decades. Parents are increasingly searching for ways to keep their children away from public spaces—by finding activities for children within the private space of the home and by sending children to private tuition and organised sports in after school hours (Valentine, 2004). Middle class parents have a greater capacity to supervise their children's activities, wherein "low income families have less opportunities to supervise their children … because of the cost" (Valentine, 1997, p. 143)

Amidst this climate of fear, the suburban Australian home has been culturally imagined as a sanctuary in an otherwise dangerous metropolis (Christensen et al., 2000; Sibley, 1995; Valentine, 2004). In this sense, the home is a refuge and source of comfort, whose symbolism takes its meaning for its direct contrast to the world beyond the suburban fence (Sibley, 1995). The home can be constructed as an exclusive, private and personal space which others generally enter only on invitation. In this way, the home can come to be a location that is highly policed and made to match the ideals of the owner. Unwanted people, and indeed unwanted ideas, can be excluded more easily in this private space than in public realms beyond. In this way the home can become a sanitised (Walkerdine, 1999), child-friendly space for worried middle class parents who hope to preserve the innocence of their child. Therein, the middle class suburban home emerges in discourse as a place where children can enjoy their innate innocence in an otherwise corrupting suburban world.

However, the home is not exclusively to be considered an overly positive space. Family dynamics vary greatly—family conflicts and internal collapses of family relationships lead to broken homes, and domestic disputes often spill out onto the suburban streets (Sibley, 1995). Thus, an alternative discourse can emerge that posits the family home might as a location for troubled childhoods and learned anti-social behaviours. Overwhelmingly in television advertisements, however, the troubled home is not depicted—harmonious, even pure, white, gendered, middle class homes are frequently depicted. An exclusionary Australian suburban ideal is generally produced (as with Hasbro *Nab-It*, 2010; Woolworth *Typical Family*, 2011); although, as will be examined, some advertisements do allude to the idea of lost harmony in order to appeal to the anxieties of middle class suburban Australian families (as with Telstra *Dem Homes* 2007 advertisement explored below).

Australian childhoods in the suburban home

Australian childhoods are constructed in the suburban family home in many television advertisements within the data corpus (Telstra *Dem Homes*, 2007; Woolworth *Typical Family*, 2011; Cuddly Altra *Thanks Mum*, 2010; Hasbro *Nab-It*, 2010). The dominantly white and male suburban Australian child is particularly prevalent in advertisements selling food products such as breakfast cereals and school snacks (Nutri-Grain *Boy2Man*, 2010; Milo *Vitamins & Minerals*, 2010; Uncle Toby's *Muesli Bars*, 2010), which more often than not feature a mother nurturing her son (as with Nutri-Grain *Get the Ball Rolling*, 2009; Kellogg's Coco Pops *Os*, 2010; Vanish *NapiSan*, 2010). The predominance of the mother – son relationship in advertisements selling domestic food and appliance products reveals and propagates an implicit gendered message that mothers should be the consumers of domestic products. Such a narrative is largely absent, for example, in car and travel advertisements, which are targeted more broadly at families and less directly at mothers *per se*. Here, then, this suburban home genre is further revealing of the implicit suburban gendering that takes place through advertising discourse.

Three advertisements featuring the suburban Australian child will be explored here: Woolworths *Typical Family* (2011), Telstra *Dem Homes* (2007), and Uncle Toby's *Muesli Bars* (2010). Typical of this trope of advertisement, and representative of the broader corpus listed above, these three advertisements produce ideal suburban Australian childhoods as white, middle class and traditionally gendered whilst dominantly male.

Woolworths Typical Family

I want to start with the Woolworths *Typical Family* (2011) advertisement, which works to reinscribe the notion that the middle class suburban home is an ideal space for Australian children to live. Throughout, three families are depicted at dinner time. Two are represented as middle class, white, nuclear and suburban, and they are contrasted in the advertisement

to an inner-city couple that is young, white, middle class, and childless. All families are white, heteronormative, and middle class. The suburban families have children, while the inner-city family does not. Thus, in the advertisement, suburbia is exclusively produced as a place for white, middle class nuclear families, and as a space ideal for children. The depiction of a non-suburban family as childless reinforces that children are ideally found in suburban family situations and not inner-city urban locales.

However, the advertisement's voiceover argues that there is no typical Australian family by highlighting the differences between the families in terms of eating and lifestyle habits. It is my argument that the families that are featured in the visual narrative of the advertisement *do indeed* reinscribe normative notions of the suburban Australian family—as white, middle class and nuclear. In this sense, the visual narrative contradicts the narrative of the voiceover, and produces normative notions of suburban Australian childhoods.

Furthermore, the narrative casts Woolworths as a place in which middle-class, white, nuclear families shop. In this sense, shopping at Woolworths is positioned as a consumption habit that can help a consumer to position themselves as the desirable middle-class subject. In a world structured by neoliberal consumption rationalities wherein consumption is central to identity formation, the advertisement sells the act of shopping at Woolworths as a way in which consumers might be able to secure recognisability as ideal middle-class white Australian consumers. Here, this advertisement attempts to secure future consumption by implying Woolworths is a place where middle class consumers shop. Thus, this advertisement continues the theme of both idealising exclusionary notions of the suburban Australian childhood subject (as white, gendered, middle-class) as well as positioning consumption as a way in which viewers might be able to secure this exclusionary Australian subject position.

A voiceover talks throughout the advertisement, paralleling the visual narrative. A deep voice with a heavy Australian accent reads the voiceover:

> [Family 1:] Sally and Paul Ellis sometimes have to cater for the extended family. [Family 2:] Terry and Sue nearly always want it simple and fast. [Family 3:] At the Furlons, they can't resist Mary's Irish stew. Fact is these days, a typical family meal is as hard to find as a typical family. But when the Question 'what's to eat?' comes up, you can count on it being something fresh. [Switch to scene in supermarket:] Something quick and easy. Something deliciously nutritious from **Australia's Woolworths**. That's why they call us the fresh food people.

As the voiceover plays, a visual narrative proceeds. In the visual narrative, each family is shown in a scene of 5-10 seconds in the process of preparing the family dinner. In the first scene (0:00-0:10), an idealised middle class, white, nuclear suburban Australian family is constructed. The parents, Sally and Paul Ellis, are shown cooking a meal by the oven for their son—around the age of 10—and his seven friends. The boys all dump their bicycles and balls at the back yard and run into the kitchen to sit for dinner, drumming their hands on the kitchen table, ready to be served.

The very first shot in this scene of the suburban Australian family is a bird's eye shot of bicycles and helmets sprawled across the suburban backyard. This top-down angle "contemplates the world" and is often "read as a map" or "blueprint" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 145). It can be read here as a framing shot that, like a map, identifies the geography in which the scene takes place. Within the frame of the shot are bicycles and a hills-hoist (Australian clothes line) in a quarter acre-block, therein framing the locale as Australian suburbia. Indeed, the close proximity of the boy's friends to his house—they rode their bikes there—would indicate that the boys live in a fairly populated suburban area:

In this screenshot from the 2011 Woolworths Typical Family advertisement, bikes and helmets are left abandoned in the suburban backyard while the neighbourhood boys eat dinner inside (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfK0ah6G2BY).

The children are constructed as Apollonian boys who have been riding bicycles around the safe suburban streets—the safety of this suburb indicates that it is at the very least a middle class suburb free from working class Dionysian children. So, presumably, Sally and Paul's son plays with his friends on the safe middle class suburban streets during the day, using the streets as their own child-friendly locale in which they can play and explore.

Of interest in this advertisement, too, is that the children who are explained as the 'extended family' are six white boys and one Asian boy. The Asian child is depicted at the very moment that the voiceover reaches the term "extended family" (0:07). Sally and Paul are white and the Asian boy is a member of their extended suburban family—but, of course, he is not the protagonists of this Australian suburban story. This observation is reminiscent of Sieter's (1990) observation that racial minorities, if depicted in advertisements, are rarely represented as the agentive protagonists so as to maintain the narrative of white privilege that permeates western discourse. In this first family, then, a construction of the Australian middle class white suburban ideal is reinscribed with romantic images of a happy and innocent child enjoying his years of innocence outdoors with his suburban friends, while the parents are indoors cooking dinner for him and his peers.

Whilst I read the production of the Asian-Australian child here as a part of the 'extended family' as reinforcing white dominance, it should also be noted that an opportunity may arise here for viewers to choose to make another meaning from this narrative. As is made clear through a post-structural politics, meanings are not restrictive, and subversion and re-appropriation of a message can certainly take place (Posner, 2011). Indeed, for some viewers who identify with the Asian-Australian subject position it may be an opportunity to take pride in being outside of the norm, in that they are not framed as central to the conservative suburban narrative produced; or, for others, the might take this advertisement an opportunity to see Asian-Australians as an included member of the suburban Australian discourse, albeit an Australian family in which Hage's good white nationalists (1998) remain front and centre, and multiculturalism remains desirable so long as whites remain in power.

The second family depicted in this Woolworths *Typical Family* (2011) advertisement is that of Terry and Sue (0:10-0:16) who "almost always want it [dinner] simple and fast". This family is depicted as an inner-city rather than suburban locale. Because they are not suburban, they do not have family. This scene is framed by an opening shot of their inner-city high-rise apartment. The story then moves inside the apartment, to the young couple kissing:

In these screenshots from the 2011 Woolworths Typical Family advertisement, a young couple is shown cooking dinner in their inner-city apartment (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfK0ah6G2BY).

Terry and Sue are contrasted with the suburban family of Sally and Paul through their lack of children. Immediately, the framing shots—of suburbia versus the inner city—give a clue

to the makeup of each family. The inner-city is not represented as a location in which to raise a family. Rather, it is the location for the young, ambitious couple to live in a phase prior to child rearing. I say ambitious because it is clear that this young couple has returned home from their CBD jobs—they are still wearing their business attire. The youthfulness of their relationship is shown by their passionate kissing over the wok. Terry and Sue, then, *are indeed typical*: the advertisement is drawing upon and reinscribing a cultural assumption that families live in suburbs to raise children, while the younger couple who have not yet settled down can live in the inner city. They do not need suburban backyards as they do not have children yet. This young, childless, inner-city family, then, assists in the overall production of suburbia as a normalised locale for the raising of children.

The scene of the third family in this *Typical Family* (2011) advertisement, the Furlons, marks a return to the suburbs, and of course, a corresponding return to a white nuclear family which includes several children (0:16-0:24). The family, again all white, sits around the dinner table eating a warm and homely Irish stew. The mother cooks the meal and the father serves, while the young pre-pubescent children sit around the table smiling. The suburban home in this third scene is a private and exclusive domain for the children. But, in conversation with the first scene, this third scene reinscribes the idea that suburban home life is an ideal location for the raising of children:

In this screenshot from the 2011 Woolworths Typical Family advertisement, a camera from outside is looking in on a suburban family dinner (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfK0ah6G2BY).

The family home in this advertisement is constructed as a more private domain than in the first family unit—not even the camera enters the family home, filming the entire scene from outside looking in. From outside, the camera looks in on an idealised scene. This outsider camera technique, where the people being filmed are not aware of the camera filming them from behind the bushes, also indicates the naturalness of the scene. The people are unaffected by, and unaware of, the camera's gaze. If the family are not aware of the camera, then the implication is that this dinner would be a normal occurrence regardless of the camera's presence. It is an implication that this scene is natural and commonplace—it could be happening in any suburban home around the nation on any night of the week. This camera technique is particularly effective in producing an idealised scene as something truthful and authentic. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) describe such a scene as having high modality. What they mean by this is that the "proposition" (p. 159) put to the viewers is that the scene is "real … as if [people] actually exist in this way" (p. 161). Such an image, then, reinforces the middle class white nuclear family imaginary as the discursively truthful (Foucault, 1972) and ideal suburban family construct.

Observing the spatial partitioning, ethnic makeup, and structure of each of the three families in this Woolworths *Typical Family* (2011) advertisement, a matrix of Australian suburban

family subjectivities is discursively reinscribed. The two suburban families have children, the inner-city family has none; the suburban home is a private and primarily white family location, except for when the 'extended family' is invited in. The inner-city folk are younger adults, not yet of an age to move to the suburbs and raise children. So, while the advertisement might state that there is no 'typical family', it is not so much indicating that there is the possibility of a variety of family constructions based on gender roles, race or social class, but rather, is reinscribing *what is typical where*. The normative suburban childhood is certainly reinscribed here—as white, middle class, and in a nuclear family unit—and this norm is cast as something to be aspired to, as with the outside-in camera positioning in the third family group. Therein, to return to Foucauldian language, the very representation of suburban Australian childhoods as ideally white, middle class and part of a nuclear family works to *produce* this suburban Australian childhood as ideal in discourse (Foucault, 1972, 1990/1978).

It can also be read that, throughout its narrative, Woolworths positions consumption of its products as a performative middle class practice: *middle class suburban families shop here*. That is to say, typical Woolworths patrons are framed in this advertisement as white and middle class. Consumption of Woolworths' product, then, can be read not simply as needs-based consumption, but also as the consumption of an aspirational white suburban middle class lifestyle image. Miller and Rose use the term "assembling the subject of consumption" (Miller & Rose, 2008/1997, p. 4) to explain the ways advertisements position consumers as particular types of people based upon their consumption habits. To put it another way, consumption can be framed through advertisements as a tactic for developing a personal lifestyle identity. In this advertisement, consumers of Woolworths products are framed as suburban middle class people. Therein, shopping at Woolworths is constructed here as an ideal suburban middle class consumption habit.

Telstra Dem Homes

The Telstra *Dem Homes* (2007) advertisement similarly constructs suburban Australian childhoods as white, middle class, gendered, and ideally part of the heteronormative nuclear family. The advertisement features a narrative of an all-white suburban family with a mother, father and four children—two girls and two boys. It follows each member of that family as they go about their daily life. Similar to the *Typical Family* (2011) advertisement, the *Dem Homes* (2007) advertisement asks agentive viewers to aspire towards, and consume on behalf of, an imagined middle class suburban family lifestyle. Here, neoliberal consumption rationalities are again at play, positioning consumption of the advertised product as a way of securing success and assembling a socially and personally desirable way of life.

The advertisement begins with a cross-section of a suburban household in which the all-white nuclear family members are each engaging in the supposedly typical day-to-day activities of their middle class suburban lives. This cross section view acts like an X-ray (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), probing "beyond the surface, to deeper, more hidden levels" (p. 145). Once again, the camera is implying that what happens on the screen is a truthful representation of suburban life. The viewer is getting an inside glance at the ostensibly authentic suburban lifestyle:

In this screen shot from the 2007 Telstra Dem Homes advertisement, a cross-section of a suburban home shows the family members conducting daily routines (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IcN7UYiK8JI).

Each family member's activity involves the use of the Telstra *Bigpond* internet product. The camera scrolls from room to room, filming each family member momentarily. Girls work on their social networks and shop for shoes while boys are concerned with surfing, video games and football. A jingle is overlayed and sings throughout the advertisement, describing the activities of each family member. The camera begins by scanning across the oldest daughter Sarah's bedroom. Sarah is on the internet, "connected to a Qantas flight" (0:04)—booking an airplane ticket with Australia's national airline Qantas. It is no coincidence that the daughter is booking a flight on Qantas, a brand synonymous with Australia's national identity (Drew, 2011). This daughter can here be situated as an *Australian* suburban child; Sarah is using her consumption to express her national allegiance. The camera then drifts to the son Michael's bedroom where he is "connected to the trading post, he's buying a surfboard from the Gold Coast" (0:11-0:14). Again, the family member's national identity is expressed inside the suburban home through his consumption habits—purchasing a surfboard. The camera then roams down to the younger daughter Suzie's bedroom where the song explains her as "connected to Facebook" (0:16-0:18), then across to the younger son Jason's bedroom where he is "connected to his PS3 [game console]" (0:24-0:25). The mother and father are shown last. The mother, Katie, is "connected to her email, as well as

music, a movie and a shoe sale" (0:30-0:35). Lastly, Paul is shown watching football on television. The jingle concludes:

> And with his family all connected at the same time,
> Paul can watch the footy in his own time. (0:36-0:41)

Here, the father is cast as the head of the family whose role is to keep his family happy and prevent suburban chaos. This narrative echoes Sibley's (1995) observation that the family home is not always a harmonious place. While in the previous case study children were constructed as innately good and angelic, in this advertisement the children are constructed as only good if the father manages his household well. Thus, it is implied that suburban children are not always amicable, but they can be if only the male viewer manages his household through the correct consumption habits. Harmony is constructed here as an ideal to be worked towards through consumption rather than something that occurs naturally. Such a rhetorical function is situated within neoliberal consumption discourse. To borrow the language of Miller and Rose (2008/1997), fatherly consumers are cast in this advertisement as "entrepreneurs of themselves, seeking to maximise their 'quality of life'" (p. 49) through their consumption habits. The father's goal of household harmony in the *Dem Homes* (2007) advertisement is constructed as an ideal to work towards out of self-interest: so the father can watch the football in peace. Here, then, consumption is framed as a way in which the father can achieve suburban harmony in his own self-interest.

Furthermore, it is revealing that the white middle class father's household consumption is positioned in a discursively masculine frame. He is not the feminised caring, self-giving parent; rather, he occupies a privileged masculine position of the rational and objective problem-solver. He consumes not out of service or love, but in order to get on with his own recreational activities ('watch the footy in his own time'). The father is consuming so that the children will not annoy him. Gender normativity is at play here. As Butler argues in

Gender Trouble (1990), gender emerges through discourses that reiterate and sustain normative gender in discourse. For Butler, images and statements "produce and reiterate the intelligibility of [gender] concepts" (p. 44). This narrative of the consuming father, whose concerns seemingly lie in his sporting pursuits, reinforces the self-serving role of the suburban father. This sits in stark contrast to the commonplace depictions of the good suburban housewife in advertisements, which position her as caring and self-giving (as in Nutri-Grain *Get the Ball Rolling*, 2009; Kellogg's CocoPops *Os*, 2010; Uncle Toby's *Muesli Bars*, 2010).

In sum, this advertisement constructs suburban Australian childhood identities as desirably gendered, heteronormative, middle class and white. Through representational practices that imply an X-ray vision into the authentic suburban Australian household, this advertisement implies that it is getting a candid look into the true lives of white middle class suburban Australians. Boys are interested in surfing, playing video games and watching football, while girls work on their social networks and buy shoes. Consumption can help fathers to achieve this idealised suburban family life, in the interest of normativity, but also of their own peace and quiet.

Uncle Toby's Muesli Bars

The Uncle Toby's *Muesli Bars* (2010) advertisement is the third advertisement that I want to explore here. In this advertisement, a suburban mother is preparing the food for her son before he goes to school. The mother is constructed as an 'Accredited Nutritionist', who occupies a position of authority on speaking about feeding the family. This advertisement sits in stark contrast to the *Dem Homes* advertisement inasmuch as the parent is the engaged, caring and self-giving interventionist-style mother, as opposed to the self-interested father. There is no suggestion that her consumption will achieve any benefit to her besides seeing

her children grow normally and healthily. This mother is ideally mzotherly—caring, nurturing, self-giving. Nonetheless, neoliberal consumption discourses remain evident here. By consuming on behalf of her own children's normalcy, the mother can position herself as the ideal gendered, self-giving motherly subject. *Consumption of the advertised product is framed central to achieving success as a good mother who raises a normal Australian child.*

Simultaneously, there is an implicit message that the mother is ultimately culpable if her child fails. It is the mother's responsibility to consume wisely, lest the child become abnormal (Rose, 1990). As Rose points out in his discussions of the mother-child relationship, the mother is often positioned in dominant cultural discourse as the member of the family *obliged* to consume, and to consume wisely. The mother, through this narrative, appears personally culpable for her family. Success as a good mother relies on successful consumption habits (Rose, 1999). Such a message sustains the gendered narrative of mother as *caregiver*, *nurturer* and culprit when if t the family falls to ruin.

The advertisement begins with the mother-cross-nutritionist tying her son's shoe laces in the morning rush to get ready for school (0:04-0:07):

In these screenshots from the 2010 Uncle Toby's Muesli Bar advertisement, a mother is shown tying her son's shoelaces (left) and preparing their lunch (right). The mother's credentials as a nutritional expert are emphasised in the caption on the screenshot on the left. (http://www.youtube.com/user/australiaads#p/u/599/l6gdfQZHUeU)

The shot then changes to another scene—presumably earlier in the morning—with the mother preparing her children's lunches (0:08-0:19). A caption shows the mother's credentials as an accredited nutritionist, as she states:

> As a busy mum and a nutritionist I know how stressful it can be to find nutritious snacks for your children's lunchbox. So I'll let you in on a little secret. One Uncle Toby's Muesli Bar has a similar wholegrain content to two slices of multi-grain bread. And together, they're a great way to boost the wholegrain content in a balanced lunchbox. (0:02-0:20)

While she speaks, footage begins rolling showing her sons running out the front gate of the suburban house on their way to school. The boys are shown energetically and boisterously pushing each other to be first out the front gate (0:25). In this simple act of pushing, these boys are framed as healthy suburban *boys* inasmuch as they have been appropriately socialised into their boisterous gender roles. This is indeed a mother successful in fostering the 'health' of her middle class suburban children:

In this screenshot from the 2010 Uncle Toby's Muesli Bar advertisement, two boys are shown shoving each other as they run out the gate to school. Their energy alludes to their health while their boisterous physical play alludes to their male gender (http://www.youtube.com/user/australiaads#p/u/599/l6gdfQZHUeU).

Central to the narrative of this advertisement is the linking of nutritional health to normative gender roles, as if being boisterous is a sign of being an appropriately fed suburban boy. Because the children eat well, they have become ideal *boys*—shown by their boisterous play. The advertisement uses the story of an 'expert' mother to create this link. The mother-cross-nutritionist subject position produces this person as motherly (concerned and nurturing) as well as expert (knowledgeable and trustworthy)—in a sense, she is an expert mother. Her expertise as a mother pays off when her boys exhibit their maleness as they push each other

in the suburban front yard. Here, then, normative nutrition ('boost the wholegrain content in a balanced lunchbox') is linked to idealised gender roles. Being fed well pays of when the boys exhibit their 'healthy' masculinity as they push each other as they run out the front gate.

Rose's (1999/1990) discussion of the relationship between expertise in neoliberal societies and child rearing is informative here. Rose argues that, in a neoliberal society characterised by self-responsibilisation and individual enterprise, expertise can be used to produce evaluative social norms against which parents can measure their children's development and act upon their children in order to secure success. He argues: "the images of normality generated by expertise could come to serve as a means by which individuals could themselves normalize and evaluate their lives, their conduct, and those of their children" (p. 132). For Rose (1999/1990), then, experts produce the judgements about how to manage a life so that it might become *normal*. This advertisement can be read as providing viewers such advice. These correct consumption habits are tied to the achievement of ideal cultural performatives—by listening to expert nutritionist's advice about the wholegrain content in children's lunchboxes, the viewers might be able to similarly have boisterous, and therefore healthy, suburban sons. On the other side of the coin, if the mother *does not* heed the advice of the advertisement, she has only herself to blame: mothers, as the women of the family, are placed under an obligation to adhere to their gender role, to consume wisely; and if they don't, their family suffers. Buying the product, in this sense, is one way in which parents can secure for their children idealised gender subjectivities.

Australian Childhoods in the Suburban Backyard

The suburban backyard is an integral part of the suburban Australian dream. The backyard is a site of celebration and a site where the Australian suburban identity is performatively practiced and learned (Hall, 2010; Hogan, 2003; Hoskins, 1994; Perera, 2009). The backyard barbecue, the father mowing the lawn with his quintessentially Australian *Victa* mower and the children playing backyard cricket are all discursive performances in the choreographed Australian suburban lifestyle. Australia's emotional attachment to the backyard has played a significant part in Australian public life. It was used in fear campaigns by politicians who resisted the Wik and Mabo native title decisions in the 1990's (Elder, 2007; Perera, 2009)— the politicians played on Australians' fears that high courts would allow Indigenous Australians to claim ownership of suburban backyards under native title. The suburban backyards has taken centre place in popular television shows such as *Burke's Backyard* and *Backyard Blitz*—shows about suburban families' renovations of their private backyard spaces.

The suburban backyard can also be read as a space of nature within an unnatural city. Hogan (2003) observes that suburbia is a "third space that mediates urbanism to nature" (p. 54). That is to say, the suburban backyard is a sanctuary of nature and a recluse from the man-made urban world beyond the fence. This notion that the backyard is a mediated natural space in an otherwise man-made city has implications for imaginaries of Australian childhoods in the suburbs. It offers the opportunity for children to play in a backyard that is both a touch of bush set amongst the man-made urban space and a tamed, "mediated" (Hogan, 2003, p. 54) space where the bush can be compulsively restrained in the controlled environment of the home. Nature functions as a space where, as with the Rousseauian vision of childhood (Jenks, 2005/1996), children belong. In a context in which middle class Australian children's natural innocence is to be protected from the ills of the city, the suburban backyard can take the form of a natural and safe recluse for suburban children.

Time in the suburban backyard, under the watchful eye of Australian mums, can function as a time where suburban Australian children can spend time being Rousseauian, natural, Australian children—safe and protected from the unnatural ills beyond the fence.

Many television advertisements feature suburban Australian childhoods in the Australian backyard (Ikea *This is Home,* 2008; Coles *It all Counts*, 2010; Kirks *Quench your Thirst*, 2010; Milo *Duo*, 2008; Sanitarium *Weet-Bix Kids,* 2006). As with the previous case studies, it remains that the genres of advertisements featuring suburban children are food and appliance advertisements, targeted at mothers who are asked to consume in the interests of their children (Rose, 1999/1990). As I argued earlier in this chapter, the predominance of discourses of motherhood in suburban Australia in food and appliance advertisements is revealing of the implicit suburban gendering that takes place through this genre of advertisement. Two case studies have been selected here as representative of the ways advertisements construct suburban Australian childhoods in the Australian backyard. These are the Milo *Duo* (2008) and Sanitarium *Weet-Bix Kids* (2006) advertisements. Both of these advertisements construct the backyard as site of nature within the city, and as a site where the children can rehearse their performative suburban Australian identity—an Australian identity that is markedly middle class, white and traditionally gendered. These advertisements, as with the broader corpus listed above, continue to produce whiteness and masculinity as the normative ideal for suburban Australian childhoods.

Milo Duo

The Milo *Duo* (2008) advertisement promotes Milo *Duo* cereal as providing the nutrition needed for young sporting Australian boys. It depicts the backyard as a space where the Australian boys can practice their sporting pursuits. The advertisement begins with a framing shot that captures the presumably everyday items in the suburban backyard (0:00-

0:02). The shot then changes to a medium-shot of a father talking to his son. He holds his fingers across the seam of a cricket ball showing his son how to hold the ball when bowling. The father pronounces:

> If you want to become a top athlete, you've got to focus. Fingers along the seam. Shiny side out. Follow through.

He then bowls the ball at the cricket stumps, crying, "Howzat!" a cricketing cry implying that he had hit the stumps.

The shot turns to the mother looking out the window of the kitchen, hands on her hips, sighing and shaking her head with a look of affection and amusement at the boys' games. She proclaims, "Boys, breakfast!", and the father and son run inside to eat the food prepared for them by the mother. Instantly, the boys are cast as the game players, the sports*men*, with time for recreation while the woman is inside preparing food for them. When the father and son walk inside, the father reads off the back of the cereal box: "Milo Duo. With added calcium and magnesium." He then looks to his son, rubs his hair affectionately, and proclaims, "Calcium! That's what growing cricketers need, eh!" By utilising the language of expertise ('added calcium and magnesium') and linking it to cultural performatives ('what growing cricketers need'), the advertisement again positions the product as useful for consuming mothers who aim to support the normative growth of their sons (Miller & Rose, 2008/1997; Rose, 1999/1990). Here, neoliberal consumption discourses remain at play, framing the product as an informative guide to healthy living in a society where a subject is obliged to consume in the pursuit of self-betterment. The product is able to help provide potential child consumers not only nutrition as they grow, but also essential nutrition if they are to succeed in their pursuit of idealised cricketing subjectivities. This rhetoric continues, as a female voiceover states:

> Milo *Duo* has original Milo plus additional vanilla pieces with the added calcium and magnesium that they [boys] need to grow. And do whatever that they dream of. Milo Duo cereal. Magnesium and Calcium for growth.

Learning under the guidance of his father, the boy can be read here as learning how to be a *man* by playing with his father, supported by the cereal. The backyard functions as his training ground—a site of nature where the boy can enact his ostensibly natural gendered identity. In this sense, the space is produced as a gendered and masculine space within an otherwise feminised suburbia. The masculine production of the suburban backyard reveals the spatial production of gender within suburbia. Foucault alludes to the role of space in the formation of identity in *Discipline and Punish* (1975), highlighting how space can be used to regulate and organise. Space, for Foucault, can be used as an individualising technology of control. Within regulated spaces, non-normative acts can be overseen and disciplined. In this sense, spaces have their own normative meanings, or as Foucault puts it, "each individual has his own place; and each place its individual" (1975, p. 143). Butler follows Foucault here, specifically seeing *gender as a regulated act*, taking place within "culturally established lines of coherence" (1990, p. 33). As she states, "Foucault proposes an ontology … that exposes the postulation of identity as a culturally restricted principle of order and hierarchy, a regulatory fiction" (1990, p. 33). She goes on to explain normative gender formations as reliant on repetition through time and space: "gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior *space* through a stylized repetition of acts" (1990, p. 191, my emphasis). Following Foucault and Butler, then, the space of the backyard can be produced as a space that has normative gender associations: it is the *boy's space*, where the *boys* can play, learn and reiterate their performative suburban, Australian and masculine gender identities. In this sense, the representation of the space of the backyard as a boy's space where they can do manly things in an otherwise feminine suburbia is an

example of "the mundane and ritualised form of [gender] legitimation" (Butler, 1990, p. 191) in the Australian suburbs.

It is instructive to pause on one image, the opening shot, to deconstruct this advertisement's interpretation of the typical suburban backyard:

In this opening frame from the Milo Duo (2008) advertisement, the suburban backyard is shown as a patch of greenery in the suburbs. The backyard is replete with sporting gear including a bicycle, basketball and cricket stumps (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=32Lzw93dY74).

This image is what Hogan (2003) meant by a mediated space—a space where nature is both desirable and constrained; a space where nature is necessary for the image of age-old cultural image of childhood innocence, but is also necessarily constrained for comfortable human living. In the image, nature lines the suburban fences. A dog house sits subtly in the corner. The dog house indicates the existence of a pet in the backyard, bringing that other facet of nature into the suburban yard: animals. It is not a wild animal, however, but a tame animal. It is another sign of the mediated suburban space: an animal to indicate nature, but a pet animal that has been tamed. The dog, like the grass, the trees and the flowers that cluster along the suburban fences, knows its place around the edges of suburban spaces. They are symbols of nature both yearned for on the behalf of a natural image of childhood and set aside on behalf of suburban lifestyle comfort (Hogan, 2003).

Secondly, sporting equipment is sprawled around the backyard as if frequently used; it is lying in wait for children to come and practice their sporting skills again. Cricket stumps, a

basketball and a bicycle lay around the backyard signifying that the backyard is a sporting location. The cricket stumps are emphasised in the foreground of the shot; viewers need to look through the stumps to view this backyard. This can act as a metaphor for the frame of Australianness through which viewers are asked to interpret this scene. Cricket, Australia's national sport (Miller, 2007), is the sport chosen to be played in this backyard. This suburban space is a practice ground for the boy to learn, within mediated nature, how to play cricket— and thus, how to enact his performative Australianness. The symbolism here is a collusion of a Rousseauian child within nature (Jenks, 2005/1996), and a child learning the very Australian sport of cricket (Miller, 2007). Therein, the suburban Australian child's relationship with the Australian backyard is symbolic inasmuch as it preserves an image of suburban Australian childhoods as both Rousseauian and ideally Australian. It also appears here to have a special symbolic relationship with boys in the feminised space of suburbia. In the backyard boys can be boys—playing sports with their fathers while the woman is inside preparing their food.

Here, then, this advertisement reinscribes and sustains natural, masculine, and traditionally gendered suburban Australian childhood formations in discourse. To again use the language of Foucault (1990/1978) and Butler (1990), the advertisement *produces* a truth of suburban Australian childhoods, and particularly boyhoods, in discourse. This truth works to privilege traditional gender roles, whiteness, and middle class nuclear families, within the regulated space of Australian suburbia. The advertisement produces in suburban Australian discourse "a social space for … the body" (Butler, 1990, p. 184) in which white and middle class boys can learn and perform their normative Australian identities. The cereal is central, too, for securing such idealised subjectivities: by consuming Milo *Duo*, the enterprising young consumer is getting the right nutrition to succeed. Here, correct consumption choices are

framed as central to achieving an ideal masculine, middle-class suburban Australian childhood subjectivity ('just what growing cricketers need!').

Thus, if mothers want their children to achieve the social capital of normative Australian boys, they are tasked with the important role of consuming correctly. Once again, the culpability for raising normative children falls on the mother, who prepares the breakfast. Again, there is a disciplinary message in the advertisement: the narrative produces the mother as the responsibilised consumer, the person who must carefully consider what to consume, knowing that her family's normalcy relies upon that choice. As Rose (1990) puts it,

> If families produced normal children, this was itself an accomplishment, not a given; it was because they [mothers] regulated their emotional economy correctly (p. 159).

Here, then, the mother is positioned in her gendered role. If she does not conform to this nurturing consumerist position, her family fails and she is ultimately to blame.

Sanitarium Weet-Bix Kids

The Sanitarium *Weet-Bix Kids* (2006) advertisement is another example of an advertisement that depicts the suburban backyard as a space in which Australian boys can practice their Australian boyhood identities. The advertisement promotes Weet-Bix as a product that iconic Australian sports people ate as children. This narrative constructs a branded identity that is distinctively Australian. The implication is that eating Weet-Bix is a performative act of Australianness, and that through its consumption Australian children might be able to be seen as 'true' Australians. As the advertisement's jingle states, "Aussie Kids are Weet-Bix kids!" The advertisement begins with *four white boys* in a suburban kitchen eating cereal. A suburban backyard is framed in the background (0:00-0:06). Trees are relegated to the fence lines of the backyard—an image of mediated nature in the man-made suburbs. Cricket

stumps sit in the yard, again being used as a major signifier of the Australianness of the suburban scene.

One of the boys eating his Weet-Bix then stands up and turns to his mother, declaring: "just going out to play cricket, mum" (0:06-0:08). The boys then head outside into the greenery and mediated space of nature in which Rousseauian children belong. Lying on the grass is a red tennis ball. The boys head towards it to pick it up and begin their cricket game. Before they reach the ball, the scene in the backyard blends into a scene at an Ashes cricket match. The tennis ball blends into an authentic cricket ball, and the then Australian test cricket captain, Ricky Pointing, picks it up (0:09-0:13):
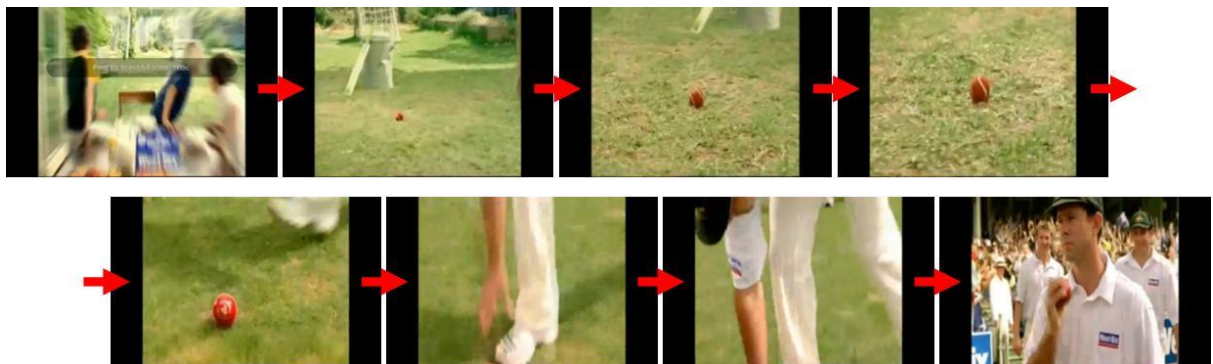
In these frame-by-frame screenshots from the Sanatarium Weet-Bix Kids (2006) advertisement, a scene of children playing the typically Australian sport of cricket in the suburban backyard morphs into a scene of Australian cricketers playing in a stadium. This can symbolise the ways practicing cricket in the backyard can morph Australian children into cricketing heroes (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=df3QaydCpV4).

The suggestion of this sequence is that Australian sporting heroes grew up in Australian backyards. One day, like Ricky Ponting, these children will become greats at the game and will play for their country. It casts the greatest of Australian sportsmen as people who were once everyday suburban Australian children. So, in the *Weet-Bix Kids* advertisement, the backyard again acts as site where particularly *white boys'* national identities, in the form of cricketing prowess, are rehearsed.

The advertisement then ends with a voiceover which reads,

> Look out Poms. We've all grown up with the long-lasting goodness and real energy of 97% wholegrain Weet-Bix. Get in to Sanitarium whole grains!

Here again, this advertisement uses expert language to secure future consumption. Cogent with neoliberal consumption discourse, the advertisements works to convince self-governing and agentive subjects that the product on offer can assist the subject in formulating a socially desirable subjectivity (Miller & Rose, 2008/1997). The use of expert language works to position the product as conducive to achieving normative childhood health—Weet-Bix has 'whole grains' which give it 'goodness' and 'real energy'. Having positioned the product as conducive to normative health, the advertisement then explains that this health is necessary for the suburban boys to grow up to become winning cricketers ('look out Poms!'). By aligning nutritional health to sporting success, the advertisement naturalises sporting success as a symbol of a healthy Australian boyhood, and promotes Weet-Bix as conducive to such an aim.

Throughout the advertisement, a jingle plays in the background. This jingle has been a staple musical theme throughout a long series of *Weet-Bix Kids* advertisements in Australia (1987, 1996, 2006, 2010a):

> We know we'll grow up winners, because we eat our bix.
> With heaps of whole-grain goodness, we'll smash the Poms for six.
> We're Aussie kids, we're Weet-Bix kids.
> We're Aussie kids, we're Weet-Bix kids. (0:01-0:17)
> ['Pom' is a playfully derogative colloquialism for Englishmen]

In this jingle, it is suggested that the defining difference that makes Australian sportsmen superior to their English cricketing rivals is that as children the Australians ate Weet-Bix ('we'll grow up winners, because we eat our bix'). The appeal to national identity in this advertisement draws upon a long history of Australia versus England cricketing rivalry. This rivalry has lasted since 1882, when the Australians first defeated England in a test series (Miller, 2007). The cricket stumps from that famous game were burned and the ashes of the stumps sent to the wives of the English players. A mock obituary was written in the English newspaper *The Sporting Times* that proclaimed the death of English cricket. The rivalry has

lasted ever since, as symbolised by the Ashes cricketing contest recurs once every few years. So, the simple mention of the England-Australia cricketing rivalry in this jingle refers to a gloating sense of sporting greatness that runs deep in dominant Australian cricketing mythology.

While this insinuation that Weet-Bix contributes to Australia's cricketing greatness may be on one level known to be a joke (obviously, it takes more to be a great cricketer than eating Weet-Bix), it is also an appeal to national belief system that pits cricket as Australia's sport—the sport at which Australians are ostensibly the best in the world. The brand utilises this nationalist Australian psyche by associating itself with the mythology—Australians are cricketing winners "because we eat our bix" (0:04). Consumption of Weet-Bix is suggested here as a performance of national identity and a way of attaining social capital: *authentic Australian children eat Weet-Bix*.

The Australian suburban backyard in this television advertisement, then, is a space of mediated nature (Hogan, 2003) set within the city in which children, particularly boys, can play amongst nature; and secondly, it a space where children can learn and rehearse their national identity within this child-friendly space. The brand is positioned as a brand that endorses Australianness, suggesting that the consumption of Weet-Bix is an act of Australianness: that is, *I eat Weet-Bix before rehearsing my national sporting identity in the backyard, which helps me to fit within the frame of being an ideal Australian child.* Through its attempts to secure consumption, the advertisement utilises socially idealised discourses of suburban Australian childhood and situates consumption as a way to achieve them. Furthermore, through representation, the advertisement contributes to the naturalisation and sustenance of exclusionary discourse. Suburban Australian boyhood identity is reinforced

as normatively gendered and all-white—and the suburban backyard plays a key role in the discursive reiteration of such an identity formation.

Australian Childhoods in the Suburban Streetscape

Whereas the backyard is a private and possessive space, the front yard is a space for suburban Australians to 'show off' to their suburban neighbours. Low picket fences and glamorous letterboxes characterise the front yard (Elder, 2007). According to Hogan (2003) it is a sign of respectability to maintain the front yard, to complimentarily mow the neighbour's nature strip (the section between the beginning of the front yard and the street; see also Hogan, 2003), and to place Christmas ornaments on the yard in December. These suburban rituals characterise an Anglo-Australian suburban community feeling and maintain a front of middle class respectability.

This section explores advertisements' representations of suburban Australian childhoods in these public suburban spaces—the front yard and the suburban streets beyond—where suburban children are often depicted interacting with their suburban community (Foxtel *EOFYS*, 2010; Ford *Territory*, 2010; Heinz *Creamy Pumpkin*, 2010, Bendigo Bank *Community*, 2010; Foxtel *Next Generation*, 2009). In the two advertisements explored here, a Foxtel *EOYFS* (2010) advertisement and a Ford *Territory* (2010) advertisement, the front yard is cast as a community meeting place for middle class suburban children, where they learn community social codes and learn how to achieve them—primarily via consumption. It is here where they learn about ideal Australian childhood identities within the neighbourhood. Primarily, success within the middle-class suburban Australian community is cast as attainable through consumption of the advertised products, and in this sense, neoliberal consumer discourse continues to frame the narratives of Australian childhoods. In a society where success as a middle class suburban child is dependent upon self-

management, consumption is framed through the narratives as a key way for viewers to attain desirable middle class suburban childhood subjectivities. These advertisements are characteristic of advertisements depicting Australian childhoods in the suburban streetscape inasmuch as they produce an image of suburban Australian childhoods as ideally middle class, white and gendered.

Foxtel EOFYS

The Foxtel *EOFYS* (2010) advertisement follows the storyline of a white suburban nuclear family comprising of father, mother, son and daughter, who wake to the sounds of a celebration on their suburban street. The suburban community are celebrating a mock festival that commemorates the beginning of Foxtel's end of financial year sale. Foxtel is a pay-tv provider. The advertisement opens with two parents sleeping in their bed. Their children open the bedroom door and run into the bedroom with enthusiasm. They jump on their parents' bed, yelling "Wake up, Wake up. It's EOFYS!" (0:00-0:04). The scene then changes to an outdoor suburban street. The street is bustling with activity: sprinklers are watering the cleanly mown lawns (0:05), families are tending to their suburban front yards, and a group of groomed white boys walk down the sidewalk (0:05). The suburban family walk out onto their front verandah to watch the commotion (0:07-0:08). They start singing, and the community join them. They sing:

> It's EOFYS, It's EOFYS
> The Foxtel deal
> You just can't miss.
> 6 months half price
> Installation free
> 6 months half price
> Sounds good to me
> EOFYS, It's finally here
> It's the best time of year! (0:07-0:25)

As the community sing, several shots of community members celebrating on the suburban street are shown. An elderly man and woman, both white, hammer a sign that reads 'EOFYS free installation' into their front yard (0:09), a group of teenage girls, all white, dance a choreographed routine on a front yard (0:10; 0:22), a father and son, both white, set up lights on their front verandah (0:12), middle-age men, all white, drag tinsel out of a garage onto the street (0:14) and middle-aged women, all white, hang tinsel around the hedges on their front garden (0:17).

In these screenshots from the Foxtel EOFYS advertisement, a family is shown overlooking their suburban neighbours' celebrations of the Foxtel EOFYS sale (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a7IbPlfcOKM&feature=related).

In this advertisement, the idealised suburban community is framed as homogenously middle class, white, and gendered. The central signifier that differentiates this suburban location from less desirable suburban locations is the representation of affluence and safety. Firstly, while a working class suburb might be imagined as an unkempt locale unfit for civilised children, this suburb is delicately groomed: the lawns have recently been mown, hedges have been trimmed, and sprinkler systems that run in the background (0:05). Children walking the street in this middle class suburban location can therefore be framed not as Dionysian street children on unkempt suburban streets, but Apollonian children playing on the safe, white, middle class suburban streets with similarly Apollonian children. The space is all-white, producing the middle class suburbs as a place where *white* Australians belong. Furthermore, gendered divisions amongst the children allude to the idealness of femininities for girls and masculinities for boys. The children in the community roam the suburban

streetscape singing in gendered groups: boys all walk down the street in a group (0:05) while the girls dance on a front lawn (0:10). Thirdly, western Christian traditions are invoked in this advertisement. The sale is made out to be a Christmas-like event taking place at the end of financial year (June 30th), Christmas being a Christian tradition. Traditional Christmas decorations including tinsel, fluorescent lights and baubles are set up on the front gardens (0:20). These performative reiterations of western religious tradition, middle class affluence and dominant gender norms take place in the highly visible location of the suburban front yard and spill out into the suburban street. The middle class, gendered, white, Christian norm blankets the entire community—there is no visible deviance from the norm. The fact that this community is created as open, friendly, affluent and gendered casts this as a suburban locale cosseted from the potential ills of working class and inner-city locales. The children can take to the streets here without appearing troubled or Dionysian (Jenks, 2005/1996) and without facing the corruption of children who deviate from the idealised suburban Australian norm. *There are no dangers here.*

Rose (2008/1996b) is informative here for understanding the role of community in the production of collective norms. He sees participation in social activities as a form of social investment—people must do certain things in order to be a recognisable member of a community. Lifestyle habits, in this sense, can involve affiliating oneself with a group of people with similar habits, in order to be a recognisable member of a community. That is to say, he argues that people:

> Must calculate their actions in terms of a kind of 'investment' in themselves, in their families, and maximise this investment with reference to the codes of their own particular communities (p. 98)

Participation in middle class community habits can allow members to "'pass' in their role as active citizens in responsible communities" (Rose, 2008/1996, p. 98). To be an identifiable member of the middle class suburban community, the represented participants

must manage their images in the form of maintaining presentable front lawns, association with similar suburban neighbours and erection of Christmas decorations. Suburban Australian childhoods are central to this middle class suburban narrative: childhood members of the suburban middle class in Australia are constructed here as white, appropriately gendered, associating with similar white and gendered peers, and participating in Anglo-Christian festivities. These signifiers of middle class respectability are signifiers of belonging to a particular suburban middle class community.

Furthermore, Foxtel is cast as a central component of this middle class narrative. By aligning the product to an exclusionary discursive image or suburban Australia, Foxtel comes to be framed as a product *for* the suburban middle class. Buying Foxtel, it is suggested, is a way for the neoliberal consuming subject to buy into this middle class subjecthood, and to project an image of middle class sensibilities. It could on the one hand be promoting the product to people who are in the middle class, with the disposable income to be seen by the advertisers as the most likely potential consumers. The protagonists in the narrative reflect the target audience in order to signify who the advertisers are appealing to. However, on the other hand, it also sends a message to people who are not in the middle class about how to become middle class; that is, how to consume in order to achieve social capital within middle class communities.

Ford Territory

The Ford *Territory* (2010) advertisement is another advertisement that produces middle class suburban Australian childhood subjectivities as desirable. It constructs the Ford *Territory* four wheel drive vehicle as a signifier of membership to the middle class suburban Australian community. The protagonist child in this advertisement lusts for his neighbour's vehicle. For the boy, being inside the car is a romantic ideal to which he aspires. Through

this narrative, the car is positioned as an idealised middle class suburban asset. Through buying the car, the neoliberal consuming subject can buy into an idealised middle class consumer community. Such a message reinforces that the exclusionary discourses can be *bought* and therefore, are exclusively for those with the economic capital. This has the effect of continuing inequalities, wherein those without the means to buy the latest gadget are conspicuously excluded from membership of the discursive middle-class Australian ideal.

The advertisement opens with a boy sitting on the floor drawing on pieces of paper (0:00-0:03). He then heads out into his front yard where his family's car is parked. In the front yard, an image of middle class suburbia is evident: the quarter acre block is immaculately clean, the green grass is mown and shrubs line the fences. The house sits beside a similarly immaculate suburban home. Using adhesive tape, the boy begins attaching pieces of paper over the car to cover it entirely in paper (0:03-0:08). As the boy steps back to admire his work (0:10), the camera angle changes so that the whole car covered in paper can be seen. The pieces of paper are stuck together in a perfect form to create the aesthetic of another car—the Ford Territory (0:11). The boy then turns to his neighbour's yard where the real Ford Territory drives down their driveway and onto the suburban street (0:12-0:18). As the Territory drives down the driveway, a male voiceover says: "Who's most likely to give you a family car that's the envy of all others? Ford. Of Course." (0:11-0:18).

In these screenshots from the Ford Territory (2010) advertisement, a boy covers his car in paper to make it look like a Ford Territory. He then watches as his neighbour drives down the driveway in his real Territory, constructing a setting of neighbourhood envy (http://www.youtube.com/user/australiaads#p/u/332/UOXTeF8Lo8o).

As the neighbour's car drives away down the suburban street, a boy of a similar age to the protagonist is shown in the back seat. He turns and waves at his neighbour with a smug grin (0:23). While the envious child might be the protagonist of this advertisement, his waving neighbour in his new family car is the ideal subject:

In this screenshot from the Ford Territory (2010) advertisement, the neighbour waves smugly as he drives down the street in his new car. He is ostensibly happier and fits more suitably within the frame of ideal suburban childhood because his family owns the latest gadget (http://www.youtube.com/user/australiaads#p/u/332/UOXTeF8Lo8o).

Here, then, the advertisement constructs the product as a signifier of successful and normative management of Self. The owner of the Territory purchased a car that is 'the envy of all others'. Here, it would be instructive to follow Ahmed (2004), who argues that emotions such as envy should not be read as located within people but within social circumstances. From this position, envy is not located in the boy or his neighbour, but are the product of a social interaction (the boy does not *have* envy. Rather, he *experiences* envy; Ahmed, 2004). In this sense, envy is a cultural practice. One child has achieved a normative suburban subject position and another has not, and this leads the protagonist to experience envy for his more normative, and thus ideal, peer. Envy is read in this advertisement, then, as producing an experiential cultural norm—through the emotion of envy, it comes to be known that the car is something that a normative suburban Australian family should ideally have.

Miller and Rose are similarly informative. They approach possession of goods as a relational practice. In other words, they are concerned with "the kinds of relations that human beings can have with themselves and other through the medium of goods" (Miller & Rose, 2008/1997, p. 116). For Miller and Rose (2008/1997), comparing oneself to one's neighbour and finding oneself wanting is a way in which consuming neoliberal subjects reflect on how they can normalise themselves in their perpetual strives for self-improvement. Following both Ahmed (2004) and Miller and Rose (2008/1997), then, it can be seen in this advertisement that envy is used to produce a cultural norm which one has and the other does not. In this way, possession of the Territory for the suburban Australian child is something that is produced as *ideal* and which should be seen as producing the emotion of envy. The Ford *Territory* (2010) advertisement, then, is another example of the ways in which the suburban front yard acts as a highly visible space for children to enact middle class performatives. The ideal childhood subject in this advertisement is the subject who has the latest gadget. That is to say, the ideal suburban child in this narrative is the child who has managed superior capital accumulation, and thus through consumption of the advertised product can become a more fitting member of the middle class suburban Australian community. If an idealised Australian childhood identity can be bought, as these advertisements imply, then it follows that economic capital is a necessary prerequisite for Australian children to attain idealised subjectivities. Such a free market logic further marginalises low socioeconomic status Australians from the Australian childhood ideal: having the gadget, wearing the clothes, or driving the car, is a material, embodied marker of being the ideal Australian childhood subject, and a marker that only those with economic means can attain.

Interestingly, Ford is a multinational brand, yet it is working hard to position its values as commensurate with, and beneficial to, a *middle-class suburban Australian way of life*, in

order to appeal to future consumers. Here, Ford is attempting to attach itself to nationalist discourse in order to further its own economic agenda. Such an observation echoes the work of Prideaux, who argues that many brands will attempt to "integrate [their] product into the discourse on Australian national identity" in order to "persuade Australians to use its product" (2009, p. 624). Likewise, it can be seen through this example that advertisers are using national discourse to make their brands appealing to agentive (Miller & Rose (2008/1997) national consumers. In this sense, national identities can be seen to be being fostered and promoted even in a globalized era (Smith, 1995) by global actors, as its maintenance is economically beneficial for the brand. The discourse of national identity, as Smith argues, is a powerful discourse that can be used to appeal to members of a territorial group through "its promise of a territorial culture community across the generations" (Smith, 1995, p. 160). Here, the tensions between the brand's international identity and its national audience are semantically smoothed over in the interest of economic gain – it remains beneficial for this brand to utilise and idealise an exclusionary middle-class version of Australianness, and as a result, the exclusionary discourse is sustained.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have conducted an archaeological exploration of television advertisements that produce discourses of suburban Australian childhoods. It has been argued that suburban Australian childhoods are produced as ideally white, gendered and middle class. They have primarily been constructed within nuclear family units and as Apollonian, or innately good. The advertisements, read in the context of prevailing neoliberal consumption discourse, can be seen to be positioning products as beneficial for viewers who inasmuch as the products can secure access to exclusionary and socially desirable suburban Australian childhood subject positions. I have continued to take a Foucauldian (Foucault, 1972, 1990/1978, 2002b; O'Farrell, 2005) approach here, arguing that through the representation of these

exclusionary white, gendered and middle class suburban Australian childhoods, advertisements reiterate and sustain them as truthful and ideal.

While living in the city can pose a threat to the Rousseauian image of childhood, the Rousseauian image of natural childhood has been sustained in the advertisements through the use of the suburban home and suburban backyard as spaces for middle class children to be safe and amongst mediated nature. It has been argued that central to the sustenance of this image is the notion of the home as a private space where the parent can oversee the child's normative growth, and Othered children can only enter the space when invited. Where suburban streets are depicted, they are framed similarly as middle class suburban enclaves, where homogeneity of white, middle class and gendered suburban children construct the suburban spaces as non-threatening and desirable for middle class white Australian children.

The harmoniousness of these idealised suburban children, their families, and their communities, has worked to *produce* such privileged childhoods subject positions as good (Ahmed, 2004, 2010) and ideal. From this perspective, it has been argued that images of envy and harmony work to produce the exclusionary suburban Australian childhood ideal as something that is desirable.

Using Miller and Rose (2008/1997) and Rose (1999/1990, 2008/1996b), I have argued that idealised normativity is produced in the advertisements as achievable through consumption. Central to this has been the use of the language of expertise that ties nutritional health to gendered outcomes. Healthy eating has been framed as a way of becoming the discursively ideal gendered subject: eating well can assist a *suburban white boy* to become an ideally gendered man (Weet-Bix Aussie Kids, 2006; Milo Duo, 2008; Uncle Toby's Muesli Bar, 2010). It is frequently the mother who is positioned as the family member culpable for the

child's normative growth, and how well she heeds the advice is the adverts is understood as crucial to the success or failure of the child. Here, then, the message reinforces the mother's gendered role as caregiver, nurturer, and the family member ultimately culpable for raising the normative suburban Australian child. Similarly, buying the correct pay television product or car can provide an outward appearance of being a member of the middle class and therefore achieve social capital for consumers.

What I have attempted to show here, then, is the ways in which the semiotic and discursive aspects of television advertisements mundanely work to produce and sustain normative and exclusionary discourses of suburban Australian childhoods. The discourses are framed by narratives targeted at securing future consumption; yet in the process, they produce exclusionary discourses of suburban Australian childhood. Throughout the chapter, I have described the ways in which the discursive truths of suburban Australian childhoods are "embodied in various representations, images and metaphors" (Foucault, 1972, p. 150). My work has not attempted to reveal representations as truthful or otherwise in relation to any non-discursive truth, but rather has explained how the advertisements "produce, perform and sustain" (Butler, 1990, p. 190) white, gendered and middle class suburban Australian childhoods as ideal within discourse, which works to exclude non-normative childhood formations from the space of the suburbs. Such textual exclusions matter, I argue, because they work to produce and normalise exclusionary assumptions about Australian childhood. The limiting normative discourses produced in these advertisements marginalise some *real flesh-and-blood* non-white, alternatively gendered, and working-class children from notions of belonging within national suburban discourse—foreclosing their recognition as true, ideal, and desired Australian childhood subjects. Thus, inequitable discourses such as those examined here have material effects. As Butler argues, and I think it is a point worth reiterating, "the 'force' of the performative is never fully separable from bodily force"

(1997a, p. 141). That is to say, discourse *affects people* by producing norms which precede their encounters with the world, and which enable and constrain the ways in which they are expected to interact and behave in their daily lives.

Constructions of White and Indigenous Australian Childhoods on Beaches and Billabongs

Racial contestations over the value and meaning of Australian spaces are never far from the surface of public life. Debate over who has the right to determine what should be done to land, and who has the right to stand upon the land, date back to the earliest days of European settlement (Moreton-Robinson, 2007; Perera, 2009). Intentional displacement of Indigenous Australians from their lands began almost immediately after the settlement of the first colonisers in 1788. White settlers claimed land for themselves and imposed British rule upon Indigenous territories. The British crown proclaimed Australia to be *terra nullius*— belonging to no one—as a justification for claiming it for the empire (Moreton-Robinson, 2005a, 2007). The Anglo-Christian invaders' visions of land as private property stood in stark contrast to traditional Indigenous visions of the land as a nurturer (Goot & Rowse, 2007; Robin, 2007). The land was partitioned, trees were felled and western buildings erected. The most fertile and coastal lands of Australia were the first sections of land populated by the invaders, and Indigenous Australians were chased towards increasingly

more barren spaces of the Australian mainland (Ellison, 2011). This practice was responded to with resistance. Battles between settlers and Indigenous Australians were persistent over the first decades of white settlement (Kociumbus, 1997). When Indigenous Australians defended the fertile coastal lands upon which they had lived for generations, they were viewed by settlers as barbarians for attacking white farmsteads and settlements (Kociumbus, 1997). From the earliest days, white sovereignty was forcefully and violently imposed upon Australian lands and their Indigenous inhabitants. Among other things, white Australian settlers perpetrated genocide against Tasmanian Aboriginals, refused to recognise Indigenous ownership over lands, forcibly removed Indigenous children from their communities, and established colonial cities upon the lands Indigenous people had used and nurtured for centuries (Goot & Rowse, 2007). There is a long post-colonial history of racial contestations over Australian spaces.

Such post-colonial acts of exclusion and marginalisation are not only a part of Australia's past, but also Australia's present. Ongoing white privilege, Indigenous dispossession and marginalisation in Australia are explained by Moreton-Robinson (2007) as 'post-colonising' practices. To explain Australia as a post-colonising nation (rather than post-colonial) is to highlight the ongoing, rather than merely 'past', white privileging that takes place within Australia. Media has a particularly pertinent function in the maintenance of white privilege (Moreton-Robinson, 2005a). Through media, racial discourses are banally perpetuated. Dominant discourses normalise Australia as a white Christian nation, reaffirming the privilege of whiteness and colonial norms (Healy, 2008; Moreton-Robinson, 2007; Perera, 2009).

Meanwhile, imagery of childhood can serve a particular rhetorical function when it comes to issue of territorial belonging. The spaces in which people grew up are commonly seen as representative of their spaces of belonging, where happy and pure childhood memories

reside, and where forefathers lived before them (Löfgren, 2001). Thus, images of childhood upon territories can act as rhetorical symbols that tie spaces to notions of origins and belonging. From such a perspective, narratives of childhood spaces can have a particularly pertinent rhetorical capacity to naturalise the connections between people and the spatial territories they inhabit. If someone 'grew up there', then they naturally 'belong' there. Images that combine representations of childhood, race, and space, therefore, can work to naturalise the idea that a particular racial group naturally belongs within a particular space. The intersection of these three categories – childhood, race, and space – forms the starting point for this chapter's examinations.

This chapter explores the ways white and Indigenous Australian Childhoods are framed as belonging to certain Australian spaces on television advertisements. I examine the beach and billabong spaces where white and Indigenous Australian children are depicted. I find that beach spaces dominantly feature white Australian childhoods. Inland waterways, on the other hand, more frequently depict Indigenous Australian childhoods. Whereas Indigenous childhoods are very rarely pictured on beaches, white childhoods are sometimes depicted in inland waterways. This is revealing of differentiated discourses of mobility and belonging. Whereas white children are depicted as more mobile across the nation, and therefore belonging throughout the land, Indigenous children are generally depicted as belonging exclusively to inland locales.

Consistent with previous chapters, here I am examining discourses with the recognition that they have material effects on the everyday life of flesh-and-blood Australians. In this chapter, where I examine the ways in which white and Indigenous children move through spaces of the nation, I am highlighting how discourse has the "ability to establish a practical sense for the body, not a sense of what the body is, but how it can or cannot negotiate space, its 'location' in terms of prevailing cultural coordinates" (1997a, p. 159 - 160). In this sense,

I am highlighting that discourse produces an expectation of how different children within the space of the nation should be anticipated in socio-spatial interactions, and how their embodied presence can normatively be received across different national locales, as informed by dominant national discourses.

Furthermore, the aim of securing future consumption remains central to the narratives' structures. In this chapter, I continue to examine how the advertisements position consumption of their products as a way for achieving social and personal success. Wealthy (predominantly white) viewers continue to be positioned as the target demographic, and framed through the narratives as the consuming protagonists. Indigenous children depicted in rural locales are consistently positioned not as a credible consumer demographic, potentially because this demographic has lesser disposable income. Instead, they come to be framed as objects to be consumed by the white viewer (Elder, 2007). This positioning of Indigenous Australian childhoods as consumed-not-consuming subjects is particularly revealing of the relationship between socioeconomic demographics and advertising narratives. The wealthier white consumer subset is spoken to *because* they have the financial means to consume. In this sense, a relationship between presumed wealth and idealised narratives of whiteness is evident: because white people are presumed to hold the wealth and are seen as the plausible consumer demography, they occupy central protagonist positions in most narratives. This consumption discourse merely acts to sustain and entrench socio-economic hierarchies and discursive disadvantage.

This archaeological analysis examines advertisements aired during a brief period of time in a post-Mabo context. In 1993, Koiki 'Eddie' Mabo won a Supreme Court case that overturned the notion of *terra nullius*, a concept that assumed Indigenous Australians did not own Australian land prior to white settlement (Moreton-Robinson, 2005a). Since this time, small gains have been made in terms of Indigenous land rights in Australia.

Nonetheless, it remains a time of deep contestation over white sovereignty of Australian lands. In 2005, the Cronulla race riots took place on Sydney's southern coastline where white Australians took to the streets to violently attack Lebanese Australians (Elder, 2007; Perera, 2009). In 2007, the Australian government sent the Australian army into outback Indigenous territories to intervene in the lives of the traditional custodians of the land (Stringer, 2007). Every year on Australia Day, the 26th of January, white settlement on Australia is celebrated, and white Australians typically flock to beach spaces to performatively celebrate white Australian culture (Elder, 2007). In such a time of racial and spatial contestation, the 'history of the present' (Foucault, 1975) of the advertisements examined is a history of ongoing, post-colonising contestation over the racial meanings of Australian spaces.

A Critical Whiteness Approach to Race and Space

This chapter draws its theoretical inspiration from critical whiteness studies (Hage, 1998; Knowles, 2005; Moreton-Robinson, 2005b; Riggs, 2007), which is a form of scholarship in which "whiteness is named, marked and located as a tapestry of advantage" (Knowles, 2005, p. 90). In particular, I am concerned with the capacity of advertisements to assert white children's privileges upon Australian spaces. This chapter's critique further draws from critical whiteness studies through a critique of whiteness as a racial demarcation that has come to be understood as *race-less* (Clarke & Garner, 2009). Ongoing white racial representations within spaces can crystallise white spatial practices as normal, natural and apolitical. On the contrary, however, it must be remembered that Australian spaces are historically contested, discursively produced and politically implicated (Knowles, 2005). A sea of white bodies can often come to be understood as so natural and unremarkable that race is presumably invisible, and the implications of privileged racial representation are unquestioned (Clarke & Garner, 2009). This is shown cleverly, for example, in Hogan's (2009) work on Australian television advertisements where research participants rarely

acknowledge the racial dimensions of all-white advertisements, but do recognise race when non-white people are represented in advertisements. From a critical whiteness studies perspective, however, exclusively white racial representations within texts do not negate the fact that racial privileging and marginalising is taking place; indeed, it should highlight it.

This chapter also engages with what Alexander and Knowles call "territorial notions of space" (2005, p. 6). That is, the idea that spaces can be owned and possessed by particular racial groups and that people can appear to belong or otherwise to specific spaces (Neely & Samura, 2011; Razack, 2007). Discourses that align particular racial groups with particular spaces reinscribe racial inclusions as well as exclusions upon territories of the nation. National territories in this sense are not homogenous – a singular Australian territory – but are rather heterogeneous, so that there may be many Australian spaces with their own racial inclusions and exclusions. From this perspective, belongings within the nation can be stratified through spatial differentiation—a racial group might belong in one part of the nation, but not another.

Furthermore, it is considered here that productions of Australian spaces as belonging to particular racial groups have very real consequences for the production of racial categories themselves (Moreton-Robinson, 2005a). For one thing, representations of the spatial privileges of whiteness reinforce white privilege in discourse (Clarke & Garner, 2009; Perera, 2009). Therein, representations that spatially privilege whiteness reinscribe "what it means to be white" (Delaney, 2002, p. 9)—to be privileged, mobile, and a proud territorial benefactor of violently attained white sovereignty. In this sense, spatial representations can be seen as complicit in the discursive production of race categories. That is to say, race can be produced by space (Alexander & Knowles, 2005; Delaney, 2002; Knowles, 2003; Neely & Samura, 2011; Razack, 2007; Sibley, 1995; Sundstrom, 2003).

Differentiated representations of Australian childhoods upon various Australian spaces have the capacity to produce racial privileges and disadvantages. In this sense, spatial framing effects do more than simply repress and suppress Indigenous and minorities' spatial belongings. They also produce Indigenous spatial belongings. They are, in the Foucauldian sense, *productive* (Foucault, 1990/1978). Indigenous Australian childhoods are not entirely invisible on television advertisements; indeed, they take a central role in some advertisements examined (for example, Tourism Australia *Beautiful Australia*, 2006; Qantas *Spirit of Australia*, 2009). Thus, Indigenous disadvantage is *sustained* and *reinforced* not through silence or ignorance, but through everyday reiterations of their spatial disadvantage in discourse. The *visibility* of Indigenous Australian childhoods in public texts such as television advertisements is central to the continuation of exclusionary discourses of Indigenous Australians within the post-colonising nation of Australia.

White Australian Childhoods on the Beach

Being a nation surrounded by sea, Australia's beaches are the border of sovereign Australian land and a frontier of dominant white Australian culture. Throughout the history of white settlement, the beach has been a site of struggles for possession, power and sovereignty (Ellison, 2011; Perera, 2009; Taylor, 2006). Political associations with the beach often involve white cultural fears of invasion from external racial groups. In this sense, the Australian beach functions as "the symbolic site of the differentiation between 'us,' the white people within Australia, and 'them,' the non-white people to be kept out of Australia" (Perera, 2009, p. 138). That is, the beach is the physical border of white Australian sovereignty over land, and is a prime location for white Australians to reaffirm the dominance of their cultural performatives (Ellison, 2011; Perera, 2009; Randell-Moon, 2006; Stratton, 2011).

The Surf Lifesaver, as the quintessential white Australian beach character, holds a special heroic status in white Australian beach discourse. As the "soldiers of the sea" (Crombie, 2004, as cited in Perera, 2009, p. 146), Surf Lifesavers devote their summers to protecting their fellow Australians from the dangers posed by the ocean. Surf lifesavers are the most vigilant overseers of the ocean, overlooking the beachgoers as they partake in white Australian rituals that reinscribe their cultural dominance. When white surf lifesavers were attacked on Cronulla beach in December 2005, race-fuelled riots ensued. The heroic status of the lifesavers in white Australian discourse fuelled the anger of white supremacists who lined the beaches blazoned with slogans such as 'We grew here! You flew here!' across their chests (Elder, 2007; Perera, 2009). Here, an implicit connection to the link between white Australian childhoods on the beach and white Australian belongings is palpable—the fact that white people 'grew here!' discursively works to legitimise territorial belongings.

Thus, the beach has come to symbolise the frontline in the Anglo-Australian project of white sovereignty over Australian land and culture. It symbolises "a site of ongoing racial demarcation and exclusion, as of endless vigilance and fear" (Perera, 2009, p. 138). As a national vigil, white Australians flock to the beaches every summer and put the dominant white Australian way of life on public display, therein reinscribing the dominance of Australian beach culture in the Australian imaginary. It is an act that takes place on the border of both physical and cultural white Australian sovereign space.

The imaginary of the beach as a locale for white Australian childhoods is common in Australian television advertisements. This trope of advertisement that utilises images of white Australian childhoods on beaches spans a variety of products and brands. This includes tourism advertisements (Tourism Queensland *Where Australia Shines*, 2010; Tourism Australia *There's Nothing like it*, 2010; Tourism Australia *Beautiful Australia*, 2006; Port Macquarie Tourism *Little Treasures*, 2010; Kangaroo Island *Let yourself go*,

2012) as well as a broader array of advertisements attempting to depict the white Australian way of life (Nutri-Grain *Afternoon Snack*, 2010; Nutri-Grain *Get the Ball Rolling*, 2009; Suncorp Insurance *Queenslanders Love the Water*, 2010; Suncorp Bank *Sun Protection*, 2010; Nutella *A lot of energy*, 2010; Bondi Rescue *Aussie Hero*, 2010). Three characteristic advertisements from this trope will be explored here: Port Macquarie Tourism *Little Creatures* (2010), Nutri-Grain *Get the Ball Rolling* (2009), and Tourism Queensland *Where Australian Shines* (2010).

Port Macquarie Tourism Little Creatures

The Port Macquarie Tourism *Little Creatures* (2010) advertisement is characteristic of advertisements that reiterate the belongingness of white Australian childhoods on the beach. Port Macquarie is an area of north-eastern New South Wales that spans both coastal and inland areas. The advertisement promotes Port Macquarie as a getaway destination for domestic tourists and frames the area as beautiful and rejuvenating. The narrative of the advertisement follows a white nuclear family—mother and father with pre-pubescent son and daughter—but primarily follows the children as they play and explore among Port Macquarie's coastlines, beaches, bushland and wineries.

Whiteness is the only racial category in this advertisement. White people, therefore, can credibly be read as *the* target consumer demographic here. The presumed socioeconomic status of white Australians may contribute to the positioning of white people as the advertisement's protagonists, as well as the notion that white people 'want' to take holidays to their symbolic home: the beachscape. Nonetheless, this hegemonic image of whiteness forcefully reinforces white privilege on beach spaces. Whiteness is generally viewed within nations of white privilege as an "absence of specificity" and "an invisible non-raced" (Clarke & Garner, 2009, p. 39) category of identity. If this were the case, then this advertisement

would be read as having no implications for race relations. However, Critical Whiteness Studies recognises that the positioning of the white subject as non-raced through hegemonic representations works to privilege whiteness as a normative ideal (Clarke & Garner, 2009; Moreton-Robinson, 2005b; Riggs, 2007). It is this commonplace alignment of whiteness and Australian beachscapes which works to discursively conceal the privileged spatial positioning of white Australians upon beachscapes. That is to say, the alignment of white childhoods and beach spaces can be seen here as reinforcing privilege at the same time as concealing it. Through exclusively white representation, Australia's beaches as framed as spaces that are paradoxically all-white and race-less.

Nostalgia is the central emotive theme of the advertisement. Nostalgia is premised on remembering something in the past that was joyful; or as Ahmed puts it, nostalgia is the memory of "a happy object that is no longer" (2010, p. 241). It involves bittersweet longing for a purer, happier and simpler past time or place, thereby requiring memory of personal histories (Barrett et al., 2009; Wilson, 2005). It involves autobiographical memories, real or imagined, of times past, that are reflected upon dreamily and introspectively (Barrett et al., 2009). Nostalgia is produced within this advertisement through a collection of semiotic and discursive affordances that, combined, forcefully communicate the emotion of nostalgia. The bringing together of childhood, water and *whiteness* is central to the production of nostalgia here.

This story of nostalgia starts with imagery of long lost, happy childhoods on the beach. Childhood is tied to nostalgia inasmuch as childhood is, discursively, a past time of happiness, simpleness, and joy. By following the storyline of two children playing on the beach, this advertisement works to construct a narrative of a simple, happy and carefree time that Port Macquarie can provide access to. The children play and explore by the beach and coastlines of Port Macquarie. Secondly, building upon the image of nostalgic childhoods is

the confluence of childhood and water to produce a distinct message of purity. The purity of childhood comes to be highlighted when the children play in the 'purifying' waters of the ocean. This imaginary of purity is evoked throughout, beginning with an image of water trickling through a child's toes as the ocean's tide recedes (0:03-0:05). Sand and shells are carried with the tide and they tickle the child's toes as they pass by on their way out to sea. The shot changes to a child's hand open wide, with the fingertips caressing a flowing current of water (0:06-0:07). The child's fingers produce a wake of water that sparkles golden in the sun. Later, a boy lays face-up in the water, arms and legs outstretched, as he is dragged and spun by the water upon the sandy shallows of a beach (0:22-0:24). The water washes over the child's body produces a purifying image—the water is washing and cleansing his body. Water is used to wash dirt—"a signifier of imperfection and inferiority" (Sibley, 1995, p. 14)—off white bodies so that they may be clean and pure. By soaking in water, the children in this advertisement are having their white skin cleaned, and its whiteness magnified.

The above two screenshots from the Port Macquarie Little Creatures (2010) television advertisement feature white children interacting with the 'purifying' waters of Port Macquarie (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6gQu6zVSe8).

I want to take up Ahmed's (2004, 2010) work here on the sociality of emotion, and particularly, her argument that "feeling may convert quickly into a reading of the other"

(2004, p. 28). For Ahmed, hurt might be ascribed to another inasmuch as 'it hurts' becomes 'you hurt me' and therefore 'you are bad'. Following Ahmed, a reading of nostalgia for a white past can be read as a negative reading of the multicultural present. If nostalgia is lost happiness (Ahmed, 2010), and happiness is 'that which is good', then nostalgia for a white past can be read as the association of whiteness with happiness, and therefore, whiteness with goodness. From this perspective, nostalgia for lost whiteness translates to lost happiness, which in turn translates to whiteness as good and multiculturalism as bad. White Australians can be seen here as the injured parties in a multicultural present—the white past is mourned as something good which has been taken from white people by non-white people. Following Ahmed (2004; 2010), then, I would argue that nostalgia has particular emotive power in this narrative of white nationhood. By using nostalgia to reflect upon a time where Australia was more homogenous, pure, and white, the advertisement has produced the white subject as "the injured party in national discourses" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 33) inasmuch as lost white hegemony is something to be mourned.

Clearly, then, this advertisement aims to secure consumption from white viewers who desire the purity of this image; a purity that can be found on a holiday to the rural beachside of Port Macquarie. The narrative insinuates that white Australian childhood purity can be achieved through consumption of the advertised products (Miller & Rose, 1997/2008). Whilst this narrative might emerge as a result of consumption imperatives, it naturalises and produces whiteness as a discursive ideal for Australian childhood.

In sum, this advertisement positions white Australian childhoods as belonging upon Australia's beach spaces. All characters in this advertisement are white. This can work to conceal the racial implication of the narrative; however, from a critical whiteness perspective, I have argued that a hegemonic image of whiteness actually works to reinforce whiteness as the norm upon the beach. The all-white cast reflects the target consumer

demographic—white people are seen as the wealthy consumers and ideal consumer demographic who are most likely to travel to beach spaces, both because of their supposed disposable income and the notion that they will be 'happy' and feel 'belongingness' in beach resort locales. Through the use of imagery of childhood, water, whiteness, and purity, a nostalgic narrative of whiteness is produced. The emotion of nostalgia, associated with times of happiness lost in the past, aligns this image of hegemonic whiteness with happiness. Upon Port Macquarie's beach spaces, long-lost whiteness and its associated happiness can be reclaimed. I have also argued that childhood is central to this consumption narrative inasmuch as childhood is used to evoke nostalgia. In this advertisement, then, imagery of white children playing on the beach idealises an imaginary of a long-lost white Australia, while also reinforcing the idea that the beach is where white children can legitimately belong.

Nutri-Grain Get the Ball Rolling

The Nutri-Grain *Get the Ball Rolling* (2009) advertisement similarly aligns white childhoods and Australian beaches. This advertisement promotes a breakfast cereal, and is primarily speaking to white mums. Insomuch as consumption of the product is positioned as valuable to consumers who wish to attain idealised subject positions, neoliberal consumption discourses are at play here. Consumption of Nutri-Grain is framed as being able to help consumers achieve desirable white masculine subject positions for their Australian sons. If mothers are neglectful, however, and don't consume the product, the sons may not secure the white beachside childhood identities idealised in the narrative.

In the advertisement, the mother is advised to feed her son Nutri-Grain so that he can become an Iron Man. 'Iron Man' is the term given to Australia's premiere surf lifesaving competition, wherein surf lifesavers compete in beachside sporting and endurance races.

The advertisement voiceover suggests that the consumption of Nutri-Grain can assist boys in their dreams to become Iron Men:

> Boys need protein for growth and muscle development. Nutri-Grain is one of the highest protein cereals. So as part of a balanced diet and regular exercise, Nutri-Grain has what it takes to help build your son into an Iron Man. (0:08-0:25)

The voiceover's message is reinforced by the visual narrative of the advertisement, which involves imagery of a white Australian child who idealises the Iron Man beach-going way of life. The storyline is of a boy growing into an Iron Man. The whole advertisement is set on the beach, featuring a white son with his white mother. At the beginning, a young boy is shown tentative about getting into the ocean (0:00-0:01). He looks up at his mother with a worried look on his face. With his face looking up at the camera, he is constructed as a child in a position of weakness and in need of help from his mother (Kress & van Leeuwen. 2006):

In this screenshot from the Nutri-Grain 'Get the Ball Rolling' (2009) advertisement, a boy is shown looking up at his mother. The camera angle looking down on the boy suggests that the boy is weak and in need of help.
(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GKTtJ_GEZAA)

As the advertisement progresses, the boy is shown training on the beach by doing push-ups (0:06), swimming (0:09) and eating Nutri-Grain (0:13). Mid-way through the advertisement, the boy morphs into an older child, and he leaps into the ocean with confidence (0:13). By the end, he has grown into a strong masculine white man who has just won an Iron Man

race. He runs across the finish line with his hands in the air, ecstatic at his victory (0:24).

His mother cheers on from the crowd, which is not-so coincidentally all-white (0:23).

In these screenshots from the Nutri-Grain 'Get the Ball Rolling' (2009) advertisement, a young man is shown winning a race. He raises his hands in a sign of victory as he crosses the line (left) as his mother cheers on proudly (right).
(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GKTtJ_GEZAA)

He gives his mother the first place medal, placing it in her hand which is now smaller than his, and says "Thanks, Mum" (0:26). Here, the relationship has changed; they are at eye level, and the son is now an ideal white masculine Iron Man subject, exhibiting his masculinity on the Australian beach. The advertisement then concludes with three images the boy looking out to sea. In each image, he is shown in progressive stages of growth from boy into man. With his back to the camera and hands on hips, the boy is shown as confident in the face of the ocean, now that he has had the training and diet necessary to be proficient at his sport:

In these three consecutive screenshots from the Nutri-Grain 'Get the Ball Rolling' (2009) advertisement, a person is shown growing from boy to man while overlooking the ocean. The boy's stance with hands on hips suggests confidence in the face of the ocean. (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GKTtJ_GEZAA)

Here, the advertisement's narrative is constructing a particular, muscular ('Boys need protein for … muscle development'), beach-going ('build your son into an Iron Man') Australian boyhood identity as desirable, and attainable through consumption of Nutri-

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Grain. Through the reiteration of a discourse of beachscapes as spaces for white masculine Australian children, and through the framing of consumption of Nutri-Grain as a way of attaining such an ideal, the ideal is reinforced and naturalised. In this sense, the advertisement is sustaining *norms of idealised Australian boyhood*—muscular boys are framed as socially desirable, as are Iron Men. To borrow from Rose, this advertisement is an example of the "power of the image" to produce in discourse the "social skills" (Rose, 1999/1990, p. 243) that are culturally desirable. Rose explains that "the simulacra of joy, warmth and achievement presented in advertisements" (1999/1990, p. 243) produces the knowledge of what is valued in society and how that might be accessed. He argues that individuals come to know what the ideal childhood subjectivity is through paying attention to the "public habitat of images" (Rose, 1999, p. 86) that make up idealised discourses of childhood. This advertisement is an example of the ways advertising images can produce and reiterate in discourse the idealised white Australian childhood imaginary—which is constructed here as a beach-going and masculine identity formation.

Furthermore, this advertisement's production of a normative vision of childhood functions to alert mothers to how their own children fare in relation to the norm, as is necessary within neoliberal consumption discourse in which correct consumption decisions are central to securing social capital and personal success. As Rose argues, "advertising and consumption with their habitat of images of personhood … provide the means for understanding and acting upon the self" (1999/1990, p. xx). In this sense, the normalising visions of childhood produced in the advertisement not only produce a norm, but also a way of achieving its realisation. Consumption of Nutri-Grain is framed as a way of acting upon one's own child in order that he becomes the masculine beach-going white child that is desirable in the advertisements' narrative. Here, consumption of Nutri-Grain is tied to the ideal of the 'good mother' who uses her personal enterprise, in the form of consumption, in order to raise a

culturally normative (and therefore healthy) son (Miller & Rose, 2008/1997; Rose, 1999/1990). That is to say, this advertisement encourages consumption of Nutri-Grain as a way in which the son may be able to exhibit masculinity on the Australian beach. As is shown in the visual narrative, such an investment will come to fruition when the son wins his first Iron Man race: he will have become the ideal white, masculine, beachside Australian.

Tourism Queensland Where Australia Shines

The third example of reiterations of white Australian childhoods on the beach I would like to offer here is that of the Tourism Queensland *Where Australian Shines* (2010) advertisement. In this advertisement, white Australian children are exclusively depicted on beachscapes. Like the Port Macquarie Tourism advertisement analysed earlier in this chapter, middle class white people take shape as the target consumer demographic. White viewers are asked to gaze upon Indigenous characters, who are not framed in the narrative as plausible consumers. Here, then, extant socioeconomic hierarchies are appeased: neoliberal consumer rationalities dictate that the people spoken to through the advertisement are the wealthier consumer demography who are most likely to consume. That is to say, the white Australian consumers are being addressed, reinforcing socioeconomic hierarchies through the narrative. The advertisement is comprised of multiple brief scenes of white Australian characters on Queensland beaches. In each scene the sun shines, glaringly bright and demanding to be noticed, in the background. In total, white children are depicted on the beach on nine separate occasions in the 60-second advertisement (0:03, 0:07, 0:09, 0:14, 0:17, 0:27, 0:34, 0:41, 0:44). Non-white people, children or adults, are not depicted once in the entirety of this advertisement.

On one occasion a boy is featured surfing on the beach (0:14). Surfing is a pastime increasingly associated with mainstream white Australian culture since the 1960s (Booth, 1994). Surfing functions here as a semiotic indicator of a quintessentially white Australian beach activity. The child surfing is cast as an authentic Australian character—he is white, a surfer, and a beach-goer. Being a child, the naturalness of this image is reinforced. The implication is that this boy is 'growing up' surfing on Australia's beaches, and therefore 'belongs' there. During the shot of the young white boy surfing (0:14-0:15), the camera is in the water, between the boy and the wave. As he surfs past the camera, the boy raises his arms in triumph, looks directly into the camera, square on, and smiles at the viewer. By gazing into the camera, the boy is highlighting the visibility of the camera in the advertisement. It is not an invisible observer but an active participant. It is joining-in, like the viewer can if only they consume the product. The vector created between the boy's eye line and the camera constructs an implied invitation to viewers (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) to participate in the performative act of whiteness. The viewer is invited to come to Queensland, a central rhetorical function of the tourism advert.

In this Screenshot, a young white boy is shown surfing on the beach, a traditionally white domain
(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HWaMt3CLRt8)

Two brief scenes later, another white boy is shown standing on the beach learning Australianness (0:17). This time, he is beside a white male surf lifesaver who is kneeling

down to be at the boy's head height. The boy, wearing only board shorts, raises his arms and flexes his biceps. The surf lifesaver ruffles the boy's hair approvingly. The sun shines in the background, directing its rays into the camera lens:

In this Screenshot, a young white boy is shown learning desirable (masculine) Australianness on the beach, a traditionally white domain (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HWaMt3CLRt8)

Here, a young boy is being helped by the quintessentially and heroically Australian character of surf lifesaver. The child flexes his muscles while the surf lifesaver watches on and smiles. The surf lifesaver – as quintessential white Australian beach goer – is encouraging a performative (Butler, 1999) act of white masculinity on the beach. This is an instance of gender normativity, whereby gender representation reinscribes in discourse the cultural intelligibility of dominant gender norms. As Butler states, "the very description of the field of gender" (Butler, 1999, p. xx) is tied up with its normative operation inasmuch as its representation will "determine in advance" (Butler, 1999, p. xxi) who qualifies as belonging or otherwise to particular categories of being. Here then, following Butler, the very representation of the normative masculine gender role in this advertisement has the power to produce this gender formation as acceptable and indeed desirable within the beachside space in which the surf lifesaver reigns supreme.

Furthermore, in every scene in this advertisement, the sun is located in a top corner of the frame. In the above image, for example, the sun creeps up behind the surfboards in the

background. The sun rays construct the scene as bright, optimistic and happy. Following Ahmed (2010), happiness is distributed to some bodies more than others. It constructs people who have happiness as living the good life; their proximity to happiness demarcates them as desirable. As Ahmed argues, "through narrative, the promise of happiness is located as well as distributed. To make a simple point: some bodies more than others will bear the promise of happiness" (2010, p. 45). Following Ahmed then, the overt happiness produced in this scene constructs the white space, and indeed these white bodies, as good and desirable. Happiness here associates white bodies with goodness through the "proximity" (2010, p. 29) of the white bodies to happy sunny spaces. That is to say, within this narrative, it seems that happiness can produce certain types of childhoods as desirable—white boys learning masculinity and Australianness on the beach are happy children. This semiotic indicator of happiness within the all-white locale, then, is integral to the construction of a narrative that positions the white beach spaces of Queensland as desirable. That is to say, by demarcating white beaches as happy, the advertisement constructs whiteness on the beach as something that is inherently good.

Tourism Queensland Where Australia Shines Remix

Over a viewing of some 300 television advertisements aired between 2006 and 2012, Aboriginal people were found to be depicted on the beach only once. This takes place in a re-cut version of the Tourism Queensland advertisement analysed above. The re-cut version was released two months after the original, and depicts elderly Indigenous men, briefly, dancing by the ocean. This one scene sits in stark contrast to the white beach locale in the scenes preceding and following. These Indigenous men are constructed as the stereotypical 'traditional' Indigenous noble savages, "fixed in another time" (Healy, 2008, p. 46) where white culture has not impacted them. They wear traditional garments and dance traditional

dances. By being presumably unaffected by white culture, they can appear quarantined and pure.

Screenshot: In this screenshot from a Tourism Queensland Where Australia Shines (2010b) advertisement, Indigenous dancers are depicted in their traditional garb (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s06i2vwlBI0&feature=plcp)

I would suggest that this image of Indigenous ceremony sits in stark contrast to the images of white banality that precede and follow. Images of white people playing sporadically upon the beach – as represented in the previous two case studies – are of high modality (i.e. framed as realistic, plausible, commonplace; see Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). The white peoples' activities are framed within the advertisement as if they are not set-up or pre-planned, merely captured by the waiting camera. Clearly, they *are* set-up, as is revealed by the consistent framing techniques that conveniently feature a sun in the corner of the screen. However, the implication in the advertisement is that the white events are, in fact, commonplace. By contrast, the one brief image of Indigenous men in traditional garb dancing is low in modality—it does not appear to be a commonplace or spontaneous event that can simply be captured by the passing camera and staged for the pleasure of the white consumers being addressed through the advertisement's narrative. The white consumer demographic, who take the role of protagonist, are framed as the only plausible demographic who would be interested in and have the wealth to enjoy this beachside holiday. Here, neoliberal consumption rationalities dictate that wealthy *white Australians* and wealthy white

Australian children be addressed through the advertisement as they are the presumably more plausible future consumers of the product on offer. It is an orchestrated dance; the men wear kangaroo skins, and they have painted their bodies in war paint. It is a cinematic spectacle. The camera does not hide the fact that the dance is taking place specifically for its pleasure, and would likely not be taking place if the camera were not there. This low modality reveals a starkly tokenistic construction. Being out of context and uncomfortable within the narrative of whiteness, its construction is distinctly a form of white touristic tokenism, rather than being an inferred commonplace Indigenous beach practice.

Indigenous Australian Childhoods in Outback Billabongs

Spatial discourses of Indigenous Australians consistently involve narratives of the outback as Indigenous homeland and the city as a place for troubled Indigenous peoples (Crilly, 2001; Elder, 2007; Shaw, 2007). The outback Indigenous character often garners a romantic image as 'noble savage' (Healy, 2008; Zielinski, 2008), but only as long as this character remains in the outback, where he or she can resist the colonial impositions of the cities and continue to practice traditional Indigenous customs (Elder, 2007; Shaw, 2007). In the outback, Indigenous Australians can be imagined as a natural, innocent and pure "feature of the landscape" (Crilly, 2001, p. 36).

In contrast to the noble outback Indigenous Australian, the urban Indigenous character is dominantly imagined as corrupted and dangerous (Elder, 2007; Healy, 2008; Morgan, 2006; Shaw, 2007). Dominant Australian discourse, which imagines the authentic Aboriginal culture as "traditional, outback, pre-colonial", denies the existence of "contemporary, urban, post-colonial" Indigenous identities (Shaw, 2007, p. 70). As a result, urban Aboriginals are imagined not to "fit into the dynamics of urban modernity" and to "either 'go crazy' or [be] thoroughly corrupted by the city" (Shaw, 2007, p. 70). The Aboriginal's existence in urban

lands discursively signifies a loss of culture, as if the Aboriginal person in question has rejected a natural outback existence for a corrupted urban one. This Indigenous character is imagined to have sought out the corruptions of white society, rather than having had it imposed from the outside. Inner-city suburbs where Indigenous communities have grown, such as Redfern in Sydney, are imagined as dangerous places where bad Indigenous Australians can be found (Morgan, 2006; Shaw, 2007). Thus, 'good' Aboriginal Australians lack a certain spatial mobility in dominant Australian discourse—broadly, it remains a dominant theme that there are spaces where they belong (the outback) and spaces where they do not (the city).

The construction of authentic Indigenous Australians as outback-dwelling characters has its history in white Australian violence. As early as 1778, conflicts between early Europeans and Aboriginal Australians took place on the beaches where European invaders landed (Ellison, 2011). First settlers took possession of coastal areas for ease of access to ports and prime agricultural land. This forced Indigenous Australians to retreat inland (Ellison, 2011). The beach became a location where white violence was perpetrated against the Indigenous people, but, it also became one of the first locations where Indigenous Australians were excluded from post-colonising white Australian legend. Today, dominant narratives of Indigenous children rarely posit them as anything other than inland dwellers (Ellison, 2011).

The inland Indigenous character is constructed primarily in tourism advertisements (Tourism Australia *There's Nothing like it*, 2010; Tourism Australia *Beautiful Australia*, 2006), but also in other advertisements promoting Australia (Qantas *Spirit of Australia*, 2009; Telstra *We are Australian*, 2002). This narrative, I argue, is constructed within a neoliberal consumption discourse which dictates that the viewers who are to be addressed are those with the economic resources to be potential future travellers. In this sense, the city-dwelling, wealthy white people are being asked to consume images of Indigenous

Australians that comfortably reinforce distance, both spatially and economically. Here, the Indigenous characters most certainly are not protagonists. Rather, they serve as decoration. They are not a credible consumer demographic—and therefore not addressed through a consumption narrative dictated by profit-making imperatives.

Furthermore, Indigenous Australians are particularly absent in advertisements that are not overtly about Australia. This reveals the conspicuous visibility of Indigenous identity is in comparison to whiteness. Whereas whiteness functions as the invisible norm, Aboriginality is salient and generally used only when Australianness is to be signified. Two case studies are used here to examine constructions of inland Indigenous Australian childhoods. They both focus on representations of Indigenous Australian childhoods in *inland waterways*, or 'billabongs'.

Tourism Australia Beautiful Australia

In two Tourism Australia (2010; 2006) television advertisements that feature Indigenous children, Indigenous children are constructed as ideally inland-dwelling children in billabongs. First, the 2006 *Beautiful Australia* advertisement promotes Australian tourism by depicting its vast landscapes, interspersed with images of both white Australians and Indigenous children. The advertisement opens with an extreme close-up of Australian singer Delta Goodrem's eyes. Beneath her eyes is the caption: "Delta Goodrem's Australia" (0:00-0:02). She begins singing *I Can Sing a Rainbow*:

> Red and yellow and
> Pink and Green
> Purple and orange and blue
>
> I can sing a rainbow
> Sing a rainbow
> Sing a rainbow too

As each colour in the first clause of the song is sung, long distance wide shots of the Australian landscape are shown. The colour being sung when each shot is depicted is the most salient colour in each respective shot. Three shots of the sandy outback are shown first, showing a deep red outback rock formation for "red" (0:02), a golden sunset over a clay embankment for "yellow" (0:03-0:04) and tinged pink sand dunes for "pink" (0:05). As Goodrem sings "green", three shots in quick concession show a green rainforest canopy, a top-down shot of a teal reef, and a top-down shot of a creek winding its way through thick green forest (0:07-0:09). "Purple" shows purple coloured mountains in the fading light of dusk (0:10) and "orange" shows the orange dirt of the Australian desert outback (0:11). Up until this point, each of the eight shots frames Australia as a place of vast physical beauty. The next shot is the first to feature a person, and it is an Indigenous boy surrounded by bright blue water (0:12-0:14). The blue water in this image, gently rippling in concentric circles, constructs an image where the Indigenous child is in harmony with the life-giving and pure water:

Screenshot: This image from Tourism Australia's 2006 'Beautiful Australia' advertisement shows an Indigenous boy swimming in bright blue water (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0Bw1XPqDrA)

The shots following return to a montage of images of the outback (0:15-0:18), then a montage of images of beachscapes (0:09-0:26). During the beachscape shots, images of surfboards, beach chairs, kayaks, a sailing boat and a surf lifesaving flag show signs of the

built environment by the beach. However, when the montage returns from the coast to the outback (at 0:27), built environments are no longer shown. The return to outback imagery is marked by a close-up shot of an Indigenous boy (0:27). He is painted in traditional Indigenous body paints and using two boomerangs to make music. The next shot is a zoomed out medium-range shot, and two Indigenous people painted in similar body paint stand against an orange rock wall (0:28). The non-built environment of the outback space signifies the authenticity of the children's Indigineity, uninfected by white colonisation that is shown in the built beach spaces earlier in the advertisement. Here, then, Indigenous children are used as markers of the shifts between outback and coastal locations. The discourse of Indigenous people *belonging in the outback* is evoked and reiterated here.

This advertisement, then, serves the function of reinforcing Indigenous Australian childhoods as ideally existing in the outback. Indigenous children growing up in the outback, I would suggest, functions here as a synecdoche for *all* Indigenous people. If Indigenous people 'grew up' as children in the outback, then it follows that they *belong* there. In this sense, the advertisement reinforces limiting spatial understandings about Indigenous people. Furthermore, the lack of any built environment in images featuring Indigenous children is telling. It reinforces their image as noble savages, uncorrupted by the imposition of white structures upon their lands. This limiting vision of Indigenous Australian childhoods is post-colonising in its effect inasmuch as it produces a simplistic nostalgic vision of Australian Aboriginality. The Indigenous Australians are far away from the wealthy city dwellers who are asked to come to the outback to observe ostensibly 'authentic' Indigenous Australian children, pay money to tourism providers, then return to their white city lives. This image appeases the white gaze inasmuch as these images of Indigenous children constructs them as frozen in a pre-colonial time before white crimes were committed. It is a comforting vision that reinforces a one-dimensional construction of Indigenous childhoods while also

ignoring white violence and dispossession. It overlooks the idea that contemporary Indigenous cultures may exist in more complex and hybridised but equally legitimate ways in the nation's metropolises.

One-dimensional constructions of raced Indigenous Australian childhoods such as the one here can be read as a rhetorical function designed to attract the wealthy white consumer's interest in the idea of timeless authenticity (Wang, 1999). Authenticity serves a particularly pertinent role in tourism advertising, where tourists are in search of a discursively true and unmediated cultural experience. As Wang argues,

> [Authenticity] is nostalgic because it idealizes the ways of life in which people are supposed as freer, more innocent, more spontaneous, purer, and truer to themselves than usual … People are nostalgic about these ways of life because they want to relive them in the form of tourism at least temporally, empathically, and symbolically ... Therefore, as a contrast to the everyday roles, the tourist role is linked to the ideal of authenticity (1999: 360).

Such an approach in tourism advertising positions travels to outback Australia as a way of seeing a discursively more innocent and pure noble savage Indigenous lifestyle. Visiting Indigenous characters in the cities is out of the question for this narrative—seeing them would apparently not constitute an authentic Indigenous experience. Therein, the discursive production of outback Indigenous Australian childhoods as authentic, used here to promote Australian tourism and secure future consumption from white domestic tourists, also works to *produce* (Foucault, 1990/1978) one-dimensional and limiting spatial understandings of authentic Indigenous Australian Childhoods.

In using the term 'produce' here, I refer again to Foucault's notion of discourse as productive of social and cultural truths. This advertisement is *producing* and *reinforcing* a discourse of authentic Indigenous childhoods as being authentically outback-dwelling. As Foucault argues, truth emerges not through reference to a stable unchanging character of subjecthood (Foucault, 1972, 2002a), but through the "production, regulation, distribution, circulation

and operation of statements" (Foucault, 2002a, p. 133). Through these advertisements geared towards securing white tourists' consumption, the narratives produce and sustain in discourse the notion that authentic Indigenous Australian childhoods are ones that are necessarily outback-dwelling. This truth of Indigenous childhoods exists not through reference to a grounded, non-discursive truth of Indigenous childhoods, but rather through the reiteration of a discursive formation that comes to be known as truth. In this sense, the concept that Indigenous childhoods naturally belong in the outback comes to represent a Foucauldian "regime of truth" (Foucault, 2002a, p. 131) produced and sustained in discourse, and marks as inauthentic urban Indigenous children.

Tourism Australia There's nothing like it

The 2010 Tourism Australia *There's Nothing like it* advertisement similarly produces Indigenous Australians as ideally outback dwellers who are to be viewed by wealthy white city Australians on trips to the outback. Such trips, as framed here, work to reinforce misconceptions of Indigenous Australians by working to reinforce distance between white and black. Such a narrative is cogent within neoliberal consumer discourses, however, as it placates an extant socioeconomic hierarchy. It appeals to wealthy (predominantly white) consumer mythologies—the only mythologies that count within profit-making consumer rationalities which target those with disposable income to consume. That is to say, the advertisement is necessarily targeted at those who hold the wealth – white people – as they are the plausible future consumers of the advertised products. The advertisement features scenes that consistently shift from coast to inland, and these shifts coincide with shifts in racial constructions. With both white and Indigenous characters in this advertisement, this advertisement is revealing of a stark contrast in racial groups' discursive spatial practices.

Whereas Indigenous childhoods are exclusively shown in inland scenes, white and Asian childhoods are framed in both coastal and inland scenes.

The advertisement opens with two young men sitting on surfboards in the ocean watching the sun rise. Two dolphins are seen playing in the water in the distance. One man whispers, "there's nothing like it, is there." His friend replies, "Nup" (0:00-0:05). The scene changes to a man playing a piano on the sandy beach, with the sun still rising over the ocean. He begins to sing: "There's nothing like the sunrise, the first wave of the day" (0:06-0:10). A woman in a seaplane then sings, "The trip along the coastline" (0:10-0:12), then a ferry driver at Circular Quay in Sydney, "This ride across the bay" (0:12-0:14).

Up until this point of the advertisement (0:14), all of the shots – of surfers, piano player, seaplane and ferry – have been by the coast, and all characters white. In the next scene, however, an Indigenous family (a man, woman, and two young boys) sits atop a rock formation by an open fire in outback Australia. The landscape behind them features rock formations and desert shrubs as far as the horizon. The Indigenous man sings, "There's nothing like this **ancient place**" (0:15-0:17). The key words 'ancient place' evoke Indigenous heritage and longevity in Australia, and his situatedness in a outback locale positions him in his ostensibly correct place as an Indigenous person. In the very next scene, the setting changes back to the coast where there is a silhouette of a convoy of people riding camels on a beach. A silhouetted woman's voice sings, "the sunset on a camel" (0:15-0:19). A seaplane flying over a reef is next, and a white man sings, "this organism" (0:19). Reverting back inland, a young Indigenous boy sits chest-deep in an outback waterhole, singing "this **billabong**!" (0:20-0:21). Again, the turn from coast to outback coincides with the turn from white characters to Indigenous characters.

The advertisement continues, featuring a white woman holding a platypus in a bush location (0:22), a white couple in a train (0:24), white people by the beach (0:26), white men rowing in a river with the city in the background(0:28), a white woman in an orchard (0:33), white surf lifesavers on a beach (0:34), white adolescents swimming in a bushland waterway (0:35), a white boy in a tree in bushland (0:37), a white man swimming in a reef (0:38), a white man and woman in bushland (0:39), another white woman in bushland (0:42), an Indigenous man at outback Uluru (0:43), a white woman feeding birds in front of some trees (0:44), an Asian family driving a car through a pack of kangaroos in bushland (0:46), white adolescents by the beach (0:50), white women in a city (0:54), racially unidentifiable men in the outback (0:57), white girls in a car in the outback (1:01), white people by the beach (1:03), and white people in a pub (1:05).

Here, many short scenes are put together to create the advertisement. The vast majority of scenes feature white people and they are featured in various coastal, bush and outback locations. White people are the only race of people featured in ocean settings, and this happens on nine separate occasions in the 90-second advertisement. Indigenous people are shown three times and each time in outback settings. Where white children or adolescents are featured, they are shown on the beach once, an inland waterway once and a bush location once. Where Indigenous children are featured, they are shown in an outback 'billabong' once and an outback campout once. Overall, white people—children and adults alike—are represented in a variety of spaces, whereas Indigenous children and adults are relegated to exclusively outback spaces. Where white people are represented, the beach recurs more than any other place, and given that only white people are shown on beaches, it appears that the Australian beach is an exclusively white space within the advertisement.

A comparison of scenes of white and Indigenous children in inland waterways shows the differing rural constructions of white and Indigenous Australian childhoods. The scene

featuring white childhoods in a river is markedly bushland as opposed to outback. The tones of the background in the white children's shot are greys and greens, indicating a more luscious bush-like locale. By contrast, the shot with the Indigenous boys in the billabong is backgrounded with red dirt, indicating an outback desert locale. This gives the effect of spatial differentiation of racial groups even within rural locales. Authentic Indigenous characters appear to belong in the red outback, not the green rural bush. The white characters, by contrast, belong in luscious bush spaces:

Screenshots: On the left is an image of an Indigenous child in a billabong from Tourism Australia's 2010 'Nothing Like Australia' advertisement; the image on the right shows white adolescents swimming in a bushland waterway (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82n1PX1hVEY)

Further reinscribing the authenticity of the Indigenous children in the outback billabong is the discursive exclusion of western influences. The Indigenous boys' clothing is hidden beneath the water. Their naked brown torsos contribute to an image of them as not wearing western dress, positioning them as native and exotic non-white noble savages. The lack of adults and lack of built structures construct these Indigenous children as uncorrupted, while the water contributes to the framing of the children as pure. The viewer is invited to imagine that these Indigenous children might just as easily be from a pre-invasion time; they are uncorrupted by colonial culture. This advertisement, then, positions these Indigenous children as authentic in the outback because they have not assimilated to white cultural customs.

Therein, this advertisement continues to reinscribe spatially exclusive constructions of Indigenous Australian childhoods. As an appeal to potential tourists, the advertisement

makes available and coherent the dominant white colonising subject position for viewers to take: the viewers are invited to go to the Australian outback in order to experience authentic Indigenous imaginaries. On the one hand, this framing appeals to potential wealthy white tourists whose consumption the advertisement aims to secure. On the other hand, the advertisement reinscribes in discourse the idea that authentic Indigenous children are outback noble savages.

These advertisements, then, work to produce a Foucauldian regime of truth, wherein "a certain way of speaking" (1972, p. 193) about the subject of Indigenous Australian childhoods has emerged as dominant. As Foucault makes clear, the marginalised and subjugated subject is produced not only through silences, but by being "put into discourse" (Foucault, 1990/1984, p. 11). It is not that Indigenous Australian childhoods are not spoken about, but they continue to be spoken about in ways that limit social and cultural understandings of the Indigenous Australian child. When Foucault examined sexuality, he examined how the ways it was spoken about were central to it being understood as taboo. He spoke of sexuality as something produced "in the light of day and broadcast to noisy accompaniment" (Foucault, 1990/1984, p. 158). Speaking about homosexuality as taboo, for example, is a central way in which it remains taboo. Using Foucault's thesis of the productivity of discourse, I want to argue that the representation of Indigenous childhoods in advertisements does not automatically signify the inclusion of Indigenous childhoods in national story, as if representation necessarily leads to inclusivity. Instead, I would argue, the representation of Indigenous childhoods in these advertisements contributes post-colonising project of Indigenous marginalisation. The way in which these advertisements speak about authentic Indigenous Childhoods as necessarily outback-dwelling, 'to noisy accompaniment', produces a limiting vision of Indigenous Australians. Thus, through speaking about Indigenous Australian childhoods in spatially limiting ways, and through the

simultaneous spatial privileging of white Australian childhoods, white privilege and Indigenous marginalisation are maintained in national discourse.

One final observation to be made in this *There's nothing like it* advertisement is the role of an Asian child in rural Australia. This image of an Asian child travelling through rural Australia is revealing of potential representations of the spatial mobility of Asian characters within Australian lands. This child – a tourist *travelling through* rural Australia – forms a significantly different role within the advertisement to the white and Indigenous Australians apparently *belonging* within various Australian spaces. The one scene featuring an Asian child in the advertisement shows the girl in a car with her family. The child in the car is the protagonist of this scene, looking out the window at Kangaroos. In the following shot, a long-angle view is constructed, framing the Asian family in the car driving through the field:

Screenshots: On the left is an image of an Asian child from Tourism Australia's 2010 'Nothing Like Australia' advertisement who is looking out her car window at kangaroos; the image on the right shows the girl's car driving through Australian bushland among kangaroos (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82n1PX1hVEY)

The Asian girl's movement through the space in a car constructs her as *passing through*; not here to stay. This is juxtaposed to the frequent construction of Indigenous people standing upon the land itself, as if they live there; they *belong* there. Similarly, while in this advertisement white people are shown in a car once, a ferry once, and a seaplane twice, they are represented as *both* passing through and staying upon the land. They thus appear more mobile on the land than their Indigenous counterparts, and have the privilege to travel

wherever they desire. The imagined tourist to which the advertisement is appealing is also offered this mobile subject position, and is perhaps thus imagined as a white or Asian tourist whose consumption the advertisement aims to secure. The Asian child is heading through inland locales to 'consume' its local inhabitants by gazing upon them. Thus, a sense of *belonging* in the outback is constructed for the Indigenous children, *belonging anywhere* is constructed for the white people, and *passing through* the nation-space is constructed for the Asian girl.

Conclusion

The narratives of the advertisements examined here produce Indigenous and white identities in differentiated ways. Spatial representations in television advertisements provide a remarkable collage of the ways different childhoods are constructed and partitioned. The narratives have been examined in relation to neoliberal consumption discourses, whereby the advertisements appeal to the wealthier socioeconomic demographic who has the disposable income to consume the tourist products on offer, and which is presumably white. The narratives produce Indigenous Australian childhood as an innately and romantically inland existence (Tourism Australia *Beautiful Australia*, 2006; Tourism Australia *There's nothing like it*, 2010; Qantas *Spirit of Australia*, 2009).They also produce white Australian childhoods as mobile across the whole nation, but also spiritually connected to the coastlines and beaches of Australia (Tourism Queensland *Where Australia Shines*, 2010; Port Macquarie Tourism *Little Creatures*, 2010; Kangaroo Island *Let yourself go*, 2012; Nutri-Grain *Afternoon Snack*, 2010; Suncorp Insurance *Queenslanders Love the Water*, 2010; Suncorp Bank *Sun Protection*, 2010).That is to say, Australian childhoods can take different forms in different locations. The advertisements discursively reinscribe the desirability of those geographical separations, therein placating dominant white coloniser mythologies; they inform the Australian public of locations where true Australian children might be found,

and what performative subjectivities those Australian children should exhibit. There thus emerges through the corpus of advertisements spatial and racial differentiation in constructions of Australian childhoods.

Importantly, central to these narratives is a profit-making imperative which appeals to wealthy white Australian viewers who hold potential as future consumers. The advertisements position white people as the travelling protagonist as they are the target demography. By contrast, the Indigenous children represented are not positioned as potential consumers but rather as constructed myths that are deemed desirable for white tourists. Outback, pre-colonial, and therefore ostensibly the more authentic versions of Indigenous childhood are on offer for white tourists to consume. City-dwelling Indigenous Australians are unrepresented, both because they are seen as a poorer demographic without potential as future consumers, and because hybridised and urban Indigenous identities do not cogently fit within the consumable narrative of the childhood Indigenous noble savage deemed desirable for the wealthy white tourists who function as the target demographic, primarily because they have the wealth to purchase the advertised products.

Furthermore, I have used Foucault's thesis that power is productive in this chapter to argue that the television advertisements do not simply repress any mention of Indigenous Australian childhoods. Instead, they *produce* discourses of Indigenous Australian childhoods in post-colonising ways that demarcate what an Indigenous Australian childhood existence might look like. They also *produce* discourses of white Australian childhoods as privileged inasmuch as white Australian childhoods are demarcated as mobile and sovereign over the whole nation, spanning its entirety, as well as spiritually connected to coastlines and beaches. As Nicoll (2007) argues, following Foucault, "power does not simply *repress* Indigenous people through the agency of 'racist' white people. It also and simultaneously

produces the contours, possibilities and privileges of white subjectivity" (p. 21, original

italics).

Schooling subjectivities are normalised and naturalised through commonplace educational

narratives in everyday media texts, producing them in discourse (Fisher, Harris, & Jarvis,

2008; Hickey & Austin, 2006; Holm & Daspit, 2011). The discursive construction of the

schooling subject works to enable and constrain embodied cultural performatives within the

schooling context, producing some as desirable and others as undesirable. The production

of schooling subjectivities on media texts, importantly, has a material impact on the

experience of schooling in Australia, as exclusionary discourses foreclose the possible ways

of being an acceptable and successful Australian school child. As Fisher, Harris and Jarvis

(2008) argue,

> [R]epresentations of education in popular culture … enable us to identify the
> important questions that, although arising from the sphere of fiction, impact
> directly on the terrain of lived experience. (p. 182)

In discourse, desirable and ideal school students possess many of the cultural performatives

of the idealised western child: subordinate to the adults of the educational environment, in

need of regulation in order to learn, and in need of protection from self, peers and dangerous

adults (Hickey & Austin, 2006). Similarly, the schooling environment is dominantly

represented as a space in which the child-student is to be both guided towards adulthood and excluded from full participation in adult life until such a time as ideal cultural subjectivities have been cultivated, institutionally recognised and performatively internalised (Fisher et al., 2008). The school is a space, then, in which idealised subjectivities are to be taught by teachers and practiced by children, and where cultural knowledges about ideal ways of doing childhood and nationhood are explicitly and implicitly taught.

The ideal, desirable and normative school child is frequently referred to in Australian public, political and institutional discourse. In mainstream political rhetoric, the image of the ideal Australian school child is dominated by neoliberal rationalities which emphasise individual responsibility, competition, and skill development for workforce readiness (Mockler, 2013; Redden & Low, 2012; Kenway & Bullen, 2001). Recent Australian funding and policy changes, standardised testing regimes and teacher training have been consistently framed in terms of skill development and competitiveness (Mockler, 2013). Similarly, school promotional texts often produce desirable Australia school child ideal as workforce ready and possessing a competitive edge (Wardman et al, 2010; Symes, 1998; Drew, 2013). Wardman et al. (2010) and Drew (2013) have also found school advertisements to produce ideal Australian school children as traditionally gendered, white and ideally middle or upper class. Such discursive re-iterations function to exclude and include particular childhoods in the Australian schooling environment.

Media discourses, however, often depict childhood subjects in ways that differ from institutional discourses (Holm & Daspit, 2011; Fisher, Harris & Jarvis, 2008). Empowered child-students in popular literature, film and television are often produced as heroes that battle against the unhelpful and untrustworthy teachers and parents in both global and Australian texts such as *Harry Potter*, *South Park* and *Neighbours*. Popular media also offers opportunities for the constitution of subversive anti-educational childhood subjectivities.

Subversive student subjectivities are highlighted by Fisher, Harris and Jarvis (2008), for example, in their examination of popular music which frequently promotes student sex and drug use. Similarly, students can be understood to be subversive and confrontational in the school playground, where popular culture often constructs narratives of student stereotypes in oppositional defiance against each other—nerds versus jocks, goths versus geeks (Hickey & Austin, 2006), and so forth.

Thus, media and popular culture productions of education and educational subjectivities are multifarious (Fisher, Harris & Jarvis, 2008). Schools and their inhabitants can be read through popular texts in complex ways (Fisher, Harris & Jarvis, 2008; Hickey & Austin, 2006). Differing media and popular culture discourses of school and educational subjectivities idealise differing educational subjectivities, producing differing ways of being as desirable or otherwise within the schooling context (Fisher, Harris & Jarvis, 2008).

In light of these concerns, this chapter contributes to the scholarly examination of the ways the ideal Australian school child is constituted in discourse, by examining the exclusionary production of the Australian school child on television advertisements. Commercial television advertisements serve a different function to film and television shows inasmuch as their purpose is primarily to secure future consumption (Rose, 1999). Advertisements' constructions of the Australian school child are read throughout this chapter as framing the products on offer as useful – even necessary – for viewers. Often, this involves framing consumption the product as helpful for the school child to navigate the material effects of a neoliberal educational climate (Kenway & Bullen, 2001) in which formal education is increasingly individualied and privatised (see ads: Sultana Bran *Fight the Fuzzies*, 2008; Sultana Bran *Obstacle Course*, 2009; Tip Top *Up*, 2010; Schools First; Australian Government *National Broadband Network*; Uncle Toby's *Muesli Bars*, 2010). By

consuming, it is suggested, school children can come to garner social capital in the schooling environment and set themselves up for schooling success.

Through the examination of discourses of Australian school children, the chapter contributes to the performative scholarly politics of deconstructing and disrupting the naturalisation of exclusive and marginalising public discourses of Australian school children (Hickey & Austin, 2006; Robinson & Davies, 2008a; Youdell, 2011). Exploring television advertisements that depict Australian school children in their narratives, this chapter identifies three dominant and exclusionary discourses of Australian school children that are produced on television advertisements. These are: ideally academically successful school children of the white Australian middle class (Sultana Bran *Fight the Fuzzies*, 2008; Sultana Bran *Obstacle Course*, 2009; Tip Top *Up*, 2010; Schools First; Australian Government *National Broadband Network*; Uncle Toby's *Muesli Bars*, 2010), ideally academically unsuccessful school children of the white working class (Telstra Bigpond *Great Wall of China*, 2006; Telstra Bigpond *Australia Day*, 2008; McCain *Veggie Patch*, 2010), and ideally socialised school children (Oreo *Bachelors*, 2009; KFC *Outback Bucket*; I&J *Iron Jay*, 2010). Regardless of whether children are constructed as academically successful or unsuccessful, or ideally socialised, Australian school children are consistently constructed as white, heteronormative and traditionally gendered. Furthermore, consumption is frequently positioned as a way of successfully navigating Australia's marketised education landscape and attaining social capital. Some social class variations have been identified— namely, the working class Australian discourse of anti-authoritarianism has emerged in some key Telstra advertisements that mock the school and teacher (Telstra Bigpond *Great Wall of China*, 2006; Telstra Bigpond *Australia Day*, 2008), which will be discussed throughout the chapter.

Consistent with the theoretical trajectory of the thesis, this chapter's archaeological analysis continues to draw upon the Foucauldian notion of discourse as productive. From this perspective, the texts examined here produce discourses of Australian school children that are both inclusionary and exclusionary in their effects. This is done by examining the ways discourses produce and idealise Australian school children's subjectivities. It involves dispensing with the search for a grounded truth, a "foundation of things" (Foucault, 1972, p. 48), in order to examine how idealised concepts of Australian school children emerge as truths through the discourses; or, as Foucault puts it, archaeological work "consists in seeing … how effects of truth are *produced within discourses*" (2002b, p. 118, my emphasis). Foucault features prominently in research into schooled subjectivities (Fendler, 2010; Robinson & Davies, 2008a; Youdell, 2006). In Youdell's discussion of the uses of post-structural theory in education studies, she explains that Foucault's work is useful for examining "the discourses the frame schooling" (2006, p. 37) and that "constitute some students inside educational processes and others outside these" (2006, p. 38). In this sense, schooled subjectivities are produced through discourses in ways that idealise, prioritise, marginalise and exclude. Who constitutes the good, privileged or ideal student, then, emerges through discourses which construct a regime of truth about how the Australian child at school should ideally act, look, interact with the teacher, and so on (Youdell, 2006).

Middle-class Australian childhoods at school

Australian childhoods are constructed as ideally academically successful in several television advertisements within the data corpus (Sultana Bran *Fight the Fuzzies*, 2008; Sultana Bran *Obstacle Course*, 2009; Tip Top *Up*, 2010; Schools First, n.d.; Australian Government *National Broadband Network*, 2008). Most of these advertisements promote ostensibly nutritious food as integral to the achievement of middle-class schooling subjectivities. Interestingly, the advertisements that were selling food products each featured

the mother-son relationship. As I discussed in the chapter *A touch of Nature in the Big Smoke*, the use of mothers in food and appliance advertisements reveals an implicit gendered message that women are the responsibilised consumers (Rose, 1999) who are in charge of children's normative growth. Three exemplar advertisements featuring academically successful students will be explored here: Kellogg's Sultana Bran *Fight the Fuzzies* (2008), Kellogg's Sultana Bran *Obstacle Course* (2009), and Tip Top *Up* (2010). Characteristic of the broader group of advertisements that feature academically successful Australian childhoods, these three advertisements frame consumption as a way of achieving idealised schooling subjectivities in ways which discursively naturalise Australian school childhoods as ideally white, traditionally gendered and middle class (see also Sultana Bran *Fight the Fuzzies*, 2008; Sultana Bran *Obstacle Course*, 2009; Tip Top *Up*, 2010; Australian Government *National Broadband Network*, 2010). The middle class aspirational academic respectability explored here is in stark contrast to the less dominant working class anti-authoritarian subject positions that emerge in the second trope of advertisements explored in this chapter, which idealise *un*academic larrikin Australian school children.

Kellogg's Sultana Bran Fight the Fuzzies

The Sultana Bran *Fight The Fuzzies* (2008) advertisement promotes Sultana Bran as a cereal that will help middle class children succeed in school. The advertisement opens with a young white boy sitting in a classroom. In the background is a class of all-white children. The boy rests his head on his fist and stares with glazed eyes at the teacher at the front of the classroom (0:00-0:02). The white male teacher dictates a lesson on mathematics at the front of the class (0:03). The child's head begins to droop (0:04). The camera then points at the whiteboard at the front of the classroom. The mathematical equations on the board begin to blur and become jumbled lines (0:05-0:10). The teacher's voice becomes distant and unintelligible (0:08). The camera then points towards the boy's textbook, where the

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equations that he has written blur so as to become illegible (0:13-0:15). Here, the equations and voice are being viewed and heard from the student's perspective. The 'fuzziness' is used as a metaphor for the student's lack of concentration and focus. The scene then shifts to an image of the boy's mother pouring him *Sultana Bran* for breakfast (0:19-0:23). A voiceover speaks:

> When Kids don't eat breakfast in the morning, things can get a bit fuzzy in the classroom. But **research** shows that a **nutritious** breakfast like great tasting Sultana Bran with **filling fibre** and **whole grains** can help kids stay focussed. Kellogg's Sultana Bran. Fight the Fuzzies at school. (0:12-0:30)

The scene then switches from the boy eating the cereal back to the classroom, where the boy is now sitting upright in his seat and taking notes. Having eaten Sultana Bran, the boy can now concentrate (0:24-0:26).

Here, the normative language of expertise (Miller & Rose, 1007/2008) explains that Sultana Bran can help students be more attentive at school. Here, the language of expertise ('research', 'nutritious', 'filling fibre', 'whole grains') is used to provide a scientific legitimacy to the claims of the voiceover (see others: Telstra *Dem Homes*, 2007; Sanatarium *Weet-Bix Kids*, 2006; Nutri-Grain *Boy2Man*, 2010). As highlighted in the theoretical framework chapter (see Chapter 2), such normative expert language is a key rhetorical device often employed in advertising narratives to position the product as desirable for the neoliberal subject who relies on expert private actors to provide advice about how to lead a normative, healthy lifestyle. These scientific claims are aimed at the suburban mother, who is represented in the advertisement by a woman pouring her son *Sultana Bran* (0:15). The mother takes a particularly important role in this advertisement, being positioned as a self-governing subject whose consumption is central to her child's normative growth. Scientific expertise helps her to achieve this goal of normativity. As Rose (1999/1990, p. 182) argues:

> The mother is to precede the teacher; her daily routines, and her responses to the wants and troubles of her children are to be conducted in the interests of her child's mental development. If she plays her part well, the child' future life chances will be immeasurably enhanced, if she fails through ignorance or impatience to realize or to actualize such a learning scheme, woe betide her child when he or she enters school.

The depicted mother in this advertisement is represented as having taken upon herself the responsibility to take control of her family's future through her consumption choices; she is a mother who has heeded the advice of experts in the interest of her child's health and school success. It is, by all appearances, a scene of the ideal self-governing motherly subject raising the ideal school subject. In a context in which education is an individualised and privatised pursuit, and the mother's choices are central to a child's schooling success, such normative consumption is of great importance if the child is to succeed: by eating Sultana Bran, the child is ideally able to concentrate at school in the interests of his own future.

A year after the first *Fight the Fuzzies* (2008) advertisement, a sequel was aired. The sequel begins in a school classroom with a white female teacher writing mathematics equations on a whiteboard. A school bell rings in the background as a sonic semiotic indicator of the educational context. The teacher turns her head and looks directly at two white schoolboys sitting at their desks. The two boys are both looking straight ahead (0:00-0:03). As she is looking at the boys, the scene freezes. All of the children stop moving as if time has stopped. The teacher, the only person still moving, walks around the desks of the class of all-white children towards the two boys. She says:

> When kids don't have breakfast it can really affect their focus at school. Let me show you. (0:05-0:10)

The teacher then picks up a torch and a piece of paper. Walking behind the boy on the left, she shines a torch into his ear. As if the light shines through one ear and out the other, the teacher holds the piece of paper at the other side of her ear to capture a projection of what is in the boy's head (0:11-0:14). On the paper is projected the equation that the boy is doing.

The equation is blurred and difficult to read (0:14). The projection indicates that the boy is having trouble concentrating on his work. "See, he's got the fuzzies," the teacher announces (0:14). The teacher then walks towards the second boy and similarly shines a torch into his ear. The projection from the second boy is clear (0:19). As she shines the torch into the second boy's ear, she discusses how to stay focussed:

> Research shows that a nutritious breakfast like fibre-rich *Sultana Bran* can help them fight the fuzzies and stay focussed. Which really helps us help them learn. (0:15-0:25)

Similar to the original *Fight the Fuzzies* advertisement, this advertisement claims that children should eat Sultana Bran in order to stay focussed and succeed school. Drawing on 'research' about the importance of 'a nutritious breakfast' that is 'fibre-rich', this teacher invokes the language of expertise (Rose, 1999/1990) to incite mothers to purchase the product in pursuit of childhood success in Australia's neoliberal educational landscape in which making the correct choice is of utmost importance for schooling success.

There are several key points I want to highlight from these advertisements. In the first instance, Australian school children's academic success is framed as something that is achievable through consumption. If mothers consume correctly, it is suggested, they can help their children to become the idealised Australian school child. Secondly, Australian school children are all white in these advertisements. As I had argued in Chapter 6, the hegemonic images of whiteness here should not mean that the advertisement is race-less (Clarke & Garner, 2009), but rather, the advertisement reinforces whiteness as the race of privilege for Australian school children. Youdell (2006) highlights this sort of discursive practice in her discussion of the ways Foucault's notion of productive power operates in educational discourse. Following Foucault, she argues:

> Discursive performativity … shows how raced, classed, gendered, and otherwise marked subjects continue to be produced and constrained in the ongoing

processes of being marked as such subjects. It also shows how particular sorts of learners are produced and constrained … Performatives, and the subjects they constitute, are not neutral, but are invested in enduring relations of discursive, productive power. (Youdell, 2006, p. 38).

Here, then, Youdell offers a Foucauldian analysis of the ways educational discourses *produce* categories such as race in exclusionary ways. The educational narrative produced in this advertisement contributes to the mundane production of a discourse of the ideal Australian school child as white and middle class. The classroom here is all-white, reinscribing whiteness as the normative expectation of an ideal Australian classroom. The students here are produced as white children, in a heterogeneously white classroom, with a white teacher, and a white mother whose middle class consumption habits have been normatively regulated. Through this text, then, Australian schools, and their students, are produced in exclusionary raced and social classed ways.

Kellogg's Sultana Bran Obstacle Course

The Kellogg's Sultana Bran *Obstacle Course* (2009) advertisement similarly produces successful school childhoods as ideal, as well as idealising images of whiteness and masculinity. The advertisement opens with a white pre-pubescent boy waking up in his bed. The camera looks directly down at the boy so that his head and pillow fill the whole screen. The boy squints, the first indication that there is no shade above his head (0:00-0:02). The camera shot then changes to a long-distance shot, revealing that the bed is sitting in an open field (0:03-0:04). Storm clouds loom above the boy's head.

The boy then jumps out of bed and runs towards an open doorway sitting in the middle of the field (0:05-0:07). As he runs through the door, the boy's clothing changes from pyjamas to school clothing. He has made the transition from child (0:06) to student (0:07). This is this moment in the advertisement where the storyline is first framed as an educational storyline, signified by the boy's clothing. He then runs to a kitchen table, still in the open

field (0:08-0:09). At the kitchen table, his white mother hands a packet of *Sultana Bran* to the boy, and he pours the cereal into a bowl (0:09-0:11). The boy then stands. His mother squats so that her face is at his level, and she runs her fingers through his hair affectionately. Both have broad smiles on their faces (0:11-0:12). The camera position returns to the long-shot (0:13), showing the boy, still in the field, running from the outdoor kitchen area towards an outdoor classroom (0:13-0:16). Pieces of paper blow in the wind above the rows of desks. A sign that reads 'Bus Stop' stands in the background. The sign, the paper and the desks can be read here as semiotic resources signifying schooling. Running towards the desks and chairs, the boy proceeds to climb over the desks and chairs towards the front of the classroom (0:17-0:19). The boy then runs further across the field to his next obstacle: a bookshelf (0:22). The camera position changes again at the bookshelf, so that the camera is on top of the bookshelf looking directly down at the boy (0:22). This top-down angle gives the bookshelf a sense of height and intimidation. The boy looks up at the camera with a determined look on his face. Despite the height, the boy begins to climb the shelf (0:23-0:25). At the top, the camera angle changes so it is looking slightly upwards at the boy. He looks into the horizon here, scoping out his next challenge. The camera angle suggests that the boy is in a position of power, having conquered the obstacle. He then sits on top of the shelf, satisfied with his conquest (0:28), before throwing himself off the shelf and towards his next obstacle (0:29).

The next obstacle is an outdoor computer laboratory. Rows of desks have computers sitting on them. The boy army crawls below the desks. Electrical cables hang low so as to give an effect of vines in a jungle (0:31). A close-up shot of the boy's face shows as stern look of resilience (0:32). Coming out from under the desks (0:34), the boy runs up a small set of steps onto a podium, where a male in a suit (presumably the school principal) hands him a certificate. The mother is standing at the base of the podium, applauding (0:36). The boy

then sprints one last time and dives in front of a set of soccer goal posts, deflecting a soccer ball from entering the goals (0:40-0:41). Approaching the end of the advertisement, a voiceover states:

> Kellogg's Sultana Bran. With a nourishing breakfast, kids can take on anything. (0:38-0:44)

Sultana Bran is positioned in this Kellogg's *Obstacle Course* (2009) advertisement as a product that can be purchased by mothers who want their children prepared for 'anything' at school. The school child is constructed in this advertisement as a child who faces challenge and adversity throughout his school day. While it is physical challenges that this boy is facing in the advertisement, the physical objects—chairs, desks and bookshelves—function metaphorically to position the challenges as *academic* challenges. Far from shying away from these challenges, this boy faces them head-on, and is given every chance of success at school because he has consumed the advertised product.

Nature has an important semiotic role in this advertisement. The entire advertisement is set in a field. A field might signify the need for children to be among nature—signifying a Rousseauian, natural construction of childhood—but could similarly signify a particularly rural Australian childhood. Indeed, this field is not flat but curved in the quintessentially Australian geographical way: to use an intertextual link to Dorithea Mackellar's famous Australian poem *My Country* (1988/c.1908), this field could be considered a quintessentially Australian "sweeping plain." Furthermore, the impending storm that hovers above the field throughout the advertisement could position the boy as an Aussie Battler (Ward, 2003/1958), a white Australian character who resiliently battles against adverse conditions. At the scene where the boy army crawls under computer desks (0:30-0:34), the camera uses an intimate close-up shot to show the boy's facial expression: his expression is one of determination as he army crawls. He is cast as a determined, resilient, male, white, Aussie Battler:

In these screenshots from the Kellogg's Sultana Bran Fight the Fuzzies (2008) advertisement, a school child is shown commando crawling under desks with computers on top (left). In the close-up shot, his face shows determination and exertion (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ghn-Spt_mas&feature=related).

In this advertisement, then, the school is an opponent which is to be challenged and defeated by the boy. He is trying to conquer the school by succeeding in the challenges it sets rather than refusing to participate in those challenges; and in this sense, the *successful* school child is constructed as an ideal. Here, then, the school can become a positive opponent; it can be seen as something that is desirably challenging. So, the advertisement constructs the school child less in terms of having a distaste for school ('I don't like the challenge'), but rather, in terms of a liking for school ('I accept the challenge'). The school is thus constructed as a positive space that provides desirable challenges, and these challenges can be conquered with the help of Sultana Bran. In this advertisement, the Australian school child can be read as an ideally capable and resilient character—a character whose subjectivity has many parallels to the fighting Aussie Battler, and which can be achieved through consumption of the advertised product.

The *Obstacle Course* (2009) advertisement produces and reinscribes in discourse the white Aussie Battler school child as desirable. Again it can be read that whiteness is produced as the norm for the Australian child, and his Aussie Battler resilience produces him also as an appropriately gendered, masculine, school boy. In this sense, gender norms and whiteness continue to be produced as ideal for the Australian child in the school environment. To become this idealised subject, it is suggested, the viewer should consume the product on offer. Here, then, the narrative is used to secure future consumption; yet, it nonetheless

entrenches and naturalises in discourse an exclusionary imaginary of what the Australian school child should be.

Tip Top Up

The Tip Top *Up* (2010) advertisement positions Tip Top as a *national* brand for *Australian* school children's consumption. Again positioning the mother as the self-governing consuming subject, the brand suggests that the Tip Top *Up* bread can help Australian mothers provide their school-age children with energy, a competitive edge, and good health. It also reinscribes gender norms inasmuch as the children in the family in this advertisement are conducting gendered tasks—the girl as passive, the boys as sportspeople. Whiteness again acts as the norm in this family; however, an Indigenous child does emerge as a character in the advertisement, indicating a degree of inclusion of Indigenous Australian childhood subjectivities at school.

The advertisement features four school children, a school teacher and a mother reciting a poem about Tip Top *Up*. The poem uses the rhythm and rhyme of Dorithea Mackellar's famous Australian *My Country* (1988/c.1908) poem, replacing the original patriotic verses with verses about the bread:

School Boy 1:	I love a homemade sandwich
	when Tip Top Up's the bread
School Girl:	It keeps me on the ball all day
	It helps me get ahead
School Boy 2:	I love the healthy fibre
	that's hidden in its walls
Soccer Boy:	It gives me heaps of energy
	Puts curly hairs on my <referee's whistle sounds> [implication: 'balls']
Teacher:	Yes I love a homemade sandwich
	when Tip Top Up's the bread
Mother:	And when I find an empty lunch box
	I know the family's been well fed

The visual narrative of the advertisement opens with a white schoolboy sitting in a schoolyard eating his Tip Top *Up* sandwich (0:01). Noises of a schoolyard can be faintly heard in the background where children are playing ballgames (0:01). Amidst the commotion, the boy sits still and composed. He takes a bite of his sandwich then recites the first two lines of the poem (0:00-0:04). In the next scene, a white teenage girl in a white scientist's coat looks through a microscope while she recites her two lines of the poem and reaches for a toasted sandwich (0:05-0:08). In the third scene, an Indigenous boy sits in a school hallway surrounded by school bags, open lunch boxes and a soccer ball. Ignoring the calamity around him, this boy recites his two lines while staring at his sandwich (0:09-0:12). The fourth scene features another white boy. This boy is playing soccer as he recites his lines (0:12-0:14). In the fifth scene, a white male teacher sits in the middle of his classroom, eating his sandwich and reciting his two lines (0:15-0:18). In the final scene, a white mother recites her two lines. As she says "family", shots of each of the five people previously shown (four children and male teacher) flick onto the screen, as if they were the mother's family (0:20-0:26).

The advertisement draws intertextual patriotic meaning from the *My Country* poem, situating Tip Top as a patriotic Australian brand. By association, consumption of the brand is suggested as consumption of a product dedicated to Australia. That is to say, the brand is indicating that it is an Australian brand, and positions its consumers as true Australians. The final tagline works to reinforce this message:

Australia's Favourite Bread. (0:28-0:30)

Targeted at the mother—as indicated by the final lines of the poem spoken by a mother: "And when I find an empty lunchbox, I know the family's been well fed" (0:20-0:26), the brand positions itself as helpful to the mother who wants her children to succeed at school. Here, again, a narrative geared towards securing consumption from agentive and self-

maximising viewers is evident in this text. The mother's use of Tip Top *Up* is thus framed

in the advertisement as integral in her successes in (self)normalising her school children. As

Rose (1999/1990, p. 159) argues,

> If families produced normal children, this was itself an accomplishment, not a given; it was because they regulated their emotional economy correctly.

The school girl, for example, is wearing a white lab coat and looking through a magnifying

glass as she pronounces "It keeps me on the ball all day, it helps me get ahead" (0:05-0:08).

Like Sultana Bran, the bread is framed as useful in helping the student's concentration, but

further, in helping the girl to "get ahead"; that is, it gives her a competitive edge. Rather than

framing students as rebellious against the school, the advertisement frames these Australian

children as successful in overcoming educational challenges. To use the language of Rose

(1999/1990), the advertisement suggests to viewers—particularly mothers—that

consumption of this product can "secure the best future for their offspring" (p. 182) by

positioning the children eating Tip Top *Up* as successful schooling subjects.

The contrast between the girl sitting in her silent lab doing patient work and the boy in the

chaotic scene of the soccer field produces an overtly gendered narrative of ideal school

children. The girl's traditional role as passive schooled subject, contrasted to the boy's role

as active doer in the school environment, comes to be discursively reinscribed here. The

successful girl subject at school is the passive academic; the successful boy subject at school

is the sporty soccer player. Such a textual production of gender, I suggest, works to

reinscribe in discourse the naturalness of such a discursive formation. Following Butler, this

sort of discursive inscription provides the "*appearance of substance*" (Butler, 1990, p, 192,

original italics), which naturalises gender as something the subject *is* rather than something

the subject *does*. That is to say, the assumption here is that the normative healthy school girl

is the normatively passive academic subject, and the boy *is* the normatively active sporting

subject. Here, then, the text functions as "a performative accomplishment" (Butler, 1990, p. 192) inasmuch as it produces the discursive fact of gender—to be a normal schooling subject is to have the ideal gendered disposition. However, using Butler, I suggest that this text should be read as performatively *doing* rather than *reflecting* or *revealing* a truth of gender. That is to say, the text "seek[s] to approximate the ideal of a substantial ground of identity" (Butler, 1990, p. 192) by repeating the performative act as if it were a grounded fact. *Healthy school children are normatively gendered school children*. Here, then, the semiotic function of the school children doing gendered schooling identities is also a discursive function: it works to produce and naturalise normative schooled gender role as a healthy fact within discourse.

In sum, this advertisement has the function of producing ideal and successful Australian school children as having traditionally gendered roles at school, and as having strategically consumed in order to secure the best chance of success in a neoliberal educational landscape characterised by individualisation, competition, and consumer choice. The successful girl subject is the passive academic; the successful boy subject is the active sportsman. Furthermore, the school children's achievement of ideal gender norms is attributed to good consumption habits and, of course, consumption of the product being sold. Here, the advertisement suggests that successful gendered normalisation of the school child involves the consumption of Tip Top *Up*. Through consumption of the bread, the girl and boy become ideally gendered subjects. The discursively constructed Australian school child, then, is not rebellious or Dionysian in this advertisement, but is a healthily and successfully gendered school subject.

Working-class Australian childhoods at school

While the above discourse of academically successful, white and gendered Australian childhoods remains a dominant theme in television advertisements, some advertisements subvert the idea that school children should be ideally academically successful. Notably, a series of Telstra advertisements released on television over a three year period (Telstra Bigpond *Great Wall of China*, 2006; Telstra Bigpond *Australia Day*, 2008) draw upon anti-scholarly Australian larrikin discourse to construct the Australian child's relationship with education in negative terms. These advertisements overtly construct anti- scholarly working class subjectivities *as ideally Australian*. Working class Australian larrikinism (Bellanta, 2012; Gorman, 1990), as opposed to the middle class academic respectability of the above advertisements, is used to cast Australian school children as desirably anti-scholarly. The anti-scholarly junior larrikin produced in the advertisements examined here, however, continues to be situated within advertising narratives which position products as beneficial for helping this anti-scholarly Australian childhood subject navigate a neoliberal educational context in which individual consumption habits are central to succeeding the individualistic and choice-oriented educational landscape (Telstra Bigpond *Great Wall of China*, 2006; Telstra Bigpond *Australia Day*, 2008). Besides the social class difference, gender roles and whiteness continue to be produced as ideal for Australian childhoods at school.

The Australian 'larrikin' male is constructed in dominant cultural mythology as someone who is unintelligent and does not take himself or others seriously. He is blasé, carefree, resents authority, and expects others to be similar (Gorman, 1990; Bellanta, 2012). The glorified quintessential Australian male is a humble and ordinary man. He is not presumptuous or self-adulating. His physical working class lifestyle, his disinterest in scholarly pursuits and his distinctive mediocrity makes him the lovable and adorable Australian character. When someone might stand-out as deviating from such a humble view, the quintessential Australian believes it is his task to 'take the piss'—that is, mock people

of distinction as self-adulating prudes, and therefore un-Australian (Gorman, 1990). To dislike intellectually distinguished people is known as 'tall poppy syndrome' (Gorman, 1990; Peeters, 2004; Ward, 2003/1958). There exists some contestation within this mythology about whether Australian larrikins resent distinguished people or only distinguished people who are egotistical (Peeters, 2004). Thus, there is lack of internal coherence about the larrikin mythology itself—it is a fluid mythology whose general thrust is towards humility not ego and pride in mediocrity not in class ascendency. Australian working class larrikin humour is built on derogations, both of self (that is, derogative jokes about oneself) and of tall poppies (Gorman, 1990; Belanta, 2012). This humour is known as an act of *cutting the heads off the tall poppies* on behalf of the values of egalitarianism and humility.

Larrikin tall poppy syndrome in the school context can manifest itself as distaste for the higher achieving peers within a classroom (Jones, 1993). There are diverse factors that could explain children's disillusionment with school, including generational, cultural, social class, gender and lifestyle factors (Jones, 1993). However, school disillusionment comes to also be read as desirable within the discursive frame of Australian larrikinism. That is to say, within the school, tall poppy syndrome can take the form of distaste for intelligence, and ostracisation of students who succeed academically. So, while school can be discursively constructed in overtly negative terms both in Australia (Jones, 1993; Hickey & Austin, 2006) and overseas (Peterson, 1998), larrikinism can contribute to cultural understandings of school as a negative space specifically in the Australian context.

Telstra Bigpond Great Wall of China

The Telstra series of advertisements explored here (*Great Wall of China*, 2006; *Australia Day*, 2008) draw upon the larrikin mythology to construct the school child and his father as

ideally unassuming, unintellectual and simple Australians. The advertisements feature an unassuming and uneducated father who repeatedly and accidentally gives his son the wrong advice on schoolwork. Through this narrative, the junior larrikin Australian school child is constructed as an endearing under-dog character, and consumption of Telstra internet is framed as a way of helping him succeed in an intimidating educational environment. Such a narrative is framed both within neoliberal *consumption discourse*, wherein consumption is necessary to formulate identity, and a material neoliberal *education context*, in which education is increasingly consumer choice-oriented and where consumption is necessary in order to succeed.

The *Great Wall of China* advertisement (2006) opens with a white father and son in a car. The son is sitting in the back seat with a workbook in his lap (0:00-0:03) while his father drives. The boy looks up and asks: "Dad ... why did they make the Great Wall of China?" (0:03-0:05). The shot shifts to a close-up shot of the father's face, which is contorted so as to indicate the father is thinking of an answer that might sound convincing. After a brief silence, he hesitantly replies: "That ... that was … during the time of Emperor Nasi Goreng. And, uh, it was to keep the rabbits out. There was [sic] too many rabbits in China" (0:08-0:24).

The scene then changes to the boy standing in front of his class at school. The teacher announces: "Okay, now, Daniel will do his talk on China" (0:25-0:27). Daniel is beaming with confidence in front of the class (0:26), unknowingly about to provide the class with the wrong information. The advertisement ends with the caption:

Give your kids the right answers. Get them broadband. (0:27-0:30)

The message of the advertisement is that if the father and son had internet then the son could be more informed and might succeed more at school. In an Australian educational context

increasingly affected by choice, consumption and privatisation, the message is clear: to succeed at school, parents must *consume*, and consume wisely. As Harris (2004) puts it, citizens "are supposed to take personal responsibility for their social rights and manage the work/family nexus without state support in the form of welfare or policy change" (p. 91). Here, then, the advertisement advises the working class viewer to purchase their internet products in order that their working class Australian child, positioned at a disadvantage in the middle class schooling environment, might be able to compete in a competitive educational climate. Through consumption, the boy can be helped.

However, through the narrative, the subject positions that the father and son take up are idealised precisely because they *do not* succeed at school. Here, the advertisement can be seen as appealing to the cultural rationalities of an anti-academic working class consumer subset. The advertisement idealises as endearing the father's dim wit. Viewers are asked to smile at the father and son's lack of intelligence. The father's use of working class English—saying 'was' instead of 'were'—positions him as a working class male. The father is the synecdoche for the everyday working class Australian male who is, supposedly, adorably simple-minded. The advertisement is 'taking the piss' out of this Australian bloke. At this level, the imagined working class Australian viewer is invited to mock their own cultural identity. That is to say, the advertisement might represent a performance of culture on behalf of the depicted father, but it simultaneously incites performance of a self-mocking Australian cultural performative on behalf of the working class Australian viewer. The imagined laughing viewer is positioned by the advertisement as similarly a working class larrikin inasmuch as *he* (it is, after all, a masculine subject position) takes the piss out of himself.

It is intended to be amusing that the boy is struggling at school due to his father's dim wit. The advertisement, then, produces the dopey (but ostensibly adorable) working class white

Australian school child as a legitimate and coherent schooling subject position. He might not be successful in a middle class environment, but we love him anyway. The unassuming Australian male is placed as more culturally coherent than a discursively Othered intelligent subject who makes no appearance within this advertisement—except, perhaps, as the teacher, marked as the intelligent Other (Hickey & Austin, 2006) whose role is in the periphery. Here, then, the white working class larrikin boy is idealised in this advertisement precisely because he is not intelligent.

Telstra Bigpond Australia Day

The Australian larrikin school child produced of the original Telstra Bigpond *Great Wall of China* (2006) advertisement is produced again in the sequel, *Australia Day* (2008). The *Australia Day* (2008) advertisement opens in a parent-teacher interview in a school classroom. The camera position begins at a medium distance so that the whole classroom can be seen. This framing shot constructs the context as *educational*. Educational items including a blackboard, student desks, sticky tape, and a world globe are scattered around the classroom (0:02). The female teacher sits on one side of the desk, the father and son on the other. The teacher flicks through the boy's school books trying to find an example of the boy's schoolwork to explain how the son is misbehaving at school. She stops at a page. The camera position changes so that it is directly behind her head, facing the father and son (0:04). The camera angle makes the teacher appear larger and higher in the frame, dwarfing the father and son so as to make them appear as if they were being scolded. The father and son both lean on the table with their hands crossed, sitting awkwardly so as to indicate discomfort in the classroom environment. The son briefly shoots a worried glance at his father (0:05). She pauses at a page and exclaims, "Here's an example of what I've been talking about" (0:04-0:05).

The camera angle changes so that it is behind the father and son, facing the teacher. From this angle, which signifies the father and son's perspective, they remain lower in the frame than the teacher, and thus still in a position without power (0:05-0:11). The teacher continues, reading from the boy's book "What does January 26 [Australia Day] mean to Australians?" (0:08-0:10). The camera then shows a close-up of the son's face. His eyes are wide as if he is unsure of what is about to be said. He swallows nervously (0:11-0:12). The teacher reads the boy's answer: "Everyone gets a day off to watch cricket" (0:13-0:15). The teacher smiles at the boy. The boy straightens his back and smiles, proud of his answer (0:15). The teacher then turns to the father and scowls. The camera shifts to a close-up of the father's face. The father, lips tight as if feigning anger at his son's answer, responds: "I see" (0:21). The scene then flicks to the father and son walking down a hallway on the way out of the school (0:22-0:25). The father has his hand on his son's back in a sign of care and muses to his son: "Next time maybe you should mention the tennis as well" (0:23-0:25). The joke is that the father does not actually understand what the problem with the answer is, but is trying to appear like a concerned parent in front of the teacher.

Again, the father and son's dim wits are to be fondly joked about here. The father leads his son into trouble at school by passing-on a working class larrikin Australian identity that glorifies sports and national celebrations (Elder, 2007). In this sense, the father and son can be seen as working class white Australian larrikins. The importance of Australia Day to these larrikins is the national day off, the moment to avoid work—in typical larrikin style; as Gorman explains, the larrikin is "born on a Wednesday, looking both ways for a Sunday" (1990, pp. ix - x). The larrikin does not fuss about the intellectual history of the day or the way it constitutes Indigenous Australians, but is rather enthused by the chance to have a day off work where the Australian community pauses to collectively and simultaneously enact

their sporting identity. Ostensibly, true Australian larrikins will use the day to pause and watch the national sport of cricket and watch the annual *Australian Open* tennis competition.

Again, the advertisement might be reminding the viewers to consume Bigpond internet in order to rectify the family's intellectual shortcomings and to help them succeed in a competitive and privatised educational environment in which they are on their own—that is, consumption is their only chance to rectify intellectual shortcomings. But, simultaneously, the advertisement is idealising the white Australian male working class larrikin identity. The boy, learning from his father, is less engrossed in intellectual pursuits than in sporting pursuits. The father and son are cast as Australian heroes: mediocre and therefore adorable, and putting sport ahead of intellectual aptitude. The intellectual character in the advertisement, the teacher, is represented as imposing through high and low camera angle shots at the beginning of the advertisements (0:04; 0:08) which position the teacher above the father and son in the frame. The intellectual character is thus the oppositional Other with which the Australian larrikin father and son cannot identify. She is discursively excluded from the frame of working class Australianness which the father and son represent.

Furthermore, in both of these advertisements featuring the father and son, the *female* teacher is antithetical to the *male* larrikins. In this sense, the larrikin identity is reinforced not only as white and working class, but also masculine. The construction of the female as prudish produces a masculine notion of national identity that excludes women from the ideal larrikin Australian subject position. Similar to the argument I put forward in Chapter 6 about Indigenous Australians, then, women are excluded from the Australian narrative here not through exclusion but through their *production in discourse* (Foucault, 1990/1978) as the oppositional Other to the larrikin males. The *inclusion of imagery of women* as the oppositional Other within this narrative is integral to the sustenance of the masculinity of larrikin discourse.

In sum, the Australian child at school is produced in the Telstra Bigpond *Great Wall of China* (2006) and *Australia Day* (2008) advertisements as an ideally white, working class and male larrikin. This larrikin, supposedly naturally anti-scholarly, is positioned as in need of Telstra's internet if he is to successfully navigate the uninspiring competition and choice-based educational climate. The discourse produced here subverts the dominant narrative in television advertisements which produces the school child as middle class and in perpetual pursuit of academic success, wilfully playing the educational game (Sultana Bran *Fight the Fuzzies*, 2008; Sultana Bran *Obstacle Course*, 2009; Tip Top *Up*, 2010; Schools First; Australian Government *National Broadband Network*; Uncle Toby's *Muesli Bars*, 2010). However, despite the subversion of the middle class discourse of academically successful childhoods, whiteness and gender roles are sustained as desirable for Australian school children. It could also be read through these narratives that school is reinforced as a middle class locale, where working class children do not succeed and are intimidated, and therein rebel against institutional education. This rebellion is glorified and celebrated here, as an act of cutting the heads off the tall poppies—the female teachers.

Ideal socialisation of Australian childhoods at school

A third theme that has emerged in advertisements featuring Australian children at school is the representation of the school playground as a place for the ideal socialisation of children. These advertisements do not focus on the academic aptitudes or otherwise of Australia children, but rather focus on children's schoolyard socialisation (Oreo *Bachelors*, 2009; KFC *Outback Bucket*; I&J *Iron Jay*, 2010). Such advertisement generally feature *boys* as the protagonists, while also idealising white and gendered childhood subjects. I would like to focus on the Oreo *Bachelors* (2009) advertisement here. This advertisement is particularly informative inasmuch as it also idealises childhood heteronormativity within the school playground. Unlike the vast majority of advertisements, then, this advertisement

acknowledges children's sexualities, which makes it a particularly pertinent case for analysis.

Oreo Bachelors!

The Oreo *Bachelors!* (2009) advertisement follows a narrative of two boys sitting in the playground making up stories about who they will marry when they grow up. In this advertisement, the school playground is constructed as a place for heteronormative childhood socialisation to occur. Childhood (hetero)sexuality is not ignored or considered non-existent in the advertisement, but rather, is banally produced as a part of the educational narrative. I want to follow Robinson and Davies (2008) here, who argue that childhood heterosexuality is a banal and commonplace aspect of educational discourse. In their studies of film and curriculum, Robinson and Davies (2008a; 2008b) show that, despite "the hegemonic [view] that sexuality is irrelevant to children", everyday schooling discourses can be read as "construct[ing] children as heteronormative subjects with heterosexual futures" (p. 222). Such a normative childhood heterosexual construct is prevalent in the narrative of this Oreo *Bachelors!* (2009) advertisement.

The advertisement opens with two white pre-pubescent boys sitting on a bench in the school playground taking Oreo biscuits out of a lunchbox (0:00-0:03). The biscuits contain two wafers connected by cream in the middle. One boy pronounces, "This time, if the cream's on my side of the Oreo, you're going to have to marry Emily Stephens." His friend groans and responds, "Ewwww! Okay, if it's on my side you're going to marry Laura Fisher." The first boy groans in response. The boys then take one side of the Oreo each and twist the Oreo, splitting the biscuit in two and pulling their wafer towards themselves (0:18). They glance down at their wafer and see that both wafers retained cream. The boys high-five, celebrating: "Both sides! Bachelors! Yeah!" A girl then runs in front of them, picks up a

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basketball and gives the boys a flirting smile (0:22-0:24). The boys stare at her as she runs off, and they say to one another:

> Boy 1: Twist Again?
> Boy 2: Yeah.
> Boy 1: It was just a practice run. (0:25-0:29)

The boys' groaning here is a performative, culturally-mediated emotive response. To use Ahmed (2004), the boys' emotional responses of disgust are mediated by normative expectations of young boys: that they *should be* disgusted by girls. In this sense, the emotive response is "shaped by past histories of contact" (p. 7) that allow the girls to be apprehended as disgusting ('ewwww!'). The mediation of this emotion relies on cultural understandings that children are asexual (Walkerdine, 1999); indeed, that children are disgusted by the concept of sexuality. Therein, the boys' initial emotional response is read here as a performative practice. Their responses are designed to be a performance in front of their peers—they hesitantly look to one another for signs of how they should emotionally respond.

However, in the next scene, the boys change their minds—*they find the girl attractive*. The girl's flirty smile is a cultural performative that casts her as the object of the boys' pleasure. She runs past them, bends to pick up the ball, flicks her hair, glances at the boys, smiles, and runs off screen. Here, she takes the role as object of desire. This is a culturally mediated discourse in which the girl is *ideally* the object of the boys' gaze. She is produced here, then, as performatively enacting her ideal femininity in the view of the boys for the pleasure of the boys.

The boys' response to the girl's smile implies that they harbour heterosexual desire. Both boys, supposedly independently of one another, came to the conclusion that they were attracted to the girl. In this sense, the advertisement produces childhood sexuality as a discursive truth, something that comes from deep in the core of the two boys' identities—

giving voice to the rarely acknowledged discourse on childhood sexualities (Walkerdine, 1999).

The "sexuality and gender binaries" produced in this advertisement have an "undergirding of heteronormativity" (Youdell, 2011, p. 60). The children's sexualities are oriented towards attraction to the gendered form of the opposite sex, inasmuch as the boys are attracted to the girl's performative femininity. Their attraction, in this sense, is to the girl's mastery of her cultural performative—the flirty smile, the flick of the hair. In *Gender Trouble*, Butler explains gender and sex as concepts that have come to be discursively aligned in the interest of "compulsory heterosexuality" (1990, p. 20). She explains:

> The institution of a compulsory and naturalized heterosexuality requires and regulates gender as a binary relation in which the masculine term is differentiated from a feminine term, and this differentiation is accomplished through the practices of heterosexual desire. The act of differentiating the two oppositional moments of the binary results in a consolidation of each term, the respective internal coherence of sex, gender, and desire. (Butler, 1990, p. 30-31)

Here, then, the advertisement's narrative can be read as producing "a language of presumptive heterosexuality" (Butler, 1990, p. xxx) in the school playground. Through the production of children's heteronormative performatives, the advertisement produces a discourse in which heterosexual desire is a normative and intelligible way of acting for school children (Robinson & Davies, 2008a, 2008b). Following Butler (1990), and Robinson and Davies (2008a), this heteronormative subject position is produced through the alignment of sex, gender and heterosexual desire; therein, the heteronormative matrix is reinscribed in this educational narrative. The Australian school children are produced here as ideally gendered and ideally heteronormative simultaneously.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that Australian television advertisements produce competing and complex discourses of the Australian school child. The dominant discourse identified is that of the Australian middle class academically successful schooling subject. This subject's consumption is to be regulated by mothers in order that success in the competitive neoliberal school environment can be secured. I also identified a less dominant discourse of the working class larrikin, who is anti-scholarly and distinctively masculine. This discourse idealises anti-authoritarian working class Australian subjectivities for boys at school, while reinforcing the school as a middle class locale. Through both themes, success at school was famed as achievable for the Australian school child in the choice-based educational landscape through consumption of the advertised products. Thirdly, I examined an Oreo *Bachelors!* (2009) advertisement, which produces heteronormative subjectivities in the schoolyard. This advertisement was exemplary in showing how the complex notion of childhood heteronormative sexuality *can* emerge through educational discourse. Across each of these advertisements, as well as those in the broader corpus, whiteness and gender norms continue to be sustained as the normative and ideal Australian school child subjectivities.

Thus, across the advertisements featuring narratives of Australian school children, traditionally gendered, heteronormative and white childhood subjectivities have been idealised. The performative reiteration of these normative Australian school child subjectivities *matter*, I contest, because non-normative childhood subjects are excluded from notions of success within the educational context (Youdell, 2006). Such discursive marginalisation is particularly concerning given that it entrenches and sustains exclusionary notions about who 'belongs' at school, who constitutes the successful schooling subject, and who has full access to educational institutions (Youdell, 2011). The discursive marginalisation of non-normative Australian childhood subjects in terms of race, gender and

social class from schooling spaces symbolically and performatively entrenches the unequal and unjust formation of ideal and successful schooling and childhood subjectivities. At the start of this chapter, I noted that unjust discourses of the Ausralian child at school have material effects on school children, as they produce the educational norms that regulate how different children are *expected* to behave in certain situations (Youdell, 2006). It is this expectation which discourse produces: an expectation which precedes the Australian child, but nonetheless impacts directly on that child's lived experience (Butler, 1997a) inasmuch as it influences how the non-normative child will come to be received in the space of the school.

Conclusion

Findings, implications, reflections, and future directions

This thesis has argued that Australian television advertisements produced between 2006 and 2012 tend to produce Australian childhoods in limited ways. Specifically, Australian childhoods are generally constructed as white, middle class and traditionally gendered, foreclosing other potential Australian childhood formations as marginal from dominant understandings of Australian childhoods. The repeated and regular reiteration of exclusionary discourses of Australian childhoods across multiple texts, both within the case studies and across the broader corpus, produces an exclusionary discourse of Australian childhoods. This discourse, while producing white, middle class and gendered Australian childhood subjectivities as ideal, also excludes non-normative childhood subjectivities.

I have highlighted that the narratives employed in the advertisements consistently position consumption of the advertised products as conducive for the achievement of individual and social success as an ideal Australian childhood subject. In this sense, I examined the advertisements in relation to the overarching neoliberal consumption discourses wherein viewers are considered to be agentive consumers looking to consume products that are beneficial for their own self advancement and identity formation (Miller & Rose, 1997/2008). Here, then, the exclusionary discourses are employed and idealised by

advertisers to secure consumption; however, the advertisements simultaneously reinforce and naturalise exclusionary understandings of Australian childhoods through their reiteration. Such a neoliberal consumption discourse, wherein identity is tied to product consumption, places attainment of branded identity formations outside the reach of those without purchasing power. In this way, neoliberal consumption discourses not only *discursively* marginalise, but also materially in terms of economic capacity.

Australian childhoods, I have argued, are broadly produced as white, middle class and traditionally gendered across the four spatial themes explored: rural Australian childhoods, suburban Australian childhoods, white and Indigenous Australian childhoods on beaches and billabongs, and Australian childhoods at school. The theoretical perspective throughout this thesis has been that the truths about Australian childhoods are produced and sustained through discourse in ways that foreclose the potential for some childhood subjectivities to be understood as belonging within national discourse. From a Foucauldian perspective, there is no one universal truth of Australian childhoods. Rather, truths are produced through ongoing performative reiteration. To channel Foucault's words, the representation of Australian children in limited ways—namely, through privileging of white, middle class, and gendered childhoods—is not a reflection of "the innermost secret of the origin" of Australian childhoods, but rather, "the systematic description of a discourse-object" (Foucault, 1972, p. 140). The truths of Australian childhoods are constituted through their representation. In this sense, Australian childhoods are social and cultural categories, produced, enabled and constrained through discursive reiteration. Such discursive reiterations, I have argued, are dependent on the context of neoliberal consumption discourse, in which consumption is positioned as a way of attaining and securing personally meaningful and socially desirable childhood subjectivities. Through consumption, parents can secure for their children performative success – they can appear ideally middle-class,

white and gendered. If children have mastered these performatives through correct consumption choices, then it follows that they have secured ideal social capital.

There were some subversions of dominant discourse, however. In the chapter *From white sands to black billabongs*, I made the case that Indigenous Australians *are* depicted on many television advertisements, and that Indigenous Australian children are generally envisaged as outback dwellers. By contrast, white Australians are represented in spaces all across the nation, and in this sense, whiteness is produced as a pervasive discursive norm. In Chapter 6, then, I discuss how Indigenous Australian childhoods *are* represented in advertisements, but in limited and spatially exclusionary ways. The spatial privileges of white childhoods are thus reinforced, while Indigenous childhood authenticity is discursively tied to outback and non-urbanised spaces. The construction of white children as protagonists travelling to view Indigenous outback dwellers reinforced a socioeconomic hierarchy wherein wealthy white people are addressed because they presumably have the disposable income to consume. By appealing to white people and white mythologies, the complexities of Indigenous life are silenced.

Similarly, another identified contradiction to dominant discourse was the representation of working class Australian childhoods in schooling spaces. While they were included in some school-related advertisements, they were otherwise generally absent or silenced across advertisements featuring rural, suburban and beach/billabong settings. However, in the narratives of a series of Telstra advertisements, working class Australians' presumed anti-authoritarian spirit is used in ways that construct Australian childhoods as ideally anti-scholarly. Nonetheless, this discourse of working class Australian childhoods can be clearly understood as less prevalent across the whole corpus in comparison to middle class Australian childhoods. Furthermore, such a narrative of the junior working class larrikin at

school continued to reinforce the need to consume in order to achieve success in a privatised and competitive educational climate.

Implications

The importance of such a Foucauldian archaeological approach is that it understands that representation does more than produce images, it produces concepts as truths. This sort of analysis has implications for re-thinking Australian childhoods in more socially just and inclusive ways. It is not that an analysis such as this proposes that advertisers change their highly profitable practices (as this will likely not happen!), but that by challenging the discourses that these texts produce, the ways of thinking and speaking about childhood that are naturalised and sedimented in contemporary Australia are unsettled and stirred, so that perhaps in the future they might not be so comfortably familiar. As Foucault so powerfully states, the role of the intellectual is to "question over and over again what is postulated as self-evident" (1990, p. 255) and to challenge the premises on which the self-evident rests. Similarly, Søndergaard (2002) argues, the ethical task of Foucauldian scholarship is to "increase the circumference of the visible" (p. 202) so that new and more inclusive alternatives to present dogma may emerge. This sort of analysis is not only about representation, but also about reflecting on the ways social assumptions about Australian childhoods can be exclusionary and unjust.

Images and narratives of Australian childhoods are abundant in television advertisements, as well as in everyday life. When these images and narratives are so pervasive, they can come to be naturalised, appearing common sense and unquestionable (Hogan, 2009). The pervasiveness of narratives of Australian childhoods in contemporary public discourse makes this critical examination a timely intervention into discourses that are under-examined and increasingly naturalised. Because discourses of Australian childhoods are so

prevalent in social life, and because they work to constitute the ways childhood can be knowable, reflecting upon their discursive power is important. As Robinson and Davies (2008b) point out, discourse mediates "perceptions and knowledge about childhood" (p. 344), which has implications for "what it means to be a child" (p. 344) in everyday social contexts. Thus, by not reflecting on discourses of Australian childhoods, socially unjust and exclusionary discursive assumptions continue unchallenged. When whiteness is sedimented as the norm in Australia, non-white Australian childhoods are produced as not belonging— as bodies out of place (Butler, 1993). When heteronormative and traditionally gendered discourses of boys and girls are produced over and again as ideally Australian, non-traditional and alternatively gendered bodies are excluded from recognition within Australian discourse. When middle class childhood subjectivities are idealised in Australian discourse, children who do not fit the middle class mould are marginalised from discourses of national belonging. Thus, it matters that assumptions about Australian childhoods are questioned.

When categories of Australian childhoods are regularly produced in exclusionary ways, some children will be produced as unrecognisably Australian, or indeed, less Australian than other children. Thus, discourses have material implications for social marginalisation and exclusion. As Butler (2009) puts it in her discursive examination of images:

> The "frames" that work to differentiate the lives we can apprehend from those we cannot (or that produce lives across a continuum of life) not only organize visual experience but also generate specific ontologies of the subject. Subjects are constituted through norms which, in their reiteration, produce and shift the terms through which subjects are recognized. (p. 3-4)

In this sense, a discourse analysis is not simply to highlight how concepts come to be represented in texts. More importantly, it is to highlight how textual practices include and exclude particular subjectivities from recognition, and ascribe value to certain types of subjectivities at the expense of others. Thus, I have argued here that discourse impacts the

embodied life of Australian children. As Butler argues, "the norms that produce and regulate the subject … also seek to inhabit and craft the embodied life of the subject" (1997a, p. 143) by producing expectations and anticipations which regulate how a subject should act, and how non-normative subject should move through the space of the nation (Butler, 2009). The work of challenging discursive truths that I have undertaken here can thus work to contribute to the project of considering the exclusionary practices of current discourses, which is necessary in order to consider a more inclusive notion of childhood(s) in Australia into the future.

The findings of this thesis might also be meditated in the theoretical and practical worlds of education, tourism and media. This thesis's critique of constructions of Australian childhood on television advertisements that are commonplace and as yet un-critiqued in any sustained way lends well to education's role of stimulating critical discussion of social structures and actions. Proponents of media literacy (Cole & Pullen, 2010; Buckingham, 2003) stress that multimedia have become "the major contemporary means of cultural expression and communication" (Buckingham, 2003, p. 5) and should thus be integral to school curricula. Given that most students will have regular contact with audio-visual media throughout their lives, media literacy scholars posit that it is important for students to have the ability to critically interpret texts and the discourses they produce. Multi-literacy pedagogies highlight the importance of educating with a critical approach to the ways multiple modes of address work to influence the meanings produced at the intersection of text and respondent (Buckingham, 2003). In an era where students need to have the ability to "interpret and make informed judgements" (Buckingham, 2003, p. 5) about multimodal texts and to understand that these texts construct selective visions of national identities, this thesis offers practical and thematic findings that can be used for teaching practice and in the development of

potential critical media literacy projects in education settings—namely sociology, cultural studies, Australian studies, and media studies.

Tourism advertisements played a significant part in this analysis, and the findings of this thesis could well contribute practically and theoretically to Australia's trade and tourism industries. Susie Khamis (2012), whose work I discussed in Chapter 2 (see pp. 46-47), has highlighted the dissonance between the Australian government's attempts to lure economic investment by positioning Australia as an intelligent, cosmopolitan and multicultural nation on the one hand, and the one-dimensional constructions of white agrarian Australia in the nation's major tourism campaigns on the other. This dissonance presents competing and contradictory discourses of nationhood which undermine the power of narratives of nationhood projected to potential investors in Australia's economy. At a time when Australian governments are attempting to pivot economic interest towards Asia and government rhetoric at least semantically constructs Australia as a welcoming multicultural nation, there is a strong case that multicultural and cosmopolitan narratives of nationhood could indeed be economically advantageous to tourism and trade advertisers. The findings here could act as a springboard for further exploration of these points. As they stand, advertising narratives are not reflecting the cosmopolitan rhetoric that Australian governments aspire towards when selling the Australian economy to international investors; this is a contradiction that tourism industries could address into the future.

Reflections

This study has employed a Foucauldian *archaeological* research trajectory. From an archaeological perspective, I have aimed to examine how interrelated texts from a specified time period produce discursive subjects (Foucault, 1972). The choice to conduct an archaeological analysis, driven by my political agenda to critique exclusionary ways in

which Australian childhoods are formulated in discourse, has determined the ways in which I uniquely contribute to analyses of childhood on television advertisements. Namely, an archaeological approach interrupts social assumptions about subjecthood by highlighting the ways subjects are produced through exclusionary textual and discursive reiteration. As I detailed in the methodology chapter, the archaeological analysis undertaken takes a different form than other recent analyses of the content of television advertisements inasmuch as its focus is on discourse and not on producers and consumers of images.

Because I wanted to maintain a focus on *ideas* of Australian childhood which emerge in discourse, I did not examine children's or viewers' reactions to advertisements. In keeping with discourse analytic and social semiotic traditions (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Fairclough, 1995; Willig, 2008), I have argued in this thesis, and particularly the methodology chapter, that language and semiotic signifiers produce culturally mediated meanings independent of producer or receiver. In conversation with analyses of viewers' reactions to advertisements (Bang & Reece, 2003; Gilmore & Jordan, 2012; Hogan, 2009; Lewin-Jones & Mitra, 2009), which generally examine how children and adults respond to advertisements, this thesis has involved prolonged engagement with *discourse* and the *concept of* Australian childhood. Such work contributes to scholarly debate by focussing on the power of discourse to foreclose and produce social truths. As Robinson and Davies (2008) argue, "the power of this discursive formation of … childhood" is "perpetuated through everyday relations of power" (p. 344). Therein, this archaeological analysis contributes to a broader scholarly project of examining childhood as it is produced in television advertisements by turning attention to discourse and its constitutive and exclusionary effects. As I have highlighted throughout this thesis, the contemporary Australian child is produced in a time when neoliberal consumption discourse (predicated on consumer agency and self-governance) increasingly influences social relations. In this

context, the discursive production of the Australian child on television advertisements have been read here as produced and foreclosed through particular consumer frames that contribute to its definition: the ideal Australian childhood subject is achievable if only parents and children consume wisely. In these advertising texts, such a neoliberal consumption discourse is prevalent and influential.

Future directions

Advertising is consistently changing and moving into new markets. In recent decades, television has been making the switch from analogue to digital, which is fundamentally changing the ways television functions (Turner, 2010). Online advertising is expanding, and advertisers are finding increasingly subtle ways of selling brands. With the changing, digitising, and increasingly online face of advertising, the next logical step for research into childhood in advertising is to move into an examination of advertisements on other mediums. Online advertisements on social networking, video, news and image sharing sites are expanding, and an examination of the ways they contribute to discourses of childhood would prove fruitful.

In an increasingly globalised world, international comparisons of discourses of childhood on television advertisements would offer insights into the relationship between childhood, neoliberal consumerism, and globalisation. In particular, I have noted in my analyses of the Toyota *Kluger* and Ford *Territory* advertisements that these multinational corporations have embraced national identity discourses on their national television advertisements in order to appeal to a national audience. How multinational corporations engage with concepts of nationhood and the national child on online advertisements – which are accessible by international audiences – might help to show the ways discourses of national identity are

being circulated in cross-national mediums, which would go some way to explaining the circulation of national identity and childhood discourses in global times.

Literature out of the United States shows the great diversity of ways racial groups are represented in the multicultural nation (Bang & Reece, 2003; Gilmore & Jordan, 2012; Li-Vollmer, 2002). Cross-comparisons of multicultural representations of racial narratives of childhoods in the United States and Australia might open up important debates about discourses of multicultural and Indigenous childhoods across advertising texts in the post-colonial world. Differing contexts across differing nations – not least of which include consumer demographics in terms of race, ethnicity and culture (Hogan, 2009) – might reveal differing ways in which truths about childhood emerge in advertising texts and consumption discourses around the globe. Similarly, a comparative study of representations of childhoods in nations such as India, where analogue television has only recently entered a 'golden era' (Turner, 2010), and other nations feeling the impacts of globalisation, could open discussion about the role of childhoods in national(ist) discourse. Following the childhood studies scholars who argue that the meaning of childhood changes as social and cultural contexts change (Aitken, 2001; James & Prout, 1990; Jenks, 2005/1996), it is important to investigate the impact of globalisation on the ways childhoods are understood and represented across the world, in order to more fully critique and challenge the ways global media practices sustain unjust understandings of childhood.

A third important trajectory for future scholarly research is the notion of YouTube as a data archive, and indeed, a democratic publication medium (Kavoori, 2011; McKee, 2011). In my examinations of the value of YouTube as a data archive in the methodology chapter, I found that there was very little scholarly conversation about the power and influence of YouTube for scholarly research, with the exception of Alan McKee's work on its curatorial and accessioning potential. McKee's (2011) argument that YouTube has "revolutionized the

archiving of audio-visual material" (p. 155) highlights the methodological possibilities of YouTube. Given its growing importance in global communication and its enormous archival potential, methodologies for accessing and using YouTube deserve more scholarly attention (Drew, 2013). McKee's (2011) work in Australia on non-traditional archival practices deserves more consideration, and it is my aspiration to contribute to the discussions in media and cultural studies about the value of YouTube for researchers. There is great potential in YouTube as a global research archive, and more research on methodologies for the use of YouTube is important for the realisation of this potential (McKee, 2011).

Conclusion

Through banal and commonplace narratives perpetuated through Australia's public and media discourses, Australian childhood is consistently and restrictively constructed as a natural and universal category of human existence, wherein discursive notions of Australian childhood are unquestioningly affirmed as common sense. Despite the vibrant and heterogeneous multicultural, globalised and consistently shifting demography of Australia, the category of Australian childhood continues to be constructed in public advertising and consumption discourses in exclusionary ways. This thesis has worked to unsettle cultural and discursive assumptions about Australian childhood by considering discourses of Australian childhood produced across 330 advertisements released on Australian television between 2006 and 2012. I have argued that idealised Australian childhoods continue to be constructed as white, traditionally gendered, heteronormative, and middle class across four spaces of the nation—rural Australia, suburban Australia, waterscapes, and schools. The narratives examined within the advertisements are framed within the neoliberal consumption discourse which reinforces the importance of consumption for agentive consumers to achieve the idealised versions of Australian childhoods produced within the advertisements. The exclusionary versions of Australian childhoods are consistently framed not only as

desirable, but also as achievable through consumption of advertised products. Ideal Australian childhood subjectivities, in this sense, are framed as the outcome of consuming well. I argue that the exclusionary discourses examined here do not simply reside in the realm of representation, but rather, have material and embodied effects on how Australian childhoods can be understood. Discourses, when they garner the legitimacy of truth, become entrenched and sedimented in cultural understandings of what it means to be an Australian child, to the extent that discourse can foreclose the possibilities of non-normative children to be recognisably, ideally or 'naturally' Australian. Whilst the advertisements might employ such exclusionary discourses in order to secure future consumption, it is clear that these advertisements simultaneously reinforce and naturalise such hegemonies and the exclusionary understandings of Australian childhoods that they entail. As a part of an important performative scholarly and political project which contests the exclusionary production of the category of childhood (Youdell, 2006; Robinson & Davies, 2008; Taylor, 2010; Valentine, 2004; Walkerdine, 2001; Jones, 2002), this examination of exclusionary spatial, gendered, raced and social classed discourses of Australian childhoods has worked to critique and challenge unjust and exclusionary textual and discursive practices that *matter* to Australian children and adults alike, particularly those who continue to be excluded from public recognition through neoliberal consumption discourse. In a nation that presumes to be inclusive and egalitarian, such constructions remain problematic as they contribute to ongoing and entrenched social inequalities. Advertising and consumption discourses produce Australian childhoods in ways that are unjust; and this needs to be continually critiqued and challenged in order that such unjust constructions are not (or no longer) naturalised as unquestionable truth.

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